

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning - Oxford City Planning Committee on Tuesday 18 April 2023

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Committee members present:

Councillor Clarkson (Chair)	Councillor Upton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Malik
Councillor Pegg	Councillor Rehman

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Jennifer Coppock, Principal Planning Officer
Natalie Dobraszczyk, Development Management Team Leader
Sally Fleming, Planning Lawyer
Chloe Jacobs, Senior Planning Officer
Hayley Jeffery, Development Management Team Leader (East)
Mike Kemp, Principal Planning Officer
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer
Andrew Murdoch, Development Management Service Manager

Apologies:

Councillor Aziz sent apologies.

74. Declarations of interest

General

Councillor Upton stated that as a member and trustee of the Oxford Preservation Trust she had taken no part in that organisation's discussions regarding any of the applications before the Committee. Councillor Upton stated that she was approaching the applications with an open mind, would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision.

75. 22/02969/FUL: Littlemore House, 33 Armstrong Road and Plot 18 Oxford Science Park, Oxford OX4 4FY

The Committee considered an application (22/02969/FUL) for partial demolition of and alterations to Littlemore House; erection of 1 no. research and development building (Use Class E) at Littlemore House with ancillary accommodation, clinic, educational floorspace and restaurant; erection of 1 no. research and development building (Use Class E) and 1 no. building to accommodate servicing plant and bicycle parking facilities at plot 18 of the Oxford Science Park; erection of an elevated walkway linking Littlemore House and plot 18 of the Oxford Science Park; and new access

arrangements, parking, landscaping, engineering and ground modelling works at Littlemore House, 33 Armstrong Road and plot 18 of the Oxford Science Park.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The application site comprised two connecting parcels of land (Littlemore House and plot 18 of the Oxford Science Park) which were largely separated by woodland, a tributary of Littlemore Brook, and the Newman Place residential development. A timber-clad elevated walkway was proposed to link the two buildings.
- The proposal involved the partial demolition of Littlemore House (a non-designated heritage asset) and erection of a new building in quadrangle form connecting to the remaining Littlemore House building. In addition to offices and laboratories, the building at Littlemore House would provide ancillary uses including a publicly accessible restaurant; accommodation for patients and visitors; a clinic; and educational floor space. A new raised building at plot 18 would also provide laboratories.
- The proposal included an extension of the existing footpath in order to link Armstrong Road to the Science Park and the future Cowley Branch Line station. Access to the footpath would be available to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- An ancillary building located beneath the publicly accessible footpath would provide a sub-station, CCTV equipment, waste store, cycle parking and shower facilities. A plant room would be located below ground.
- 208 parking bays were proposed to be provided across both sites. This would equate to provision for 35% of staff, and was considered acceptable by the Highways Authority. Sufficient cycle parking would also be provided across both sites.
- Solar panels would be mounted on the rooftop of Littlemore House, the elevated walkway and the building at plot 18. Air-source heat pumps were proposed for heating and cooling of the building, and ground-source heat pumps would provide hot and chilled water. The scheme would achieve a 41% reduction in carbon emissions at Littlemore House, and a 55% reduction at plot 18 when set against Part L of the 2021 Building Regulations.
- The submitted drainage strategy proposed the use of blue rooves, permeable paving, extensive landscape features and an attenuation tank. The Lead Local Flood Authority had expressed no objections to the proposed drainage strategy.
- The route of the elevated walkway would avoid the root protection areas of the principal woodland trees, and the position of the plot 18 building allowed for the retention of most of the important boundary canopy cover. A courtyard garden at Littlemore House would provide an interesting landscape, with spaces designed for all intended uses. Additionally, a garden with water feature underneath the plot 18 building provided an interesting response to the on-site flooding constraints;
- It was predicted that the proposed planting would result in a 13% increase in canopy cover after 25 years, compared to a no-development scenario. This was in excess

of the local policy requirement for no net loss. The scheme would result in a biodiversity net gain of 15.5% in habitat units and 27% in hedgerow units. This was in excess of the currently required 5%, and also the 10% which will be required under national legislation from November 2023.

