

East Area Planning Committee

1st June 2011

Application Number: 11/00707/RES

Decision Due by: 3rd June 2011

Proposal: Erection of 9,097 square metres of Class B1 Business offices on 3 floors. Provision of 252 car parking spaces and 111 cycle spaces. (reserved matters of planning permission 91/01303/NO as varied by permission 99/01351/VF and 04/00215/VAR seeking approval of access, appearance, layout, landscaping and scale.) (Amended Plans)

Site Address: 2300 2400 And 2600 John Smith Drive (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Cowley Ward

Agent: N/A

Applicant: Arlington Business Parks
GP Limited

Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee are recommended to approve planning permission for the following reasons:

- 1 The proposed development has already been granted outline planning permission for business use (Class B1) under 91/01303/NO, nevertheless it would make an appropriate and efficient use of an undeveloped site within the Oxford Business Park. In accordance with the reserved matters, the siting, layout, external appearance and landscaping of the proposed development would create an appropriate visual relationship with the surrounding area without having a significant impact upon adjoining properties, whilst also providing appropriate access and parking arrangements so as not to have an adverse impact upon the local highway.
- 2 In considering the application, officers have had specific regard to the comments of third parties and statutory bodies in relation to the application, however officers consider that these comments have not raised any material considerations that would warrant refusal of the applications, and any harm identified could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions.
- 3 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all

other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions:

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Samples of materials
- 4 Landscaping Strategy carried out on site
- 5 Landscape Management Plan
- 6 Parking Areas provided as submitted
- 7 Cycle Parking provided as submitted
- 8 Re-alignment of footpath and cycleway
- 9 Full Travel Plan
- 10 Construction Travel Plan
- 11 Details of Flood Risk Assessment carried out
- 12 Detailed design of surface water drainage scheme
- 13 Contaminated Land Risk Assessment
- 14 Restriction on surface water drainage infiltration

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

- CP1** - Development Proposals
- CP6** - Efficient Use of Land & Density
- CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context
- CP9** - Creating Successful New Places
- CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs
- CP11** - Landscape Design
- CP13** - Accessibility
- CP18** - Natural Resource Impact Analysis
- CP19** - Nuisance
- CP20** - Lighting
- CP21** - Noise
- TR1** - Transport Assessment
- TR2** - Travel Plans
- TR3** - Car Parking Standards
- TR4** - Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities
- TR5** - Pedestrian & Cycle Routes
- EC1** - Sustainable Employment
- DS57** – Oxford Business Park - Cowley - Employment Use

Core Strategy

- CS2_** - Previously developed and greenfield land
- CS9_** - Energy and natural resources
- CS11_** - Flooding
- CS13_** - Supporting access to new development
- CS18_** - Urban design, town character, historic environment

CS19_ - Community safety
CS27_ - Sustainable economy
CS28_ - Employment sites

Other Material Considerations:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPG13: Transport
PPS25: Development and Flood Risk
Parking Standards, Transport Assessments, and Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document
NRIA Supplementary Planning Document

Relevant Site History:

02/00730/RES - Extension of access road (part of reserved matters of outline approval NO/1303/91): Approved

91/01303/NO - Demolition of all buildings. Construction of buildings for B1 business use (125,023 square metres) & a hotel (10,451 square metres) incl. new roads, car parking, infrastructure & landscaping (Amended Plans) (Oxford Business Park, Garsington Road): Approved

93/00706/NR - Details of access and landscaping on Garsington Road and some internal site roads. Details of landscaping on Eastern By-pass (part reserved matters of outline approval NO/1303/91): Approved

99/01351/VF - Variation of condition 1 on permission NO/1303/91 to allow submission of reserved matters application until 26.11.2004: Approved

04/00215/VAR - Variation of condition 1 on permission 99/01351/VF to allow submission of reserved matters application until 30.11.2012: Approved

Representations Received:

Occupant, Oxfam House:

- The current public transport links are inadequate for the provision of the business park currently and offer few sustainable ways to travel to/from work. The transport plan provided offers no improved links whilst increasing traffic by 1300 new staff
- The current parking and cycling facilities are inadequate for the size of the property when there is no improvement to public transport
- A construction management plan should be submitted to ensure that Oxfam will not be affected by noise, dust and dirt through the construction phase of the build.

