

UTT/0883/06/FUL - LITTLE CHESTERFORD

Erection of new building for B1 purposes (Research & Development).

Location: Chesterford Research Park. GR/TL 535-422.

Applicant: Norwich Union Life & Pensions

Agent: Malcolm Honour

Case Officer: Mr T Morton 01799 510654

Expiry Date: 25/08/2006

ODPM Classification: MAJOR

NOTATION: Chesterford Park Local Policy 1.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE: The application concerns a plot of land within the Chesterford Park site, located to the north of the mansion house in the centre of the park and served from the existing estate road.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL: A new research and development building is proposed of two stories height, of separately lettable suites organised around a central internal corridor. A car park is provided to the north of the new building. The elevational treatment is consistent with the designs used in the other recent buildings approved and constructed within the site. The proposals involve the demolition of buildings already present on the site totalling 3755sq.m, with a proposed new floorspace of 3428sq. m. Some ornamental trees on the site are to be removed, but these make little overall contribution to the landscape as a whole, and the scheme includes new planting proposals that provide a better mix of species and a net gain in landscape terms.

APPLICANT'S CASE: A detailed supporting statement has been submitted with the application. This places particular stress upon the sustainable design aspects of the proposal, with the building intended to be efficient in energy and water use. Construction materials are chosen to minimise environmental impact.

RELEVANT HISTORY: A Master Plan for the development of Chesterford Park was presented to the Environment and Transport Committee in June 2003, where it was resolved to approve the Master Plan, and in effect it now forms supplementary guidance to the Local Plan. This sets out a landscape framework and design statement with locations for new buildings. The current application concerns one of those approved locations for a new building.

CONSULTATIONS: Environment Agency: Consulted but representation not received at time of drafting. In previous cases standardised guidance has been offered in relation to design of drainage systems and the preferred use of sustainable drainage solutions.

PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS: To be reported (due 29 June 2006).

REPRESENTATIONS: None received. Notification period expired 20 June 2006.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS: The main issues are

- 1) location of development (ULP Policy Chesterford Park Local Policy),
- 2) design (ULP Policy GEN2);
- 3) access, parking and traffic generation (ULP Policy GEN1, GEN9);
- 4) landscaping (ULP Policy ENV3));
- 5) other material planning considerations.

1) The Local Plan sets out the development zone for this site, and the proposed development sits within the designated area. This is further confirmed by the adopted Master Plan for the park. This proposal provides smaller units to meet the needs of companies that are in the early stages of their growth, with the hope that they will prove successful and expand, either by combining other space within this building or moving to larger units elsewhere within Chesterford Park.

2) The design of the building has a strong family resemblance to the recently approved new buildings on the site, for example Central Facilities. This will provide a unifying identity to the buildings within the parkland setting, and help to blend the buildings into their environment. The design is considered satisfactory.

3) Traffic assessments have already been carried out in earlier phases of the proposal for the park, and the access road and its junction with the main road network have been improved. The park also provides a minibus link to local rail stations and to Saffron Walden for shopping trips at lunchtime, and these are proving to be useful. This application is accompanied by an update to the traffic assessment that demonstrates that this phase of development sits within the capacities outlined in the original assessment.

4) The submission includes a full landscape planting plan and schedule for an ornamental landscape scheme. Although some small trees, such as Cherries will have to be removed, the new proposal offers planting of a wider range of species and more trees than will be lost, and it is considered that this will enhance the setting of the new building.

5) No other issues are considered to arise.

CONCLUSIONS: The proposal is considered to be acceptable in the context of the Master Plan for the site.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development.
2. C.3.1 To be implemented in accordance with approved plans.
Reason: To ensure the development will be carried out as approved and because any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority
3. C.4.2. Implementation of landscaping.
Reason: The landscaping of this site is essential in order to protect and enhance the existing visual character of this attractive rural area.
4. C.8.22. Control of lighting.
Reason: In the interest of the rural appearance of the area.
5. C.9.1 No outdoor storage.
Reason: To prevent harm to the character of the area.
6. C.11.7 Standard vehicles parking facilities.
Reason: In the interest of highway safety and visual amenity.
7. The parking spaces shown on drawing 931-SV-L02 dated July 2004 received 22.05.06 shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles in association with the use of the development hereby permitted. No vehicle shall be parked in the approved parking spaces unless it belongs to or was driven there by a person who is resident at (or working or attending a function which is being held at) the site.
Reason: To ensure adequate car parking spaces are provided to serve the development in the interest of highway safety and to protect the rural amenities of the area.

8. The buildings hereby permitted shall only be used for uses falling within Class B1b of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987, as amended and as may be amended or superseded.
Reason: in the interests of ensuring development complies with the Council's policies for the Chesterford Research Park.
- 9 The buildings and floorspace which are indicated within the application to be demolished shall be so demolished before occupation of the development hereby permitted.
Reason: To integrate the development into the landscape framework of Chesterford Park.
10. C.8.29. Details of sustainable construction required.
11. C.8.33. Accessibility – Further Submission.

Background papers: see application file.
