

Planning Committee Report - 20/1685/OUT

- 1.0**
- Application Number:** 20/1685/OUT
Applicant name: University of Exeter
Proposal: Outline planning application to build a replacement Estates Services Centre and ancillary buildings and structures, with associated infrastructure and landscaping (*All Matters Reserved*).
Site address: Land at Rennes Drive, University of Exeter, Exeter
Registration Date: 10 December 2020
Link to application: <http://publicaccess.exeter.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QL4R5YHBKVS00>
Case Officer: Paul Jeffrey
Ward Members: Cllr K Mitchell, Cllr M Mitchell and Cllr M Pearce (Duryard and St James Ward)

REASON APPLICATION IS GOING TO COMMITTEE: Major application with over 10 emails/correspondence of objection.

- 2.0** **Summary of Recommendation:** DELEGATE to GRANT permission subject to conditions as set out in report.

- 3.0** **Reason for the recommendation:** as set out in Section 18

- Site lies within the University of Exeter Streatham Campus Masterplan December 2010 identified for development.
- Provide improved facility to meet the ground and landscape maintenance requirements of the university campus
- The location is considered to be sustainable and the proposal is acceptable in its design and general visual impact.
- The scale of development is appropriate within the setting of the University campus and its wider landscape setting.
- The proposal is not considered to cause any significant harm to the residential amenity of nearby occupant's properties.
- Suitable conditions can be imposed to mitigate the impact of the development to occupants of existing residential properties in the area.
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application.

4.0 Table of key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Site lies within the University of Exeter Streatham Campus Masterplan December 2010 identified for development
Impact on the landscape	The scale of development is appropriate within the setting of the University campus and its wider landscape setting
Impact on residential amenity	Suitable conditions can be imposed to mitigate the impact of the development to occupants of existing residential properties in the area
Sustainable Design	The location is considered to be sustainable and the proposal is acceptable in its design and general visual impact.
Ecological Issues	Limited impact. Scheme to incorporate appropriate mitigation and enhancement including 10 metre wildlife buffer.

5.0 Description of Site

The relocated Estate Service Centre is proposed on land to within the north eastern part of the campus to the south of Belvidere Road and west of the Exeter Community Garden. The site is currently being used by the ground services team for storage of green waste, spoil and equipment. It was previously used on a temporary basis in connection with the development of student accommodation at the nearby East Park. The site slopes from its highest point at the north western corner (111m AOD) to the south eastern corner (99m AOD). The western side of the site contains a mature band trees separating the site visually from the reservoir beyond. The northern boundary contains a mature row of trees, which lie to the south of Belvidere Road with Belvidere Meadow Local Nature Reserve and woodland beyond. To eastern edge of the site is the Community Garden which contains vegetable beds, polytunnels and greenhouse. A public footpath forming part of the Green Circle is located to the eastern edge of the Community Garden. An additional area of University land containing mature deciduous trees is located beyond this public footpath and forms the boundary with existing residential properties in Hillcrest Park. The rear garden boundaries of these properties would be located approximately 50 metres from the eastern boundary of the site. The distance from the rear of the dwellings is

approximately 100 metres. Due to the topography of the Hillcrest Park, properties on the eastern side of this road are elevated and also have a view of the application site through the existing deciduous trees. These properties would be located approximately 140 metres from the eastern boundary of the site. The southern boundary contains existing mature trees and shrubs with open green space beyond.

Access to the site would be within the campus from Rennes Drive to the south western corner of the site closest to the new decked Car Park B.

6.0 Description of Development

This outline planning application is for a new estate services centre comprising of offices, workshops, glasshouses, polytunnels, growing areas and storage buildings, associated infrastructure and landscaping with all matters reserved. However the applicant has provide significant illustrative material, which provides details of the access location; layout including position of storage areas, parking and vehicular turning/circulation space and proposed buildings/structures required in connection with the use. Whilst the details of these are not for consideration as part of this outline planning application, they are helpful to the overall assessment of the scheme's impact and appropriateness within this location.