Occupant, 5520 Oxford Business Park:

- Parking on the estate is at a premium and, whilst the company supports any 'Green Travel Plan', they have to work, and with the public transport links to the estate as they are many of those who work here have little option but to drive

- The parking provision for the development is wholly inadequate and the estate requires more parking spaces

Statutory and Internal Consultees:

Oxfordshire County Council Strategic Planning Consultations Team: No comment

Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority: No objection to the proposal, subject to conditions.

Environment Agency Thames Region: No objection subject to conditions

Thames Water Utilities Ltd: No objection

Issues:

- Principle of Development
- Design
- Impact upon neighbours
- Landscaping
- Highways Matters
- Sustainability
- Flood Risk / Drainage
- Other Matters

Officers Assessment:

Site Location and Description:

1. The application site comprises an area of undeveloped land to the south-east of the Oxford Business Park, bordered by Plot 2200 to the north-east, Plot 3100 to the south-west, Oxfam House to the north-west, and the Eastern Bypass (A4142) to the south-east (**appendix 1**)
2. The site has vehicular access from John Smith Drive, while there is a combined footpath and cycleway running along the south-western boundary of the site, and also across the site.

Background

3. In November 1992 outline planning permission was granted for the development of the Oxford Business Park and the construction of buildings for B1 Business Use (125,023m² floorspace); a hotel (10,451 m² floorspace); new roads; car parking; infrastructure and landscaping under reference 91/01303/NO.
4. At the time outline permission was granted a number of matters were reserved for approval. The timeframe for these matters to be agreed was extended under permissions 99/01351/VF and 04/00215/VAR. This application is subsequently seeking approval of these reserved matters which relate solely to the scale, layout, access, appearance and landscaping of the proposed development.

Proposal

5. The proposed development would involve the erection of a detached three-storey office building providing 9,096.80 m² of business use (Class B1) floorspace, with the provision of 252 car parking spaces, 111 cycle spaces (101 covered, 10 uncovered), vehicular access, landscaping and services infrastructure.

Principle of Development

6. The principle of developing the Oxford Business Park for business use (Class B1) has already been established through the outline planning permission (99/01351/VF).
7. PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth encourages an efficient use of land and a positive approach towards economic development with the emphasis on securing sustainable economic growth.
8. The Oxford Business Park is identified within the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 as a protected employment site which provides one of the main opportunities for employment growth over the next 5 years. It goes on to state in Policies CS27 and CS28 that the modernisation of employment sites will be supported. The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 also makes clear in Policy DS57 that permission will be granted for business (Class B1) space within the Business Park.
9. The proposed development would provide 9,096.80m² of Class B1 floorspace over 1.59Ha. This would leave approximately 26,148.20m² of floor space on 6.35ha of land available for development within the park under the original outline permission (99/01351/VF).
10. The building is to be occupied by British Gas Business who currently has 406 employees situated in three buildings within the park. It is intended that the new building will accommodate at least 1,300 people with 950 desk based jobs, and a further 250 to 350 employees (e.g. support teams) and visitors. According to the Planning and Economic Statement submitted with the application, it is anticipated that the existing 406 employees will relocate to the new office development whilst further local jobs could also be generated by the proposal.
11. Therefore notwithstanding the fact that the general principle of development was established under the outline permission (91/01303/NO), the proposal would be consistent with the aims and objectives of current national and local development plan policies.

Design

12. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires development to demonstrate high-quality urban design responding appropriately to the site and surroundings; creating a strong sense of place; contributing to an attractive public realm; and providing high quality architecture.

13. The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 requires development to enhance the quality of the environment, with Policy CP1 central to this purpose. Policy CP6 emphasises the need to make an efficient use of land, in a manner where the built form and site layout suits the sites capacity and surrounding area. This is supported through Policy CP8, which states that the siting, massing, and design of new development should create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the surrounding area.
14. The proposed three-storey building would measure approximately 88m (l) x 47.5m (w) x 17.5m (h) and has a compact footprint designed around a central atrium with office space either side. The building has a contemporary appearance with full height and length glazing to the office space which has a gentle curve that leads into the masonry elements at both ends of the building and a flat roof to limit the profile, with a plant room at roof level that is incorporated into the design. The footprint has been orientated with an east-west alignment to maximise natural light and also provide a main entrance onto the plaza from John Smith Drive.
15. In terms of size, scale, and design the building would be consistent with other similar sized office buildings within the business park, in particular its immediate neighbour the Oxfam building. The overall built form and site layout would suit the sites capacity, and make a positive contribution to the public realm within the business park itself. Therefore officers consider that the proposal would satisfy the requirements of Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, and Policies CP1, CP6, CP8, and CP10 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

