

ITEM NO. 7

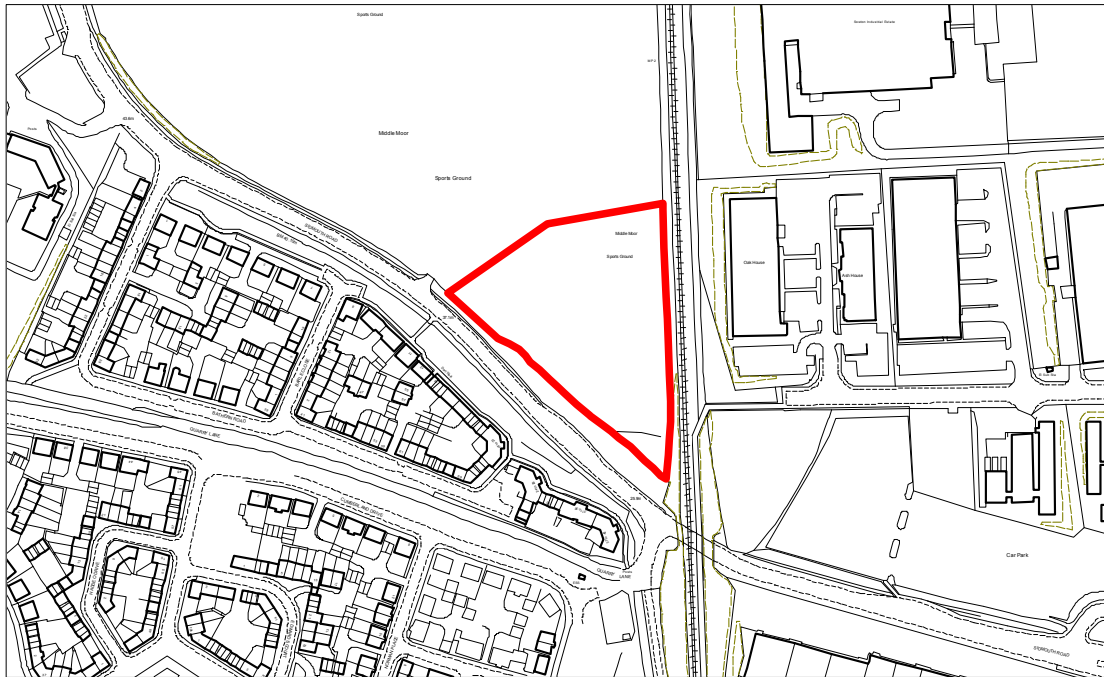
COMMITTEE DATE: 10/12/2007

APPLICATION NO: 07/2007/02 **APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS**

APPLICANT: Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
PROPOSAL: Two detached buildings (1137sq.m.) to provide three storey fire station with ancillary offices, training building with tower, parking, cycle, bin and fuel store, access to highway and associated works (approval sought of reserved matters on Ref. No. 04/1467/01 granted 16 March 2007) for siting, design, landscaping and external appearance

LOCATION: Devon & Cornwall Constabulary Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter, EX2 7HQ

REGISTRATION DATE: 05/10/2007



Scale 1:4000

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HISTORY OF SITE

There is an extensive history of applications relating to the Middlemoor complex but the only application relevant to the part of the site the subject of this application is as follows:-

04/1467/01 - Provision of fire station with access to highway PER 16/03/2007
(siting, design, landscaping and external appearance reserved for future consideration)

This application was approved on 16th March 2007 and is the subject of a Section 106 Legal Agreement relating to highway improvements.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL

The site is located at the southern end of the Middlemoor HQ and borders Sidmouth Road to the west and the Exeter-Exmouth railway to the east. The land at present forms the perimeter of the sports field but does not contain any pitches.

The current application seeks approval of reserved matters pursuant to the outline consent granted under application 04/1467/01. Under the outline application the position of the access to the site was fixed but all other matters were reserved. Therefore approval is now sought for the siting, design and external appearance of the building and the landscaping of the site.