Access to site is to be created through the existing and widened entry point within the south western corner of the site. To maximise the area for level ground, highlighted as a specific requirement for the new service centre, two main terraced areas are proposed within the site. Given the sloping nature of the site a significant cut and fill operation will be required. The lower service yard and upper terraced area are delineated by a retaining wall. The supporting information indicates that this will be constructed using devon bank/ gabion basket approach. The retaining wall is indicated to be approximately 2 metres in height. The lower yard will contain open hoppers to the western section of the yard for green waste storage. The central and southern area of the yard will provide vehicular access and circulation with the new estate service centre building located to the eastern side of the site.

The new building would contain workshop (including vehicular inspection pit) and staff facilities (i.e. changing rooms, lockers, drying rooms and WCs) at ground floor with storage, a smaller workshop area, welfare (staff kitchen, WCs) and offices/meeting rooms on the upper floors. The building would comply with accessibility regulation (including a lift) and be built using Passivhaus principles. The illustrative drawings indicate a building 17 metres by 7 metres with an overall height of 5 metres. The proposed design indicates a building with a green roof on the higher mono pitched eastern side and an essentially flat roof with solar panels on the western side. No windows are proposed within the eastern elevation of the building with the majority of the building facing inwardly

overlooking the service centre yard and parking area. Staff access to wc/showers is also provided to the south of the building and an access is provided from the first floor of the building onto the upper terrace.

The upper section of the site contains the horticultural elements of the service centre including greenhouse and polytunnels and an open growing area. These buildings are single storey and even allowing for the raised area where they are proposed to be located would be no higher than the two storey service yard building located on the lower terraced, as depicted in the illustrative plans submitted.

The boundary of the site will be secured by a new boundary fence and a 10 metre landscape/ecology buffer including trees and wildflower is proposed around the perimeter of the site, which is stated to be artificial light free.

The applicant has stated that the existing estates services centre is approximately 4000 sq metres in site area with proposed centre at Rennes Drive to be approximately 6080 sq metres. In terms of the split of uses, the polytunnel/greenhouse area is approximately 100 sq metres larger at the proposed centres compared to the existing facility. The main increase is the open yard area, i.e. providing additional circulation space, which means less reversing of vehicles on site. The applicant has stated that the existing Estates Services Centre has evolved over many decades and is currently outdated. The replacement facility is not intended to intensify the uses at the site, but would just provide more room for the existing staff to operate and to maintain the campus grounds.

7.0 Supporting information provided by applicant

The application is accompanied by the following supporting information:

- Planning, Design & Access Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Illustrative Masterplan
- Landscape and Biodiversity Parameter Plan
- Landscape Appraisal
- Arboricultural Constraints Report
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Ecological Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Heritage Statement
- Lighting Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Energy and Passivhaus Report
- Transport Statement
- Utilities Infrastructure Assessment Report

8.0 Relevant Planning History

There are no relevant planning application relating to this site.

9.0 List of Constraints

Smoke Control Area

10.0 Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the Council's website.

Natural England has no comment to make on this application. The lack of comment from Natural England does not imply that there are no impacts on the natural environment, but only that the application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes. It is for the local planning authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national and local policies on the natural environment.

South West Water comment that no development will be permitted within 3 metres of the water main. The water main must also be located within a public open space and ground cover should not be substantially altered. Should the development encroach on the 3 metre easement, the water main will need to be diverted at the expense of the applicant. South West Water is able to provide foul sewerage services from the existing public foul or combined sewer in the vicinity of the site. Having reviewed the applicant's current information as to proposed surface water disposal for its development. The method proposed to discharge into the ground (infiltration) is acceptable and meets with the run-off destination hierarchy.

County Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (Highways) make no comment in respect of this application.

Devon County Council Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team currently raise objection as the scheme does not satisfactorily conform to Policy CP12 (Flood Risk) of the Exeter Core Strategy which requires all developments to mitigate against flood risk and utilise sustainable drainage systems, where feasible and practical. The applicant will therefore be required to submit additional information in order to demonstrate that all aspects of the proposed surface water drainage management system have been considered. The surface water drainage strategy for the new service centre is proposing a tank to attenuate the runoff. The applicant is encouraged to fully explore the use of above ground attenuation in line with best practice for Devon's SuDs Guidance (2017). Above ground systems provide multiple benefits which underground systems do not such as amenity value, biodiversity benefits such as habitat creation and the treatment of runoff to help improve water quality. The agent is currently in discussion with the County Flood officer to address this issue.