Impact upon Neighbours

16. Policy CP10 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to be sited in a manner which meets functional need, but also in a manner that safeguards the amenities of other properties.
17. The proposed office building would be unlikely to create any adverse impact upon the other adjoining units within the park. During the consultation process concerns have been raised regarding the impact from the construction of the building upon these business units, however, such matters would normally be dealt with through legislative powers other than planning. Officers would recommend a construction traffic management plan to manage any adverse impact from construction traffic.
18. Although there are residential properties to the east of the business park, these are sited some 170m away from the application site. Therefore having regards to the separation distance the proposal would not give rise to any significant neighbour issues.

Landscaping

19. A Landscaping Strategy has been submitted with the application, which provides full details of the hard and soft landscaping for the proposed development.

20. This strategy has been designed to integrate the building into the landscape of the business park and the approaches to the site from John Smith Drive and surrounding footpaths. The external areas are separated into three categories – Arrival and Entrance Plaza, Car Park, and Garden Space – with appropriate landscaping for these areas in order to define the different spaces and provide attractive views from the building and adjoining plot and along the boundaries.
21. Officers consider that the landscaping strategy would make a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the site and the wider area, in accordance with Policy CP11 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

Highways Matters

22. A Transport Statement and interim Travel Plan have been included with the application. In terms of concerns that have been raised during the consultation process regarding traffic generation it should be recognised that these matters have been considered at the outline planning stage.
23. The proposed development would be accessed from John Smith Drive with two access points to provide separate access for staff and visitors to the site. The parking areas will be shared parking and pedestrian surfaces, and will provide a total of 252 car parking spaces and 111 cycle parking spaces.
24. The level of parking within the site would meet the maximum parking standards set out within Policy TR3 and Appendix 3 of the Local Plan and the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document. The Local Highways Authority has indicated that the layout of the parking area is also acceptable.
25. In terms of cycle parking, the proposal would include 101 cycle stands within a covered store to the rear of the site for staff, and a further 10 uncovered stands to the front of the site for visitors. The level of cycle parking also accords with the minimum standards set out within Policy TR4 and Appendix 4 of the Local Plan and the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document.
26. In accordance with Policy TR2 of the Local Plan, an interim travel plan has been submitted setting out the methods for promoting sustainable travel to and from the development and to set out realistic targets for achieving these aims. The interim travel plan has been developed in liaison with the Local Highways Authority and as such a condition should be attached which secures the submission of a full travel plan for the building.
27. The proposed development would also require the re-routing of the cycleway and footpath that currently splits the three plots that form the application site and provides a continuous link through the business park. The proposal would relocate this footpath and cycleway and officers would raise no objection to the new alignment, which could be secured by condition.

Sustainability:

28. A Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) has been submitted as required by Policy CP18 of the Local Plan, and the NRIA Supplementary Planning Document.
29. The NRIA scores 6/11 and focuses on the energy efficiency measures that would be provided rather than the renewable energy. It scores a maximum for energy efficiency, but would provide 17% of on-site renewable energy just short of the 20% target. The energy statement does predict a total reduction in carbon dioxide emissions against a baseline by integrating energy efficient measures and renewable technologies within the scheme, such as solar water heating, solar PV, and a biomass boiler. The NRIA also scores a maximum with regards to water efficiency.
30. Officers consider that the scheme uses a hierarchical approach to energy generation, and although it falls just short of the NRIA target for renewable energy this is offset by increasing the energy efficiency of the scheme to a good level. Therefore officers would raise no objection to this aspect of the proposal.

Flood Risk / Drainage

31. A Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Scheme prepared by Baynham Meikle Partnership have been submitted with the application.
32. The Environment Agency are satisfied that the sustainable drainage techniques proposed within the scheme will reduce flood risk, and also offer water quality, biodiversity and other amenity benefits, in accordance with PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.
33. Whilst the Environment Agency have not raised an objection to the proposal, they have suggested that there are revisions that could be made to improve the scheme and have therefore recommended conditions be attached to secure the details of the Flood Risk Assessment, and also agree the detailed design of the surface water drainage system.

Other Matters

34. Having regards to the previous use of the site, there is potential that the land could be contaminated despite remediation works being carried out in 1993-1994 following the grant of outline permission. The Environment Agency has recommended a condition be attached requiring further investigation of the site, and a remediation strategy to be supplied where any unsuspected contamination is found.

