

## Minutes of a meeting of the Planning - Oxford City Planning Committee on Tuesday 21 November 2023



### Committee members present:

Councillor Clarkson (Chair)	Councillor Hollingsworth (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Altaf-Khan	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Fouweather	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Kerr	Councillor Railton
Councillor Upton	

### Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Gill Butter, Principal Heritage Officer  
Felicity Byrne, Principal Planning Officer  
Jennifer Coppock, Principal Planning Officer  
Natalie Dobraszczyk, Development Management Team Leader  
Sally Fleming, Planning Lawyer  
Chloe Jacobs, Senior Planning Officer  
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Mike Kemp, Principal Planning Officer  
Andrew Murdoch, Development Management Service Manager

### Apologies:

Councillor Malik sent apologies.

## 43. 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 any of 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.

### 23/02092/FUL

**Councillor Railton** declared that she was a member of Littlemore Parish Council, which had commented on the application, and had attended a meeting arranged for the Parish Council in October 2022 to outline the proposal. Councillor Railton declared that she had not participated in any discussions at the Parish Council relating to the comments submitted on the application, was approaching the application with an open mind, and would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision on it.

## **23/00693/FUL and 23/00694/LBC**

**Councillor Hollingsworth** declared that as a ward councillor for the area he had, before the applications were submitted, spoken to a number of residents at their request and advised them on the process for commenting on the planning application. Councillor Hollingsworth declared that he had formed no judgement or expressed any opinion on the proposal and would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision on them.

**Councillor Chapman** declared that he had visited an acquaintance who lived in St John's Street and had viewed the application site but had not discussed the application with them. Councillor Chapman declared that he had formed no judgement on the proposal and would listen to all the arguments and weigh up all the relevant facts before coming to a decision on them.

**Councillor Clarkson** declared that she was a graduate of St John's College, which was the applicant, although she had not had any contact with the College regarding the proposals. Councillor Clarkson also declared that she was a member of the congregation at Blackfriars Priory, which had objected to the application. As this gave rise to a potential public perception of pre-determination, Councillor Clarkson declared that she would leave the meeting room whilst the applications were considered and would not participate in determining them.

### **44. 23/00693/FUL: Site of 6-25 Pusey Lane and 19-21 St John Street, Oxford**

Councillor Clarkson left the room and Councillor Hollingsworth took the chair.

(Note: as they related to the same site, applications 23/00693/FUL and 23/00694/LBC were considered together).

The Committee considered applications (23/00693/FUL and 23/00694/LBC) for the demolition of nos. 6-25 Pusey Lane and erection of a 2-3 storey terraced building to provide new student accommodation; demolition of rear outrigger extensions to nos. 20 and 21 St John Street; erection of single storey common room building to the rear of nos. 20 and 21 St John Street; and re-landscaping of the existing amenity areas to the rear of nos. 7-11 and 19-21 St John Street, including demolition/alteration of rear plot boundary walls.

The Planning Officers gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The application site encompassed a series of 1970s mews buildings fronting Pusey Lane containing 22 garages on the ground floor and 9 self-contained flats on the upper floors for graduate students of St John's College; a disused early C20 building on the corner of Pusey Lane and Pusey Street known as The Lighting Store; and the rear gardens of 7-11 and 19-21 St John's Street, all of which were owned by St John's College.
- The proposal included demolition of The Lighting Store and the mews buildings replacing them with a linear, terraced development consisting of 5 individual houses and 8 self-contained flats which would provide purpose-built accommodation for 33 students. The outer edges of the terrace would be two storeys with rooms in the pitched roof, and the central section was of lower height to correspond with the properties on the rear of St John Street which were privately owned and residential.

The height of the development would be the same as the highest point of the existing mews buildings in this location.