Devon County Waste Management comment that paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy for Waste and Policy W4 of the Devon Waste Plan requires major development proposals to be accompanied by a Waste Audit Statement. The application is not supported by any such statement and it is therefore recommended that a condition is attached requiring the submission of a statement at reserved matters stage.

ECC Environmental Health officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of CEMP, noise, lighting, hours of operation and contamination.

ECC Place Making officer raises no objection in principle but makes the following comments in response to further information requested.

The detailed information about the change from green roof to biodiverse roof is informative.

The confirmation that the development platforms will be blended into the landform and the ecology buffer is welcome.

Notes that the intended planting of the central retaining wall has been included in the Landscape and Biodiversity Parameter Plan and that evergreen trees have been included in the area to the east of the centre as part of the parameter plan.

RSPB notes that the developer's ecologist' report includes a recommendation that bird boxes/bricks are integrated into the design of the new buildings. We are aware that if Passivhaus Principles are being applied there may be restrictions on how they will be integrated into the building, we would like to see more details with the reserved matters application

11.0 Representations

41 objection email/letters received. Issues raised:

1. Use/building will have a damaging impact on the visual appearance of the area contrary to development plan policies;
2. Use similar to an industrial unit unsuitable in an area of landscape value and close to residential properties;
3. Too close to existing residential properties in Hillcrest Park and Doriam Close;
4. Loss of green space/green buffer;
5. Existing and proposed tree screening will be inadequate to mitigate the visual impact of the use/buildings;
6. Existing car parking lighting/sports pitch lighting has highlighted the insufficient screening available;
7. Noise pollution from motorised vehicles, shredders, reserve beeping all amplified by the natural amphitheatre of the site;
8. Detrimental impact on flora and fauna including deer, foxes, badgers, bats, moths and owls;
9. Impact of light pollution on wildlife particularly given sites proximity to protected wildlife areas;

10. Unacceptable accumulation of development in the area from the recent approvals of East Park and Car Park B;
11. Insufficient information within the submission to satisfy resident's concerns about the impact of the development on their existing amenities;
12. Concern over the use of heavy vehicles using the site and causing congestion in the nearby roads;
13. Glare of glass roofs adversely affecting residential amenity;
14. Alternative site for the facility should be found on the campus away from residential properties;
15. Activity will extend beyond normal working hours given the nature of the site;
16. Unconvinced that the University will adhere to any planning conditions given experience of the East Park development;
17. Increase in traffic noise from the campus;
18. Lighting and noise report considered inadequate/inaccurate and overly technical;
19. Further noise and disturbance during building work; a continuation of the East Park development;
20. Two storey building unacceptable in this open setting;
21. Inadequate public consultation;
22. Inadequate sound mitigation measure proposed as part of the scheme;
23. Loss of open green space on the University campus having a negative effect on the wider surrounding landscape;
24. Loss of green/wildlife link through the campus;
25. Topography of site means that residents will have a clear view of use/buildings adversely affecting their outlook;
26. Lack of a waste plan accompanying the application;
27. Impact on adjacent community garden through noise pollution, fumes and oil/grease run off;
28. Ecological report incomplete no information on protective species.

Design Review Panel 20 February 2020

The Panel is supportive of this and considers it will contribute to the creation of successful and attractive campus. In the spirit of helpfulness it is suggested the proposal could further consider the need for long term future expansion. It is felt there may be an opportunity to re-orientate the eastern boundary building, as this may allow for further expansion of the service yard. It is recognised the proposed building creates a barrier, however the Panel also note the provision of planting to provide screening between the service yard site and adjacent neighbouring properties.

Consideration should be given to the potential for glare from the proposed greenhouses. It is noted that the separation distances between the proposed greenhouses and any other buildings amenity spaces may be sufficient to prevent this from being considered problematic. However it may be helpful to demonstrate this at this design process. It is suggested that it may be beneficial for the proposed Estates Service Centre to utilise off-site manufacturing; this may

represent a good opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of this, may help with the delivery programme and may also help to reduce the carbon footprint of the proposals. It is felt there is an opportunity for the introduction of further renewable energy measures within this element of the proposals.