The submitted plans depict a 3 storey main building with an attached single storey wing accommodating the 4 appliance bays. Detached training and storage buildings are also proposed between the main building and the existing trees along the boundary with Sidmouth Road. A total of 42 parking spaces are proposed (of which two are designated for disabled use). The ground floor accommodates the practical facilities associated with provision of a Fire Service, the middle floor houses the backup and welfare accommodation such as rest areas, dining room, kitchen and lecture room, and the top floor provides administrative functions, training and the Community Fire Safety Operations base.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT

The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Archaeological Assessment, Design Statement and Green Transport Plan.

REPRESENTATIONS

1 letter of objection has been received raising concerns about further noise pollution from sirens, additional congestion at Middlemoor roundabout and highway safety implications in context of proximity of pedestrian crossings and nearby school.

CONSULTATIONS

South West Water - Initially raised an objection to the drainage strategy for the removal of surface water from this site. However, following submission of a revised drainage strategy/Flood Risk Assessment which addresses the concerns their objection has been withdrawn.

Environment Agency - Raise two concerns in respect of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment in terms of its design and capacity. Recommends no decision is made until these matters are clarified.

Highways Agency - No objection in principle. Comments on the Travel Plan in respect of monitoring, review and mitigation arrangements and possible need for a Transport Assessment. Following further clarification the Highways Agency has accepted that there is no need for a Transport Assessment in respect of this application.

County Director of Environment, Economy and Culture - Observations awaited.

Head of Leisure and Museums - supports the paragraph on Wildlife 6.0 and 6.1 in the Design Statement which states " The southern corner of the site would be designated as a wildlife area. It will be managed in order to encourage native species of fauna and flora as agreed by Exeter City Council. This will include provision of nest boxes for birds and bats." Expresses

concern that this is a missed opportunity to enhance other parts of the development particularly the buildings. Supports use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Recommends condition regarding Wildlife Plan.

PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE

Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016

ST1 - Sustainable Development
ST10 - Exeter Principle Urban Area
CO6 - Quality of New Development
CO8 - Archaeology
CO9 - Biodiversity and Earth Science Diversity
TR1 - Devon Travel Strategy
TR4 - Parking Strategy, Stands and Proposals
TR10 - Strategic Road Network and Roadside Service Areas

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011

L5 - Loss of Playing Fields
T1 - Hierarchy of Modes
T10 - Car Parking Standards
C5 - Archaeology
L3 - Protection of Open Space

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS9 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPS23 - Planning and Pollution Control
PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk
PPG13 - Transport
PPG16 - Archaeology and Planning
PPG24 - Planning and Noise

OBSERVATIONS

The current application seeks approval of reserved matters pursuant to the outline consent granted under application 04/1467/01.

The main issues in respect of the application relate to the visual impact of the development/design, its relationship to surrounding trees and buildings and highway implications.

Visual Impact/Design

The originally submitted drawings were not considered satisfactory from a design point of view both in terms of the building itself and its layout in relation to the parking areas and the access road. The position of the main entrance to the building was not clearly evident and overall the design was considered weak.

Following the Working Party negotiations have taken place and revised plans have been submitted. During negotiations the Fire Service were keen to point out that there were significant operational factors that had dictated elements of the design, particularly in respect of the alignment of the appliance bays to the road. Nonetheless the revised plans have resulted

in a reorientation of the building and changes to the parking layout. This has enabled the creation of a better setting to the building and more legible main entrance which has been emphasised by the addition of a glazed canopy. The new access road now terminates in a landscaped area rather than a tarmac surface running up to the new boundary created with the police playing fields.

A variety of materials will be used on the hard surfaced areas to differentiate between the vehicle circulation areas, parking spaces and pedestrian circulation routes. A different type and layout of paving materials will also be introduced around the main entrance to the building to add further emphasis to the glazed canopy. These changes have also created the opportunity for further landscaping and the introduction of a small piece of public art in front of the building.

