

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning - Oxford City Planning Committee on Tuesday 19 September 2023

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Committee members present:

Councillor Clarkson (Chair)	Councillor Hollingsworth (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Kerr
Councillor Mundy	Councillor Railton
Councillor Rehman	Councillor Upton
Councillor Gant (for Councillor Fouweather)	

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Natalie Dobraszczyk, Development Management Team Leader
Sally Fleming, Planning Lawyer
Mike Kemp, Principal Planning Officer
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer
Andrew Murdoch, Development Management Service Manager

Apologies:

Councillors Chapman, Fouweather and Malik sent apologies.
The substitute for Councillor Fouweather is shown above.

30. Declarations of interest

General

Councillor Upton declared that as a member and trustee of the Oxford Preservation Trust she had taken no part in that organisation's discussions regarding the applications before the Committee. Councillor Upton said 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 on them.

31. 23/00707/RES: Oxford North Northern Gateway Land Adjacent A44 A40 A34 And Wolvercote Roundabout, A40 Section From Cherwell District Council Boundary To Wolvercote Roundabout, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 8JR

The Committee considered an application (23/00707/RES) for reserved matters approval of scale, layout, landscaping and appearance for the erection of commercial building, erection freestanding service pavilion for storage of associated waste and gas bottle storage and provision of landscaping (Plot A) at Oxford North Northern Gateway

Land Adjacent A44 A40 A34 and Wolvercote Roundabout, A40 Section from Cherwell District Council Boundary to Wolvercote Roundabout.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- An updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been published on 5 September, which was after the officer's report had been finalised. The Planning Officer confirmed that there had been no change to the paragraph numbers of the NPPF cited in the report, nor any alteration to the assessment contained in the report or the officer's recommendation arising from the update to the NPPF.
- Further comments had been received from Oxfordshire County Council on 18 September in relation to drainage. The County Council was still requesting clarification on how the detached pavilion buildings would follow SUDS guidelines; matters relating to the capacity of the existing drainage ditch to accommodate drainage flow and consent from the relevant body; and details relating to how the brown roofs of each of the buildings would drain. Officers were therefore seeking delegated authority to resolve the County Council's remaining concerns.
- No further public comments had been received following the consultation expiry date on 18 September.
- Correction was required to paragraph 10.58 of the report which referred to the maximum parking standards being one space per 62sqm of employment floor space. This should read one space per 62.5sqm of employment floor space. The same correction was required to condition 7 (relating to the car parking strategy) which also referred to square meterage of employment floorspace.
- The application related to one of three employment buildings which were proposed under the next phase of development (phase 2) for Oxford North. Phase 2 would also include proposals for a new park and public square and a multi-storey car park: reserved matters applications for these proposals would be brought before the Committee at a later date.
- The siting of the building aligned with the masterplan which had been approved under the hybrid application 18/02065/OUTFUL and which showed a building of a similar scale within the location. The building would be used for life sciences and research and development use, consisting of a split of laboratory and office space. The hybrid masterplan had been accompanied by a land uses parameter plan, which specifically allowed for this type of use on this part of the Oxford North Site.
- The proposal would provide 11,065sqm of floor space in total. Two detached buildings were proposed adjacent to the main building which would provide waste storage, storage for gas bottles and a cycle store.
- The proposed use was consistent with the overall vision for Oxford North, which was focused on innovation and science and technology uses.
- The site layout included soft landscaping, which would include a contribution to biodiversity net gain. Biodiversity net gain was being delivered cumulatively across

the Oxford North project, with the 5% net gain target to be achieved throughout the duration of the project.

- The Sustainability Strategy for the building met the requirement to deliver a 40% reduction in carbon emissions as assessed against the new Part L building regulations. The building would be capable of meeting the BREEAM excellent rating requirements. It would therefore be compliant with Policy RE1 of the Oxford Local Plan.
- Officers considered that the building was well designed and was contextually justified and compliant with Policy DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan.
- A small section of the building (principally an area of PV panels and plant equipment) would sit above the height parameter plan which had accompanied the hybrid planning permission. This represented a small section of the building, and the visual impact had been assessed against the range of key views which had originally been used to assess the hybrid proposals. Officers considered that the additional height above the height parameter plan would not result in any additional visual harm when assessed against the scope of the original proposals.
- In total 123 cycle parking spaces were proposed. This would exceed the minimum requirement set out in Local Plan Policy M3, which was one space per 90sqm. However, it was below the one space per 50sqm minimum standard proposed in the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan Policy NG4. As set out in the report, officers considered that there were material reasons to depart from the very high quantity of cycle parking required under policy NG4: the proposed provision would be capable of meeting the existing and future target modal shares for cyclists set out within the applicant's travel plan, whilst also accounting for the County Council's now adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. The provision of a substantial number of further cycle parking spaces may have an adverse design impact. Officers considered that there was a clear urban design rationale for considering a lower number of spaces where there was not an objective need to meet the NG4 policy standards, and the County Council had also not objected to the cycle parking provision, based on the ability to meet future demand for cycle parking provision.
- The proposal did not include the provision of car parking. It was instead proposed that car parking would be provided within a multi-storey car park which would provide car parking capacity for up to 70,000sqm of employment space, applying the target ratio of one space per 62.5sqm of employment space which was the maximum target ratio for parking under the hybrid permission. An application for the multi-storey car park would be presented to the Committee at a later date: a car parking strategy was therefore recommended which would outline the location, timing of delivery and management measures relating to car parking for Plot A, as well as plots B and C.