The cut and fill approach to the proposed Estates Service Centre, proposed so as to minimize off-site waste is supported in principle. However it is noted that this area has already facilitated the redistribution of infill from the adjacent car park site and this should be acknowledged within the proposal.

12.0 Relevant Policies

Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

2. Achieving sustainable design
3. Plan making
4. Decision-making
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed places
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Adopted 21 February 2012)

CP11 – Pollution

CP14 - Using Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Development

CP15 - Sustainable Construction

CP16 – Landscape Setting

CP17 - Design and Local Distinctiveness

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011 (Adopted 31 March 2005)

E4 - Exeter University Campus

The development of education uses, student housing and research and development initiatives, including ancillary production, will be permitted on the University of Exeter Campus provided that the character and setting of the Campus is protected.

T3 - Encouraging Use of Sustainable Modes

C4 – Historic Park and Garden

C5 - Archaeology

EN2 - Contaminated Land

EN3 - Air and Water Quality

EN4 - Flood Risk

EN5 – Noise

EN6 – Renewable Energy

DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design

DG2 - Energy Conservation

DG7 - Crime Prevention and Safety

LS1 - Landscape Setting

Development which would harm the landscape setting of the city will not be permitted. Proposals should maintain local distinctiveness and character.

LS4 - Local Nature Conservation Designations

Development that would harm a site of nature conservation importance or a site of local interest for nature conservation...or landscape features which are of importance for wild fauna and flora, or wildlife corridors will only be permitted subject to the following;

a)the need for the development is sufficient to outweigh the nature conservation considerations; and

b)the extent of any damaging impact is kept to a minimum and appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures are implemented.

Devon Waste Plan 2011 – 2031 (Adopted 11 December 2014) (Devon County Council)

W4 – Waste Prevention

W21 – Making Provision for Waste Management

Development Delivery Development Plan Document (Publication Version, July 2015)

This document represents a material consideration but has not been adopted and does not form part of the Development Plan and therefore carries limited weight.

DD1 – Sustainable Development

DD20 – Accessibility and Sustainable Movement

DD28 – Conserving and Managing Heritage Assets

DD29 Landscape Setting Areas

'Development within the Landscape Setting Areas will only be permitted where:

a) there is no harm to the distinctive characteristics and special qualities of the landscape setting of the City and the wider area; and

b) it does not contribute towards the urbanisation of these areas;...'

DD30 – Green Infrastructure

DD31 – Biodiversity

DD33 – Flood Risk

DD34 – Pollution and Contaminated Land

Exeter City Council Supplementary Planning Documents

University of Exeter Masterplan Development 2010

8.2.2 Areas with potential for development

Zone C These areas lie on the relatively flat upper plateau above the 100m contour. Development in these areas may be visually sensitive. Development here will primarily be limited to low level buildings, sports use and strategic car parking.

Sports Park

8.3.2 This comprises the areas of landscape along the upper ridge of the campus. The key management aim is to retain the existing areas of tree groups and woodlands to provide a landscape framework for the sports pitches and to retain the wooded hill top image of the University campus. Green links to the surrounding countryside will be retained.

Belvedere Park

8.6.10 Any future development proposals in that part of the area lying east of the reservoir are subject to policy LS1 of the adopted Exeter Local Plan

Trees in relation to Development September 2009

Other documents

Net-Zero Exeter 2030 Plan July 2020 to inform all policy documents, plans and corporate decision making in response to the Climate Emergency and in pursuance of the goal to make Exeter a carbon neutral city by 2030

13.0

Human rights

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property

The consideration of the application in accordance with Council procedures will ensure that views of all those interested are considered. All comments from interested parties have been considered and reported within this report in summary with full text accessible via the Council's website.

It is acknowledged that there are certain individual properties where there may be some adverse impact and this will need to be mitigated as recommended through imposing conditions to ensure that there is no undue impact on the home and family life for occupiers. However, any interference with the right to a private and family life and home arising from the scheme as result of impact on residential amenity is considered necessary in a democratic society in the interests of the economic well-being of the city and wider area and is proportionate given the overall benefits of the scheme in the provision of homes, including affordable housing and economic benefits.