Conclusion:

35. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and therefore Members of the East Area Planning Committee are recommended to grant planning permission for the proposed development.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

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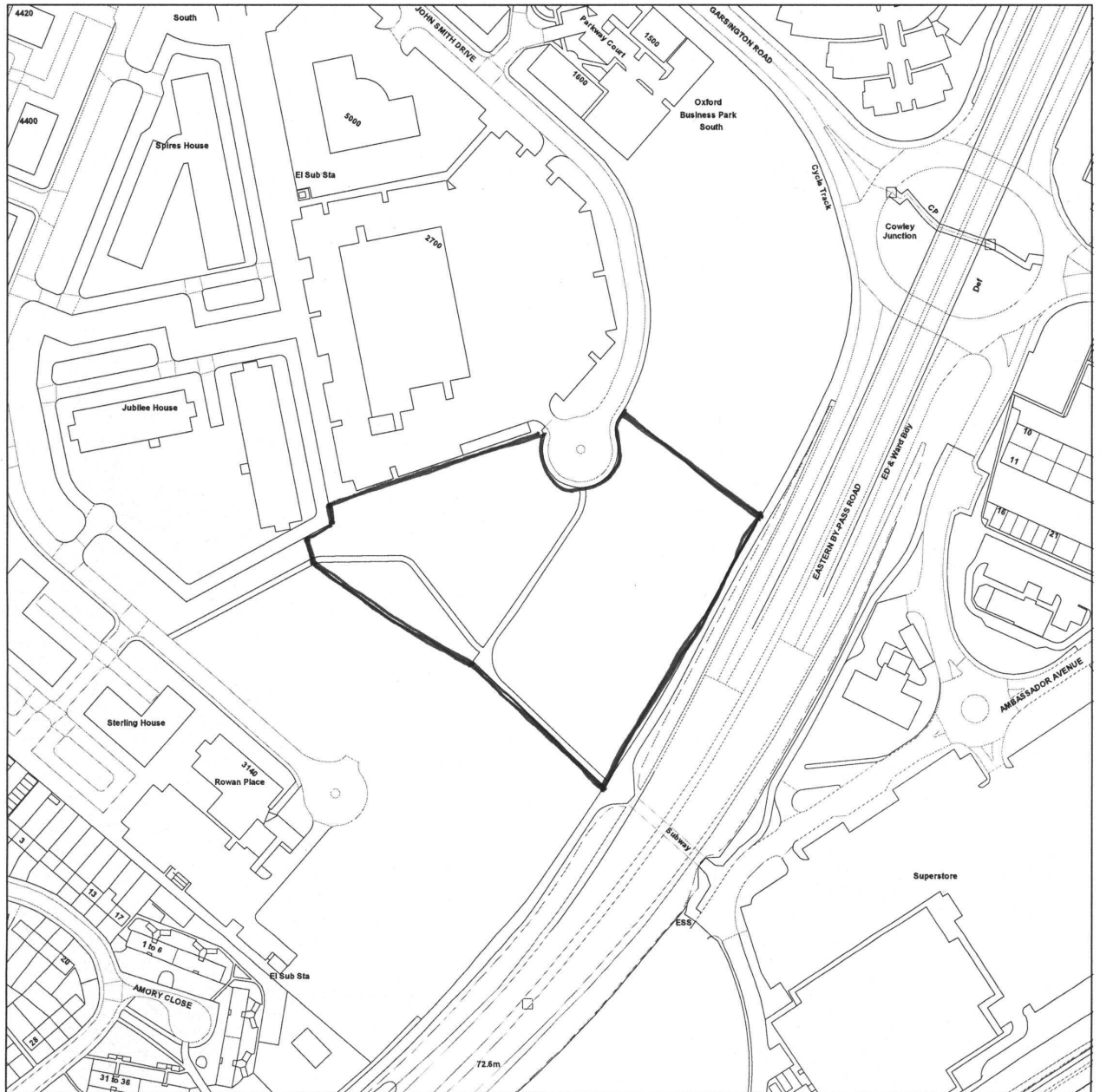
Date: 16th May 2011

Appendix 1

2300 2400 2600 John Smith Drive (11/00707/RES)



GIS by ESRI (UK)



Scale : 1:2500

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Organisation	Not Set
Department	Not Set
Comments	
Date	19 May 2011
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