Victoria Collett (the applicant) spoke in favour of the application.

Councillor Altaf-Khan, who arrived at the meeting after the officer's presentation had concluded, did not participate in determining the application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the report, which were responded to by officers, the applicant, agent, architect and technical consultant. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- Some Committee members expressed reservations about the level of cycle parking provision and questioned the reasons for accepting the lower amount of cycle parking required by Local Plan Policy M3 rather than enforcing the requirements of Policy NG4. Officers responded that the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan had been adopted prior to the current Local Plan and therefore pre-dated it. The rationale for the departure from NG4 was set out in the report. It was also noted that the application before the Committee related only to part of the site and that there was potential to increase the amount of cycle parking across the development as a whole in the future, in the event of an increase in the mode share of cyclists or to adapt to changing circumstances (increased use of larger bikes, etc). The applicant and agent, who were present, were asked to note the Committee's concerns about cycle parking standards. It was also noted that the use of the building for life sciences would result in a lower average number of staff working within the building compared with an office use.

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, subject to the conditions set out in the report and the resolution of the County Council's remaining concerns or objections relating to drainage which was delegated to the Head of Planning Services.

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 and issue the planning permission; and
 - respond to any comments received by Oxfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority) to resolve any concerns or objections and to finalise any recommended conditions relating to site drainage.

32. 23/00708/RES: Oxford North Northern Gateway Land Adjacent A44 A40 A34 And Wolvercote Roundabout, A40 Section From Cherwell District Council Boundary To Wolvercote Roundabout, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX2 8JR

The Committee considered an application (23/00708/RES) for reserved matters approval of scale, layout, landscaping, and appearance for the erection of commercial building, erection freestanding service pavilion for storage of associated waste and gas bottle storage and provision of landscaping (Plot B) at Oxford North Northern Gateway

Land Adjacent A44 A40 A34 and Wolvercote Roundabout, A40 Section from Cherwell District Council Boundary to Wolvercote Roundabout.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- An updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been published on 5 September, which was after the officer's report had been finalised. The Planning Officer confirmed that there had been no alteration to the assessment contained in the report or the officer's recommendation arising from the update to the NPPF.
- Further comments had been received from Oxfordshire County Council on 18 September in relation to drainage. The County Council was still requesting clarification on how the detached pavilion buildings would follow SUDS guidelines; matters relating to the capacity of the existing drainage ditch to accommodate drainage flow and consent from the relevant body; and details relating to how the brown roofs of each of the buildings would drain. Officers were therefore seeking delegated authority to resolve the County Council's remaining concerns.
- No further public comments had been received following the consultation expiry date on 18 September.
- Correction was required to paragraph 10.53 of the report which referred to the maximum parking standards being one space per 62sqm of employment floor space. This should read one space per 62.5sqm of employment floor space.
- The proposal would provide 16,561sqm of flexible laboratory and office space, cycle storage, refuse stores and specialist waste and gas bottle stores, as well as new soft landscaping (including tree planting) to the west of the building and level access for cyclist and pedestrians.
- The principle of providing life sciences space fully aligned with the Land Use Parameter Plan for the Oxford North site and the overall vision for delivery of the site in terms of overall uses which would enhance the knowledge economy.
- 188 cycle parking spaces would be provided. A number of these would be in a detached pavilion to the west of the main building, with further spaces (single tier Sheffield stands) surrounding the building. Waste storage and gas bottle storage would also be provided within a detached pavilion building to the west. As with Building A, cycle parking was based on the Oxford Local Plan standard but was below the requirement set out under Policy NG4 of the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan. As set out in the report, officers considered that the departure from Policy NG4 was justified considering future demand for cycle parking consistent with the applicant's travel plan.
- No car parking provision was directly proposed: a car parking strategy condition would be required in order to deal with future car parking provision.
- The proposal included areas of green roofs which would sit above flat roofs. This would contribute to the biodiversity net gain strategy and drainage strategy for the building. The third floor of the building also included an outdoor terrace area above the front entrance for use by the occupiers as communal space.

- Officers considered that the building design was of a high standard and appropriate for the site context in terms of its scale and appearance. The Sustainability Strategy fully met Policy RE1 requirements and exceeded the 40% reduction target for carbon emissions as assessed against Part L building regulations and was capable of meeting the BREEAM excellent rating requirements.
- The majority of the building would sit fully within the height parameters approved under the hybrid permission. However, as set out in the report there were smaller sections of the building which did deviate from the heights allowed for within the Height Parameter Plan. When considered in the context of the building and the scope of the overall application officers considered that the additional scale would not have an adverse visual impact when considered within the key views that were assessed within the applicant's provided Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

The Committee asked questions about the details of the report, which were responded to by officers, the applicant, agent, architect and technical consultant. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- A committee member commented that some of the cycle parking within the pavilion would be provided by double height stands, which could be difficult for those with non-standard bikes or who were not fully able-bodied. The agent responded that there would also be Sheffield stands and spaces for larger bikes provided within the secure enclosures.
- Some committee members drew attention to the sharp zig-zag of the access path. It was noted that the aim was to achieve a level gradient, but some committee members considered that it may result in users cutting across landscaping to create a shorter route, or risk cyclists taking a sharp bend.