Any interference with property rights is in the public interest and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 regime for controlling the development of land.

This Recommendation is based on consideration of the proposal against adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

14.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard in particular to the need to:

- a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove OR minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has had due regard to the matters set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

15.0 Financial benefits

The requirements to set out the financial benefits arising from a planning application is set out in s155 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. This requires that local planning authorities include financial benefits in each report which is:

- a) made by an officer or agent of the authority for the purposes of a non-delegated determination of an application for planning permission; and
- b) contains a recommendation as to how the authority should determine the application in accordance with section 70(2) (of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

The information on financial benefits must include a list of local financial considerations or benefits of a development which officers consider are likely to be obtained by the authority if the development is carried out including their value if known and should include whether the officer considers these to be material or not material.

16.0

Planning Assessment

1. Principle of the Proposed Development

This proposal relates in part to the student accommodation scheme (Ref [20/1684/OUT](#)) on the Streatham campus as approval of this application would remove the existing estates service centre to be redeveloped for purpose built student accommodation. However the consideration of the application for the new service centre must be assessed on its own individual planning merits.

It is recognised that the estate service centre provides an essential on-site function for the University. The substantial tree cover and green space on the campus requires ongoing maintenance and the presence of this onsite facility ensures that issues can be dealt with 'in house' and the current attractive landscape setting for campus continues. It is accepted that the existing facility is dated and a new centre would provide better facilities for staff within a more energy efficient building. Consequently whilst it is considered that a new service centres is acceptable on the campus, specific assessment is required to determine whether the proposed site is appropriate. Consideration is needed as to the use and building's impact on the landscape character, residential amenities and the wildlife/habitat in the area and its appropriateness against the development plan policies. Assessment of the proposal is made on the acceptability of this site rather than whether other sites are more appropriate, as suggested by some residents. In addition, given the application is for outline condition with all matters reserved it is the principle of the development which is to be assessed rather than the details contained within the submitted application, which are to be treated as for illustrative purposes only.

The site has been used in association with University related activities for many years without the need for planning permission, as the works undertaken were either of a temporary nature or did not constitute development. These included the temporary storage of materials from the campus and more recently as a temporary site compound in connection with works at Car Park B and the East Park student accommodation scheme, the latter of which is still ongoing. These activities did not require planning permission being defined as; ancillary uses in associated with the University's primary function; not defined as development or permitted development in association with approved works. Clearly the creation of a purpose built permanent estate service centre and associated structures does not fall within any of these categories.

The application site lies outside the University campus as designated in the Exeter Local Plan Policy E4 but is refer to in the Streatham Campus Masterplan as an area where *limited to low level buildings, sports use and strategic car parking* may be appropriate. This document does highlight the visual sensitivity of the site and the need to ensure that the backdrop of the existing trees, which forms the boundary with the Belvidere Local Nature Reserve is maintained. The

site is located within land designated for landscape setting under Policy LS1 of the Exeter Local Plan and consequently development which '*...harm the landscape setting of the city will not be permitted. Proposals should maintain local distinctiveness and character...*' The site falls within an area of local interest for nature conservation covered by Local Plan Policy LS4 and part of the historic parks and gardens within Policy C4, although these designations are applicable to the whole of the University campus. The landscape importance of the site is further recognised within Core Strategy CP16 which maintains the site's status as an area of landscape protection. Given government advice which still identified the development plans as the starting point for planning decision, the policy position represents an important consideration. Recent appeal decisions have effectively weakened the status of landscape policy LS1 giving it limited weight but conversely these decisions have recognised that Core Strategy Policy CP16 carries full weight. However the assessment of the application needs to consider the development plan as a whole and identify a development's specific impact on the landscape character on the area. It is not appropriate to view the landscape policies of Local Plan Policy LS1 and Core Strategy Policy CP16 as a blanket restriction to development in these designated areas.