- The proposal also included demolition of the rear outriggers at 20-21 St John Street, to be replaced with a single storey glass and brick extension. The outrigger adjacent to 18 St John's Street would be retained.
- The building had been articulated and the windows varied to correspond with the buildings opposite and optimise the use of light, in order to provide good quality accommodation for the graduate students.
- The development included a high quality landscape scheme in the rear gardens of the St John's Street houses involving the removal of a large number of poor quality trees and replacement with new species which would replace the canopy cover over 25 years. There would be no harm to the public amenity as a result of the tree removals. The houses and flats would have direct access for students into the shared courtyard gardens, offering significantly improved amenity space for residents. The landscape design included rain gardens, sustainable drainage and enhanced greening of Pusey Lane, as well as relaying of the cobblestones to the front on Pusey Lane.
- Officers were of the view that the development would result in a high quality, highly sustainable design which would be of an appropriate scale, height and massing to its surroundings and would enhance the character and appearance of the C19 residential character area of the Central Conservation Area. It was considered that there would be no harm caused to the significance of the listed buildings at 19-21 St John Street arising from the demolition of the outriggers. It was considered that there would be a low level of less than substantial harm caused to the setting of the listed terrace of St John Street properties resulting from the increased height of the new development over the existing; however, officers were of the view that the weight of harm caused would be outweighed by the public benefits arising from the proposed development. Officers considered that there would not be a significant increase in overbearing or overshadowing to residents to the rear over and above that caused by the existing buildings. There would be no direct overlooking back to back: the rear windows facing the private properties on St John Street had been removed, and other first floor and ground floor windows would have a protective fine mesh which would prevent direct overlooking and leaning out of windows. As such, officers considered there would be no significant adverse impact.
- The control of vibration and external noise had been conditioned, and subject to these conditions officers considered that there would be no adverse impact from any plant or air source heat pumps.
- Acceptable levels of cycle parking would be provided; the proposal also included a reduction in car parking through the loss of the 22 spaces, which was welcomed.
- Construction traffic would be controlled by the County Council as Highways Authority under a Construction Traffic Management Plan.
- The applications were therefore recommended for approval, subject to the conditions in the respective reports and the satisfactory completion of a Section 106

agreement in respect of the development which was the subject of the planning application.

John Landers of St John Street Area Residents' Association and Francis Wenban-Smith, on behalf of a local resident, spoke against the application.

Zoe Hancock, Principal Bursar of St John's College and Toby Martin, architect, spoke in favour of the application.

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

- The listed status of the building, 6 Pusey Street, referred to as The Lighting Store. Officers confirmed that this building had never been listed. In officers' opinion the building was not, as had been suggested, listed by virtue of being a curtilage building to No 22 St John Street. Officers explained the tests set out in case law relating to curtilage and the application of those tests, together with guidance from Historic England, that underpinned their conclusion on that matter.
- A Student Management Plan could be conditioned, setting out details of how the accommodation would be managed by the College, in order to provide additional assurance with regard to noise or disturbance issues.
- There would be no windows overlooking no 22 St John Street, and the windows on the adjacent unit would be covered by mesh in order to provide screening. The mesh screen also had fins and would be held closer to the façade which would eliminate any sideways views out. With these measures, the screening provided by additional trees, and a condition relating to approval of the mesh material, officers were confident that there would be no overlooking issues.
- A committee member commented that the proposal would provide accommodation for graduate students which was needed in the city and would free up private sector rented accommodation currently used by the students. It was considered to offer a much better quality of design and architecture than the current buildings. The developer had made significant efforts to consider sustainability issues and had given a detailed response to concerns about overbearing, light issues, bin storage and cycle storage. However, the lowering of the middle part of the building - which faced the privately owned residences to the rear of St John Street - to two storeys with a flat roof whilst the ends of the building which faced onto student accommodation remained at two and a half storeys, seemed to be an anomaly.

On being proposed, seconded and put to the vote the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation to approve the planning application for the reasons set out in the report, subject to the conditions set out in the report, an additional condition requiring a Student Management Plan, and a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations set out in the report.

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and an additional condition requiring a Student Management Plan and grant planning permission subject to:

- the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or Unilateral Undertaking 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 and Regulatory 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 and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary; and
- finalise the recommended legal agreement or Unilateral Undertaking 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 and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary; and
- on receipt of the completed section 106 legal agreement or Unilateral Undertaking issue the planning permission.