- Officers considered that the proposal successfully responded to the scale, articulation and materiality of Littlemore House through the incorporation of chimneys as a visual link between the old and the new, and the breaking up of the massing into smaller blocks which reflected the existing building. Stepping of the building line added to the perceived variation in roof line experienced at street level.
- Visual permeability with the streetscape was proposed through the use of a glazed atrium along the eastern elevation to allow views of Littlemore House; a glazed staircase to the corner at Armstrong Road; and a glazed main entrance giving views into the courtyard. These features were considered to contribute positively towards the streetscape.
- It was considered that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to Littlemore House (a non-designated heritage asset) and the setting of the nearby Littlemore Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset). As required by the NPPF, great weight had been given to the conservation of the designated heritage asset and a balancing judgement had been undertaken in respect of the non-designated asset in the evaluation of the proposal, but it was considered that the less than substantial harm caused to both assets would be outweighed by the numerous public benefits provided by the scheme, as set out in the report.
- A detailed lighting strategy for the whole scheme would be conditioned, in order to ensure protection of the amenity of neighbours.
- Due to resourcing issues, comments had not yet been received from the Environment Agency in relation to flood risk. Their response was due by 30 May, and any comments received would be resolved by officers.
- Officers considered that the proposal responded appropriately to the site context and the Local Plan allocation for the Oxford Science Park, and that it accorded with the overall aims and objectives of the NPPF and policies within the Oxford Local Plan for the reasons set out in the report. It was therefore recommended for approval, subject to the conditions and planning obligations set out in the report and the resolution of any comments made by the Environment Agency.

Lisa Flashner (President and Chief Operating Officer of the Ellison Institute) and Guy Wakefield (agent) spoke in favour of the application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the application, which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- A Community Employment Plan would form part of the S106 legal agreement, which would provide accountability for achievement of local employment projections. The Planning Lawyer clarified that a requirement for periodic reporting could also be included, to enable monitoring.

- The publicly accessible footpath would be lit for surveillance: this would need to be balanced against the need to protect wildlife through the woodland area. The site was expected to be most occupied between normal working hours of 9am to 5pm (with the restaurant staying open later): however, security would also be provided on site at all times.
- The principle of Littlemore House as an employment site had been established through successive planning permissions. The site was allocated for employment in the previous Local Plan but had not been promoted by the landowner for inclusion within the current Local Plan.
- The clear and significant public benefits in terms of provision of jobs, biodiversity, carbon benefits, architectural design, and connectivity were considered by members of the committee to outweigh the less than substantial harm to Littlemore House and the setting of the conservation area, in addition to enhancing Oxford as an area of prime scientific research.
- The proposal would involve the loss of an avenue of lime trees along the Armstrong Road entrance to Littlemore House. The trees were not protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- The pre-application work and design review process had refined the proposal in a collaborative way which had resulted in a scheme which was considered to be of a modern, exciting design with well thought out buildings.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote, the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the conditions and planning obligations set out in the report and the resolution of any comments made by the Environment Agency.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission; and subject to:
 - the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and other enabling powers to secure the planning obligations set out in the recommended heads of terms which were set out in the report; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary;
 - respond to comments made by the Environment Agency, resolve any concerns or objections and finalise any recommended conditions;
 - finalise the recommended legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and other enabling powers as set out in the report, including refining, adding to, amending and/or deleting the obligations detailed in the heads of terms set out in the report (including to dovetail with and where

appropriate, reinforce the final conditions and informatives to be attached to the planning permission) as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary; and

- complete the section 106 legal agreement referred to above and issue the planning permission.