2. Impact on the landscape

The site is located within the highest parts of the campus and as recognised by the University Masterplan represents a sensitive location where the existing landscape is an integral part of the University's setting. The terraced approach has sought to create two distinct level areas to serve the storage, parking, circulation and the two storey building on the lower level with the single storey greenhouses and polytunnels on the higher level. It is noted that the two storey office/staff/workshop building has a comparable height to the maximum height of the greenhouses/polytunnels on the upper level. In both instances these structures are set below the existing row of trees, which form the southern boundary of Belvidere Road. This reflects the requirements of the Masterplan which seeks to '*...retain the existing areas of tree groups and woodlands to provide a landscape framework...and to retain the wooded hill top image of the University campus*'. In addition, the supporting information indicates more planting would be provided to the boundaries of the site, which will ensure that '*...green links to the surrounding countryside will be retained*' as specified by the Masterplan. This is considered important due to the presence of the Community Garden on land adjacent to the site and the Green Circle public footpath further to the east. The Council's Place Making/Landscape office has assessed the scheme and raises no objection in principle subject to matters of detail being provided at the reserved matters stage.

The application was reported to the Design Review Panel for consideration prior to submission. The Panel were supportive of the scheme (expressing no objection to the site area being expanded for future proofing) and offered comments as to how the scheme could be enhanced at the reserved matters stage. NPPF paragraph 129 states that local authorities should have regard to

the outcome of the recommendations made by design review panels in achieving well designed places. It is accepted that the formalisation of this site with buildings, structures, hardstanding and parking will have a permanent visual impact on the appearance of this site within the context of the wider landscape. However it is considered that suitable care has been taken at this outline stage to indicate that the facility can be integrated successfully without adversely affecting the landscape character of the area. The facility will be set below the trees and ridge that border the campus and consequently unseen from Belvidere Valley Park. The low level buildings will appear set within the landscape and indeed it is considered that the upper appearance of the buildings proposing a green roof and greenhouses/polytunnels provide an appropriate visual appearance within the site designated as important for landscape setting in Core Strategy Policy CP16.

3. Impact on residential amenity

The closest residents to the application site live in Hillcrest Park. Given the topography of this land both sides of this road and residents in Doriam Close are currently able to see through to and down onto the site. The site is separated by trees beyond the rear garden of properties in Hillcrest Park and the Community Gardens owned by the University. The illustrative details submitted with the application indicate the two storey building's location on the eastern section of the site. This has been purposely sited to reduce the visual impact of the storage, parking and vehicular circulation areas when seen from the residential properties. The distance from the rear of the two storey building to the rear of the residential garden boundary is approximately 50 metres. Properties in Hillcrest Park have relatively long rear gardens and therefore the average distance to the rear of the dwelling is approximately 100 metres. The applicant is proposing to plant additional deciduous and evergreen trees to the rear of the proposed building to mitigate its appearance from the east. However notwithstanding these additional trees, it is considered that suitable distance would be retained for the proposed structures and hardstanding not to have an adverse visual impact on residential amenity.

A number of objections have been received in respect of the loss of view across this currently open site. Members are reminded that loss of a view is not a material planning consideration and cannot justify refusal of the application. However the siting and in particular heights of the proposed buildings and structures have been assessed within the context of the site's position within the overall landscape and are considered acceptable.

Residents have likened the proposed estate service yard as being similar to an industrial depot and therefore inappropriate close to residential properties and in an area of landscape importance. However it is notable that the same facility currently operates in closer proximity to existing resident's properties and gardens without objection. Concerns have been raised regarding the noise from traffic manoeuvring within the site and from machinery in connection with the

service centre's functions. The Council's environmental health officer has assessed the proposed operations within this application and considers that subject to specific conditions being imposed the application would mitigate against any significant adverse impact on residential amenity. The applicant has confirmed that the hours of operation would be 7am until 6pm in line with the current service yard, with the earlier time providing staff to access the facility, rather than undertake work which may generate noise disturbance. In response to specific issues raised, the applicant has confirmed that no shredder or chipper will be used at the centre (with this work being carried out at source and stored later at the facility) and a white noise bleepers will replace the normal reversing sounds associated with vehicles. Specific conditions are proposed to address these issues.