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, subject to the conditions set out in the report and the resolution of the County Council's remaining concerns or objections relating to drainage which was delegated to the Head of Planning Services.

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 and issue the reserved matters approval; and
 - respond to any comments received by Oxfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority) to resolve any concerns or objections and to finalise any recommended conditions relating to site drainage.

33. 23/01412/RES: Oxford North Northern Gateway Land Adjacent A44, A40, A34 and Wolvercote Roundabout A40 Section from Cherwell District Council Boundary to Wolvercote Roundabout

The Committee considered an application (23/01412/RES) for reserved matters approval of scale, layout, landscaping and appearance for the erection of commercial building, erection freestanding service pavilion for storage of associated waste and gas bottle storage and provision of landscaping (Plot C) at Oxford North Northern Gateway Land Adjacent A44 A40 A34 and Wolvercote Roundabout, A40 Section from Cherwell District Council Boundary to Wolvercote Roundabout.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- An updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had been published on 5 September, which was after the officer's report had been finalised. The Planning Officer confirmed that there had been no alteration to the assessment contained in the report or the officer's recommendation arising from the update to the NPPF.
- Further comments had been received from Oxfordshire County Council on 18 September in relation to drainage. The County Council was still requesting clarification on how the detached pavilion buildings would follow SUDS guidelines; matters relating to the capacity of the existing drainage ditch to accommodate drainage flow and consent from the relevant body; and details relating to how the brown roofs of each of the buildings would drain. Officers were therefore seeking delegated authority to resolve the County Council's remaining concerns.
- No further public comments had been received following the consultation expiry date on 18 September.
- Correction was required to paragraph 10.54 of the report which referred to the maximum parking standards being one space per 62sqm of employment floor space. This should read one space per 62.5sqm of employment floor space.
- The proposal related to the delivery of a research and development building housing 15,290sqm of laboratory and office space. It included the provision of hard and soft landscaping surrounding the building as well as a new pedestrian link to the north. A detached store building was proposed for waste and gas bottle storage, located between the site of the building and the proposed multi-storey car park.
- As with buildings A and B, no car parking was directly proposed within the application. A car parking strategy would be required to deal with future car parking provision for the plot. A strategy to re-provide the temporary car and cycle parking serving the Red Hall and the Phase 1a buildings, which would be lost through the development, would be conditioned.
- 168 cycle parking spaces would be provided at ground level, mainly within the envelope of the building itself but also within further detached spaces provided within Sheffield stands surrounding the building. The cycle parking provision was based on the Oxford Local Plan standards, but as with Plots A and B was below the Policy NG4 Northern Area Gateway standards. This departure was considered to

be justified for the reasons set out in the report, based on existing and future demand for cycle parking consistent with the applicant's travel plan.

- The building would be five storeys in height, clad in a dark green metal material. The plant area at the top of the building would be surrounded by metal mesh cladding, which would serve to make the upper sections appear less heavy.
- The building would meet the 40% reduction in carbon emissions set against the Part L building regulations requirement and was capable of meeting BREEAM excellent requirements. The Energy Strategy would comply fully with Policy RE1 requirements. The building design included balcony spaces for use by future occupiers as outside space for social, communal or work purposes.
- The majority of the building would sit within the height parameters approved under the hybrid permission. However, as set out in the report there were smaller sections of the building which would deviate from the heights allowed for in the Heights Parameter Plan. The site was in a location where there was provision for greater height. Although the building appeared relatively large in scale it was predominantly compliant with the height parameters approved under the outline application and would be set in the context of similarly large buildings including the Red Hall and the Phase 1a buildings. The impact on the development had been assessed thoroughly within the applicant's provided Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), and within the scope of the development allowed for under the hybrid application.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the report, which were responded to by officers, the applicant, agent, architect and technical consultant. The Committee's discussions included, but were not limited to:

- A new route would be provided to the north of the building which would connect to the new car park, with pavements either side of the access road. The County Council had therefore considered that there was safe access from the car park into the building.
- A requirement to submit a sample of the exterior material to be used before commencement of above ground works had been conditioned. A committee member recommended that evidence of the material's ability to withstand weathering should also be submitted.
- A committee member did not agree with the officer's assessment that the deviation from the height parameter plan would be small.

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, subject to the conditions set out in the report and the resolution of the County Council's remaining concerns or objections relating to drainage which was delegated to the Head of Planning Services.

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

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; and issue the reserved matters approval.
- respond to any comments received by Oxfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority) to resolve any concerns or objections and to finalise any recommended conditions relating to site drainage.

34. Minutes

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2023 as a true and accurate record.

35. Forthcoming applications

The Committee noted the list of forthcoming applications.

36. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 17 October 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.