#### **45. 23/00694/LBC: site of 6-25 Pusey Lane and 19-21 St John Street, Oxford**

(Note: this application was considered together with application 23/00693/FUL above).

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

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report subject to the required listed building conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant listed building consent; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning and Regulatory 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 and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary.

#### **46. 23/01592/RES: Land Bounded by A34 and A44 And A40, Parcel 1, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 8JP**

Councillor Clarkson re-joined the meeting and took the chair.

The Committee considered an application (23/01592/RES) for reserved matters approval of scale, layout, landscaping, and appearance for a multi-storey split decked car park including immediate landscaping at Land Bounded by A34 and A44 and A40, Parcel 1, Woodstock Road, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- A correction was required to section 6.1 of the report which referred to 3 parking spaces outside of the car park to the north-east. In fact, these were not car parking spaces but was instead an area for the storage of compost materials. This did not affect the overall number of spaces, which remained at 1120.
- The application was for a multi-storey car park of five storeys located on the western edge of the site, adjoining the A34 and Plots B and C. It was a split-level, steel framed structure with concrete stair cores which would be accessed by the secondary road, which had reserved matters approval. It would be a system-built, component-based structure of relatively simple design. In response to comments from Thames Valley Police, the plans had been amended to incorporate steel mesh on all levels from floor to ceiling.
- There would be pedestrian footpaths on either side of the road, with entrances on both sides of the building and via two stair cores and a main entrance off the secondary street. There was a pedestrian access route to the north of Plot C linking the car park with the central section of the Oxford North site.
- Parking would be provided for 1120 cars, which would equate to c70,000sqm of employment space applying the ratio of one space per 62.5 sqm of employment space (which was the maximum parking standard outlined in the section 106 agreement accompanying the hybrid planning permission). There would also be 40 motorcycle parking spaces and 7 parking spaces for estate management vehicles. The car park would serve two of the employment buildings approved under Phase 1a of the development, the Red Hall, and the three buildings approved under Phase 2 (Plots A, B and C).
- Presently there was 60,200sqm of employment space benefitting from planning permission, which would equate to a maximum of 963 parking spaces which may be allocated for the consented plots. This left some remaining capacity within the car park for potential hotel use (one of the next potential proposed uses on the site) or another employment plot.
- As delivery of the employment plots on the site would be phased, it was important that provision and availability of parking within the car park was also phased in order to avoid early over-provision of parking. This would need to be set out in the Car Park Management Plan, which was required by Condition 3.
- Small areas of landscaping surrounding the car park along the western boundary would provide some screening of the lower sections of the car park from the A34 whilst making a small contribution to biodiversity net gain. Visibility of the structure was mainly limited to views from the north and the west, and with minimal exceptions the height would accord with the height parameter plan approved under the hybrid planning permission.
- Inclusion of all the parking within one single structure allowed for other sections of the site, which may otherwise be used for surface level or multi-storey car parking, to be given over to landscaping or public realm uses and therefore represented an efficient use of land. The system-built nature of the car park meant that it would be de-mountable and sections removed should the need for parking decline over time.

- Policy M4 of the Oxford Local Plan required 25% of the spaces to be fitted with EV charging points: a condition requiring details of this had been included.
- Officers considered that the proposal complied in full with the Oxford Local Plan, the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan, and the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan and so the reserved matters proposal was recommended for approval.

Ron German (the applicant) spoke in favour of the application.

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

- In response to a question about the reason why the car park was not covered, and whether including a roof would help to prevent cars becoming overly hot in the summer, the applicant responded that the inclusion of a roof had been considered but rejected due to the carbon cost implications. Additionally, the open design sought to address emerging concerns about the risks of EV charging in enclosed spaces. Officers responded that a roof would also increase the height of the building, thereby increasing the visual impact.
- Approval of the material for the mesh to be used was conditioned. Officers would need to consider the balance between adding interest to the structure and the impact that might have in terms of its visibility. It was also noted that the Oxford Design Review Panel had favoured a minimalist approach.
- The level of car parking had been approved in the outline application and the low carbon, lightweight and flexible approach was supported.