It is considered that the type of activity associated with the centre, proposed layout and the imposition of conditions to control the noise and light levels coupled with the proposed additional planting will result in a development, which will undoubtedly alter the current appearance when seen from neighbouring residential properties, but not to an extent which would be unacceptable to residential amenities.

4. Wildlife and ecology

The application has been accompanied by an ecological assessment which addresses existing wildlife within the site. The landscape parameter plan indicates a no light 10 metre wide wildlife buffer which although specific to aid bat movement will be beneficial for all wildlife through the creation of habitat corridors. The RSPB has commented on the need for bird boxes which can be addressed within the proposed ecological management plan. It is noted that protected species are afforded specific protection and it is considered that subject to a condition which ensure the future ecological management in line with the submitted report, the application would be appropriate in this instance.

Other issues

5. Environment Assessment

Some residents have commented that the application was not accompanied by an Environment Statement in accordance with Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations. The local planning authority has provided a screening opinion that concludes that an EIA in this instance is not required. Whilst the proposal requires significant supporting documentation, which has been provided, to make an appropriate assessment in the context of this planning application Members are advised that the Planning Practice Guidance 'Environmental Impact Assessment' states that *'only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development (which this development falls within) will require an assessment...'*. The Guidance goes on to state that it is for the local planning authority to consider whether a proposed development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment.

6. Waste Management

The issue regarding the need for a waste management audit has been highlighted by residents as being absent in the planning submission. As previously stated the application is in outline and therefore all details will be provided for consideration and therefore will require scrutiny at the reserved matters stage. However the County Waste Management team were contacted upon registration and requested that a planning condition is imposed, if the application is approved.

7. Flooding

The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment which states that the site is located within Flood Zone 1, is not within a critical drainage area and has no history of surface water flooding. However the County Flood Officer has raised concern about the lack of detail contained within the report in respect of times of high rainfall and lack of mitigation which incorporate SUDS measures. The applicant is currently discussing this issue with the County Flood officer with the intention of agreeing a suitably worded condition for details to be provided at the reserved matters stage.

8. Lighting from Car Park B

Many residents living in Hillcrest Park have commented on the light intrusive from the new decked car park, which lies beyond the application site. Whilst it is noted that this had given rise to significant objection from residents, it is not a relevant consideration for the assessment of this application. The applicant has commented that the level of lighting for the facility will be low level and not comparable with the requirement of the existing car park. It is considered that a condition which requires details to be submitted will ensure that any issue associated with light pollution from this site is mitigated. It is understood that the University will comment separately in respect of the light intrusion from the car park in the near future.

17.0

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed estate service centre represents an essential facility towards maintaining this attractive university campus. Whilst the proposed site lies within an area of landscape setting, it has previously been identified for potential low level development within the University Masterplan. It is considered that the building's overall layout and height reflect the sensitive nature of this site and will not cause adverse harm to the wider landscape. The proposal to meet Passivhaus requirement is to be welcomed. The scheme has been designed to reduce its impact on residential properties located to the east and the imposition of conditions will help to mitigate any adverse impacts the use will have on residential amenity. Accordingly the recommendation is to approve the application.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1) Approval of the details of the access, layout, scale, appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.

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

2) Application for the approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of five years from the date of the permission and the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of the permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of the approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved whichever is the later.

Reason: To ensure compliance with section 91 - 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the Site Location Plan (dwg no. 019002 Rev P1) and Landscape and Biodiversity Parameter Plan (Figure 1, dated 8th February 2021) as modified by other conditions of this consent.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.

4) No development shall take place until an Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The Management Plan shall indicate;

a) how the existing biodiversity of the site will be protected, in accordance with all relevant legislation;

b) how the proposed development and associated works will enhance wildlife in the area and

c) how the landscaped area is to be managed to include an ecological clerk of works and shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for review on a 24 month basis unless otherwise agreed in writing;

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation.

5).No development shall take place until a Detailed Arboricultural Method Statement in association with the Tree Protection Plan for the demolition and construction phase of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The final method statement shall incorporate a provisional programme of works; supervision and monitoring details by an Arboricultural Consultant shall proceed in accordance with the measures described in the Arboricultural Method Statement throughout the duration of the works.

Reason - To ensure the continued wellbeing of the trees in the interests of the amenity and environmental quality of the locality.

