

ITEM NO.

8

COMMITTEE DATE:

20/02/2012

APPLICATION NO:

11/1960/03

VARIATION OF CONDITION**APPLICANT:**

MREF II Exeter Property Company Ltd

PROPOSAL:

Variation of condition 2 to allow for change of use of 6 store rooms to student accommodation (Ref: 11/0140/03 approved 31/08/2011)

LOCATION:

James Townsend Printers, Western Way, Exeter, EX1 2DE

REGISTRATION DATE:

30/11/2011

EXPIRY DATE:

29/02/2012



Scale 1:2500

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HISTORY OF SITE

11/0140/03 -	Redevelopment to provide student accommodation, access to highway, central open space and associated works	PER	31/08/2011
11/1738/37 -	Minor amendment to proposed elevational treatment of building, external finishes, internal layout of building and external site layout (Non-material minor amendment to Planning Permission Ref no. 11/0140/03 granted 30/08/2011)	PER	15/11/2011
11/1739/32 -	Discharge of Conditions 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17 for Planning Permission Ref No. 11/0140/03 granted 30/08/2011	PER	07/12/2011
11/1959/32 -	Discharge of Condition 3 for Planning Permission Ref No. 11/0140/03 granted: 30 08 2011	PER	16/12/2011

DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL

The application relates to the former Townsend Printers site, for which consents exists for redevelopment to provide purpose built student accommodation comprising 487 bed spaces with associated communal areas/floor space in the form of reception, common rooms and laundry facilities. Work on the demolition of the existing structures has commenced.

Consent is now sought for a minor variation to the approved scheme, by way of a variation of condition 2 which specifies the approved drawings that the development shall be constructed in accordance with. The variation comprises the conversion of a number of store rooms on the lower ground floor to an additional 5 bed roomed studio flat. The proposal has no impact on the external appearance of the building.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT

Supporting letter states - "During the detailed design process it has become apparent that the amount of 'common room' facilities provided within the development exceeds what is required. as such the common room area was amended to storage space under the non-material amendment application (11/1738/37). It is now proposed to change an area of storage on level 0 from storage to 1 no. 5 bed flat, including kitchen. This will provide this part of the facade with activities and offer natural surveillance benefits to Western Way."

REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

CONSULTATIONS

County Director of Environment, Economy and Culture - Comments - " Provided that the agreed highway terms, contributions and conditions are not prejudiced by this proposal, there is no highway objection to this variation of condition 2."

PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE

Central Government Guidance

PPG13 - Transport

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3 - Housing

PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment

PPS5 PG - Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (March 2010)

Devon County Structure Plan 2001-2016

ST1 - Sustainable Development

ST10 - Exeter Principle Urban Area

CO6 - Quality of New Development

CO15 - Air Quality

CO16 - Noise Pollution

TR1 - Devon Travel Strategy

TR2 - Coordination of Land Use/Travel Planning

TR3 - Managing Travel Demand

TR4 - Parking Strategy, Stands and Proposals

TR5 - Hierarchy of Modes and Transport Assessment

TR7 - Walking and Cycling

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011

AP1 - Design and Location of Development

AP2 - Sequential Approach

E3 - Retention of Employment Land or Premises

H1 - Search Sequence

H2 - Location Priorities

H5 - Diversity of Housing

T1 - Hierarchy of Modes

T2 - Accessibility Criteria

T3 - Encouraging Use of Sustainable Modes
T10 - Car Parking Standards
C5 - Archaeology
EN2 - Contaminated Land
EN5 - Noise
DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design
DG2 - Energy Conservation
DG7 - Crime Prevention and Safety

Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy (for adoption February 2012)

CP1 - Spatial Approach
CP3 - Housing
CP4 - Housing Density
CP5 - Housing Mix
CP9 - Transport
CP11 - Air Quality
CP12 - Flood Risk
CP13 - Decentralised Energy Networks
CP14 - Using Low Carbon and Renewable Energy
CP15 - Sustainable Construction
CP16 - Protected Sites and Species
CP17 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
CP18 - Infrastructure

Exeter City Council Supplementary Planning Guidance

Development Related to The University of Exeter

OBSERVATIONS

The approved scheme for redevelopment of this site provides for 487 student bed spaces. The applicant has stated that further detailed design and appraisal work has concluded that the amount of communal/storage space provided for within the originally approved drawings was greater than required. Consequently, it is now proposed to convert the surplus space into an additional 5 bed student flat. No alterations to the external appearance of the building are required to facilitate this as the elevation already incorporated windows to this part of the facade.