In terms of the building itself the original approach of shallow pitched roofs has been replaced with a gentle curved structure over both the main building and the appliance bays. The Fire Service emblem has been introduced to the north-east and north-west elevations. Whilst the changes are modest it is considered that they constitute an improvement upon the original submission.

Relationship to surrounding buildings

The site is well separated from surrounding buildings. The nearest buildings on the Middlemoor complex itself are separated from the site by the existing playing pitches. The nearest residential dwellings are separated from the site by Sidmouth Road and the significant mature trees on either side of the road. Consequently it is not felt that the proposal would have any impact on the amenities of the nearest residential properties by virtue of its massing/bulk. In the context of the sites isolated position it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of its relationship to the surrounding area.

Relationship to Trees

The layout proposed is clear of the Tree Protection Areas and should not therefore have any significant adverse impact upon the existing tree cover surrounding the site. The detailed drainage and service arrangements will also need careful consideration and will need to be conditioned for approval prior to commencement of works.

Highway Matters

The position of the access into the site was fixed as part of the outline approval. In approving the outline the principal of a new Fire Station with access from Sidmouth Road, and its associated highway implications were accepted. Within this reserved matters application the internal vehicle circulation arrangements and parking provision form the main considerations. In response to the Highways Agency comments the applicant has clarified the potential trip generation associated with the proposal and the level is such that a Transport Assessment would not be required in respect of this reserved matters application.

The proposal incorporates 42 parking spaces and the need for this level of parking provision is addressed in the Green Transport Plan and comprises spaces for the Station and Group Commander, 12 for trainees (usually from outside the area), 2 for fire service vans, 2 disabled spaces and 24 to serve the fire crews and support staff present in the station at any one time. The justification for the level of parking provision indicated seems reasonable. The revised plans have improved the disposition of the spaces relative to the building.

Southern Area Working Party 17/10/07

Whilst welcoming the proposal for an additional Fire Station in principle Members expressed strong concerns regarding the design and layout of the proposal. It was considered that the submitted design represented a missed opportunity and was not of a sufficient standard for them to support an approval. Members requested that Officers seek to negotiate an improved design. The Chair also undertook to write to colleagues on the Fire Authority Board to encourage a re-appraisal of the design approach.

Southern Area Working Party 21/11/07

Members noted the improvements to the design and layout of the proposal. It was noted that the application would be placed before the Planning Committee for determination with an officer recommendation of approval.

Conclusions

Although individually the changes are all fairly modest they combine to represent an improvement upon the original submission. The relationship of the building to the new road and legibility of the entrance are improved and the proposal is now considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-

- 1) C15 - Compliance with Drawings
- 2) The development hereby approved shall not commence until details of the proposed finished floor levels and overall ridge heights of the dwelling/building(s), in relation to an agreed fixed point or O.S datum have been submitted to, and been approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and the residential amenities of the occupants of surrounding properties.
- 3) C12 - Drainage Details
- 4) C17 - Submission of Materials
- 5) C38 - Trees - Temporary Fencing
- 6) C35 - Landscape Scheme
- 7) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a detailed Wildlife Plan identifying specific measures to protect existing wildlife on the site, and to enhance the wildlife opportunities within the site, shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the measures identified in the Wildlife Plan shall be fully implemented prior to occupation of the building and be maintained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure that the wildlife opportunities associated with the site are maximised in the interests of biodiversity.
- 8) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a Green Travel

Plan identifying specific measures to encourage a modal shift away from the use of the private motor car associated with the use of the building shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall specify the arrangements for reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of Travel Plan.

Reason: To ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport in connection with the use of the building.

- 9) All conditions imposed on notice of outline approval (ref no. 04/1467/01) are hereby reiterated in as much as they relate to the development and have yet to be discharged in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the rights of control by the Local Planning Authority in respect of the reserved matters.

- 10) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved full details of the new drainage outlet from the site to Sidmouth Road shall be submitted to, and be approved on writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be completed strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed drainage outlet is acceptable in terms of its potential impact on the existing trees/vegetation along the frontage to Sidmouth Road.

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