6) No development (including ground works) or vegetation clearance works shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) The site access point(s) of all vehicles to the site during the construction phase.
- b) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- c) The areas for loading and unloading plant and materials.
- d) Storage areas of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
- e) The erection and maintenance of securing hoarding, if appropriate.
- f) Wheel washing facilities.
- g) Measures to monitor and control the emission of dust and dirt during construction.
- h) No burning on site during construction or site preparation works.
- i) Measures to monitor and minimise noise/vibration nuisance to neighbours from plant and machinery.
- j) Construction working hours and deliveries from 8:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 8:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- k) No driven piling without prior consent from the LPA.

The approved Statement shall be strictly adhered to throughout the construction period of the development.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

7) No development shall take place until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The statement should include details of route of construction traffic vehicles, access arrangements, timings and management of arrivals and departures of vehicles. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and public amenity.

8) No development shall take place on site until a full investigation of the site has taken place to determine the extent of, and risk posed by, any contamination of the land and the results, together with any remedial works necessary, have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The building(s) shall not be occupied until the approved remedial works have been implemented and a remediation statement submitted to the Local Planning Authority detailing what contamination has been found and how it has been dealt with together with confirmation that no unacceptable risks remain.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

9) No development shall take place on site until an investigation has taken place to determine the risk posed by unexploded ordinances and results, together with

any further works necessary, have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved works shall be implemented in full and a completion report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interests of public safety.

10) No development related works shall take place within the site until a written scheme of archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall include on-site work, and off-site work such as the analysis, publication, and archiving of the results, together with a timetable for completion of each element. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved scheme, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the appropriate identification, recording and publication of archaeological and historic remains affected by the development.

11) Pre-commencement condition: Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Waste Audit Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This statement shall include all information outlined in the waste audit template provided in Devon County Council's Waste Management and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved statement.

Reason: To minimise the amount of waste produced and promote sustainable methods of waste management in accordance with Policy W4 of the Devon Waste Plan and the Waste Management and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document. These details are required pre-commencement as specified to ensure that building operations are carried out in a sustainable manner.

12) The applicant shall undertake a noise impact assessment for this application, which shall be submitted and approved in writing prior to commencement of the development. This report shall consider the impact of noise from the development on local receptors and shall include noise from plant and equipment as well as noise from deliveries, communal areas, residents and events. If, following the above assessment, the LPA concludes that noise mitigation measures are required, the applicant shall then submit a scheme of works to ensure that the development does not have a significant negative impact on local amenity. These measures shall be agreed in writing by the LPA and shall be implemented prior to and throughout the occupation of the development.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

13) The level of noise emitted from the site should not exceed a rating noise level (measured in accordance with BS4142:2014) of 42 dB. The noise levels should be determined at the nearest noise sensitive premises. The measurements or assessment should be made at free field locations representing facades of the

nearest noise sensitive premises, or via a combination of measurement and propagative calculation.

Reason : In the interests of residential amenity.

14) Prior to the commencement of the development an assessment of the impact of all external lighting associated with the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment should address the impact of the lights (including hours of use) on the nearest receptors. Thereafter the lighting shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the specifications within the assessment.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

15) The use hereby permitted shall not be carried out outside the hours of 07.00 and 18.00 (excluding emergency activities, such as gritting estate roads and paths) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.

16) No external lighting is to be used within the application site outside the hours specified in condition 14 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.

17) No chipping or shredding of green/brown waste is to take place within the application site unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.

18) Only white noise reversing alarms shall be operated on vehicles operated or owned by the Applicant unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.

19) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use until secure cycle parking facilities have been provided and maintained in accordance with details that shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and retained for that purpose at all times

Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities are available for the traffic attracted to the site.

20) The development shall be designed in accordance with Passivhaus Principles. Prior to occupation, or as soon as practicable after occupation, evidence of Passivhaus certification shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with the aims of Policy CP15 of Council's Adopted Core Strategy and in the interests of delivering sustainable development.

21) This consent does not imply the approval of the details of access, siting, layout or design shown on the illustrative masterplan, which must be the subject of a further application for approval of reserved matters.

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