The proposal amounts to a 1% increase in the number of bed spaces provided on the site. By virtue of the previous consent the site has already been identified as appropriate for the provision of purpose built student accommodation, and it is not considered that this minor increase in the number of bed spaces accommodated on the site would give rise to any significant adverse impact on the locality.

There are no external alterations to the building as part of this proposal and therefore no adverse visual implications upon the approved external design of the building.

SAWP (01/02/12)

Officers reported that Cllr Taghdissian had submitted a written objection to the proposal by email on the grounds of the increase in number of students to be accommodated in terms of impact upon the locality, and the loss of valuable storage space in terms of the functionality of the development. Members noted officer comments that the applicant was seeking the proposed change following feedback obtained during the detailed design process. Nonetheless they expressed strong concerns regarding any reduction in communal/storage space within this development to provide additional bed spaces. Members noted that in the light of these concerns the application would be placed before Planning Committee for determination.

In response to the concerns expressed by the Working Party the applicant was asked to provide further information on the appraisal of the scheme during the detailed design process that had led to the changes now proposed. The applicant's agent has responded as follows -

"The project team have given very detailed consideration to space planning of the common areas which are of critical importance to the creation of a successful student community and the commercial success of the project.

Further to your request for additional information to support the Committee Report, we have provided a response to the questions posed below:

1. Stakeholder engagement to ascertain appropriate level of communal floorspace

Following detailed concept design work in early 2011, associated with the planning process, as part of the detailed design evolution, a student focus group was held on 28th June with the support of Exeter University and the Student Guild. This was held on campus at the XFi building, lasting for around five hours, with 12 students attending together with Guild officers. The workshop covered a range of issues, from space usage to interior design and the creation of a true community.

We have also spent further time during Q4 2011 in liaising with the proposed building manager, CRM, which manages several thousand student beds across the UK.

The feedback received, including the comments regarding the optimum size and space usage within the common room and management suite areas, has since been used to move the designs to the best possible result for the students who will ultimately live in the building.

2. Demand for storage facilities

The issue of storage was also discussed at the student focus group and with CRM. There are a number of storage areas incorporated into the building design notably to the rear of the substation towards Verney Street, and within the individual blocks. It is considered that these together with surplus space within the management suite which is generously sized, provide ample space for storage.

3. Comparative information

The table below provides a comparison of the provision of communal areas within recently completed student accommodation at Exeter Trust House and Bath Charlton Court.

Student Accommodation	Total Common Area (m2)	Number of bedspaces	Common area floorspace per bedspace
Exeter	82	124	0.7
Bath	101	330	0.3
Western Way – as approved	496	487	1
Western Way - current proposals	393	493	0.8

The total proposed common area (including common room, gym, laundry, storage) is 393m², significantly larger than any of the comparable student accommodation schemes in Exeter and indeed elsewhere. The space on both the main entrance and lower levels

has been divided up into a number of distinct zones, based on student feedback and best practice including: meet, study, socialise and exercise."

CONCLUSION

Many purpose built student accommodation schemes comprising cluster flats rely on the living areas within each cluster flat for the social space and provide no additional scheme wide communal areas. This development has adopted a different approach and has provided two generous areas of scheme wide communal space, one on the ground floor and one on the lower ground floor. This level of provision compares well with other student accommodation schemes where additional communal space outside of cluster flats has been provided.

In the overall context of the redevelopment of this site for the provision of student accommodation, and the absence of any current policy requirements regarding the level of communal/storage space with purpose built student accommodation developments, this minor variation to the previous approval is considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the following submitted details :-
Approved drawings on application no 11/0140/03 - received by the Local Planning Authority on 27th January and 28th March 2011 (dwg. nos. 31509_P001, 31509 P121, 31509 P122, 31509 P123, 31509 P124, 31509 P125, 31509 P115, 31509_P116 Rev A, and 60463(63)001),
Approved drawings on application no 11/1738/37 - received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th October 2011 (dwg. nos. 31509 P103 Rev C, 31509 P105 Rev C, 31509 P106 Rev C, 31509 P107 Rev C, 31509 P108 Rev C, 31509 P109 Rev C, 31509 P110 Rev C, 31509 P111 Rev C, 31509 P112 Rev C, 31509 P113 Rev C, 31509 P114 Rev B, 31509_P117 Rev D, 31509_P118 Rev D and 31509_P120 Rev B), and
31509 P104 Rev E (received on the 30th November 2011), as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.

Local Government (Access to Information) 1985 (as amended).

Background papers used in compiling the report:

Files of planning applications available for inspection from the Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter: Telephone 01392 265223