76. 23/00388/FUL: UYS Ltd, Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2BW

The Committee considered an application (23/00388/FUL) for the demolition of 2 no. canopies to the north elevation and formation of 1 no. canopy to the main entrance; replacement cladding to all elevations; replacement cladding and rooflights to all roofs; and replacement window and fire exit doors at UYS Ltd, Garsington Road, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The County Highways Team had raised no objection to the development.
- The site comprised a large industrial building on the edge of the city. In addition to the building it consisted of an area of existing car park and hardstanding, with access via a security-controlled gate from Garsington Road through the adjacent Unipart site.
- The building was well-screened, and visible only from selected views.
- The building was currently clad in metal sheeting and composite material, coloured in blue and white, which had been extensively damaged as a result of a sprinkler system malfunction during the winter which had led to flooding in areas of the building. The cladding had also been identified as a potential fire risk. The proposal included the replacement of the existing cladding across the whole building with new cladding coloured in dark and light grey, and the demolition of a small entrance canopy to the front of the building which would be replaced by a new entrance lobby.
- It was considered that the new cladding represented an improvement on the existing, which had faded and was in poor condition. It would also offer improved fire safety. The proposals were considered to represent necessary works which were required in order to bring the building back into operational employment use, and was therefore considered by officers to be justified in accordance with policies E1 and SP7 of the Oxford Local Plan. In design terms the proposal was considered to offer enhancement on the appearance of the existing building and accord with policy DH1 of the Local Plan. The proposals were considered to have no adverse impacts in respect of amenity, nor any other environmental impacts. The application was therefore recommended for approval for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in the report.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the

required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission; and

2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services to:

- finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary.

77. 22/02868/FUL: Kassam Stadium and Land Adjacent Falcon Close, Oxford

The Committee considered an application (22/02868/FUL) for change of use of part of car park for motorcycle testing/training and part of stadium for storage and office (a sui generis use) for a temporary period of 2 years at Kassam Stadium and Land Adjacent Falcon Close, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The proposal sought continued change of use of part of the car park at the Kassam Stadium for motorcycle testing and training, and part of the stadium for storage and office use, for a period of two years. The application had originally sought a permanent change of use; however, due to officers' concerns arising from the stadium being part of an allocated site for residential development within the Local Plan, the application had subsequently been amended to seek temporary consent.
- The site encompassed a large proportion of the Kassam Stadium, adjacent to Grenoble Road to the south-west of Blackbird Leys. The stadium was currently home to Oxford United Football Club; however, other uses had taken place in and around the site.
- The proposal involved small scale changes to the use of parts of the stadium site to provide the office and storage areas. The office area would be provided in the main building, with storage in a cupboard which would be accessed externally. Change of use of the car park was also sought, to provide the motorcycle training areas. The changes were considered to be small scale in the context of the overall site, which would not prejudice its principal use as a football stadium.
- The site was located more than 100 metres away from the nearest residential property: the proposal was therefore considered unlikely to give rise to any adverse impacts on neighbouring properties in terms of noise disturbance. As hotels were sited to the east and west of the site, the hours of operation had been restricted to between 8am and 8pm, in order to mitigate any adverse impacts on the hotel occupiers.
- The site had been in operation as a motorcycle training and testing facility since 2008, with no complaints having to date been received in respect of its use.
- The site included ample parking provision, and the motorcycle testing/training facility had operated successfully for a number of years without conflicting with the other uses of the site, including the use of the stadium. No objections had been raised by the Highways Authority, subject to requiring the proposed development to

be accessed from Grenoble Road only and for the use of the motorcycle training not to take place on match days or concurrently with other large events.

- For the reasons set out in the report, officers considered that the proposal was acceptable in design and amenity terms and recommended its approval, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

In discussion a member of the committee commented on the value of offering motorcycle training and testing within the city, given recent and likely future transport changes which could increase demand for training on vehicles such as electric motorbikes or scooters.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote, the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the application for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report and subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services to:
 - finalise the recommended conditions and informatives as set out in the report including such refinements, amendments, additions and/or deletions as the Head of Planning Services considers reasonably necessary.

78. Minutes

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023 as a true and accurate record.

79. Forthcoming applications

The Committee noted the list of forthcoming applications.

80. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.00 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 23 May 2023

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.