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.

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 reserved matters approval; and
2. **delegate authority** to the Head of Planning and Regulatory 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 and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary.

#### **47. 23/02092/FUL: Littlemore House, Oxford Innovation Park, 33 Armstrong Road, Oxford OX4 4FY**

The Committee considered an application (23/02092/FUL) for partial demolition of, and alterations to, Littlemore House; erection of 1no. research and development building (Use Class E) at Littlemore House with ancillary accommodation, clinic, educational floorspace and restaurant, new access arrangements, parking, landscaping, engineering and ground modelling works.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- The scheme for Littlemore House and Plot 18 of the Oxford Science Park with an elevated walkway joining the two buildings for research and development use had been approved by the committee in April 2023 subject to conditions, completion of a S106 legal agreement and the resolution of any objections from the Environment Agency (EA) which had not commented at the date of the planning committee meeting. Shortly after the April 2023 committee meeting the EA objected on biodiversity grounds in relation to Plot 18 of the Oxford Science Park and this had required a period of delay in order to address its concerns. During the process of resolving the EA's concerns the applicant had decided to submit a standalone application for Littlemore House, which was not subject to the EA's comments, in order that meaningful work could be started in the event of a further protracted delay with the 'main application'. The EA removed its objections and recommended conditions on 3 November 2023, and the Section 106 legal agreement for the application was currently being negotiated. This current application therefore now formed a 'fallback' position for the applicants should the 'main application' fall through for any reason.
- The only difference between the application which had been considered in April and the application which was now before the Committee was the addition of roof-mounted solar panels in order to ensure that the standalone application adhered to the requirements of Policy RE1.

Guy Wakefield (agent) spoke in favour of the application.

The Committee asked questions about the report which were responded to by the officers. As noted at the April committee meeting, a Committee Member expressed regret that the application had not been sympathetic to the avenue of lime trees which would be lost as part of the proposal.

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

The Oxford City Planning Committee resolved to:

1. **approve the application** for the reasons given in the report subject to the required planning conditions set out in section 12 of the report and grant planning permission; 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 and Regulatory 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 and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary;
  - 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 and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary; and

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

#### **48. 23/02006/FUL: 43 Dodgson Road, Oxford OX4 3QS**

The Committee considered a report (23/02006/FUL) for change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) and provision of bin and bike stores at 43 Dodgson Road, Oxford.

The Planning Officer gave a presentation and highlighted the following:

- Since publication of the report, Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority had provided comments on the application and had raised no objection.
- The application sought planning permission for the change of use from a residential dwelling to a small House in Multiple Occupation and also the provision of bin and cycle storage. The application was before the committee as the applicant was an Oxford City Councillor.
- With regard to HMO density, the proposal would not result in an over-saturation of HMOs within the area and would therefore maintain a balanced community and comply with Local Plan policies.
- During the course of the application amended plans were received to address officers' concerns with regard to the size of the originally proposed kitchen, which did not comply with space standards. The amended plans show an open plan kitchen diner and living room. All of the rooms would now comply with the HMO space standards with the exception of the study on the first floor: however, the restriction of this room for bedroom purposes would be controlled further under the HMO licensing regime.
- The area of garden space was more than adequate for the needs of future occupiers; the existing car parking area would be retained; and whilst the site did qualify to be car-free, given that the existing car parking arrangement was not changing and there would be no net increase in parking on the site, the proposal was considered to comply with Policy M3.
- The proposal would be served by bike and bin stores, to be located to the front of the property. Both the bike and bin store were considered to be acceptable and comply with the Local Plan policies. The application was therefore recommended for approval, subject to the conditions shown in the report.

The Committee asked questions about the details of the report which were responded to by officers.

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 and Regulatory 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 and Regulatory Services considers reasonably necessary.

## **49. Minutes**

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 as a true and accurate record.

## **50. Forthcoming applications**

The Committee noted the list of forthcoming applications.

## **51. Dates of future meetings**

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.26 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Tuesday 12 December 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.*