

APPLICATION NO.	11/02835/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	Small Major
REGISTERED	12 December 2011
PARISH	Harwell and Chilton
WARD MEMBER(S)	Margaret Turner, Reg Waite
APPLICANT	Harwell Science & Innovation Campus GP Limited
SITE	Land at Fermi Avenue, Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Harwell
PROPOSAL	Full application for the erection of a 5,165sq m B1 building with 125 parking spaces. Outline application for 0.20 hectares of land for B1 use (layout, scale and appearance reserved).
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	448050 186720
OFFICER	David Rothery

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is a hybrid application in that it is a part full and a part outline application.
- 1.2 The site lies on the northern side of the main eastern approach road into the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, and within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.3 The application comes to committee as there is a need for an urgent decision and an important issue needs to be addressed by members.
- 1.4 A site location plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The full application element is for a new bespoke office building for research and development purposes. This would be for a gross internal floor area of 4,950sqm on two floors (5,165sqm gross external area), and would be provided with 125 car parking spaces (119 spaces and 6 accessible spaces) and 23 cycle rack spaces (20 for staff and 3 for visitors).
- 2.2 The outline part of the application is for a future extension to the building on 0.20ha of the site to provide a further 2,385sqm of gross internal floor space. This would come with an additional 45 car parking spaces (43 spaces and 2 accessible spaces) and 12 cycle rack spaces (10 for staff and 2 for visitors).
- 2.3 Overall, the fully completed development on the site resulting from both phase 1 and phase 2 would provide a total gross internal floor space of 7,335sqm together with 170 car parking spaces.
- 2.4 The activity being proposed for this development is indicated as being for specialist inorganic, non-metallic, solid material research, development and applications testing. This would include the manufacture of prototype materials and components for use in a wide range of industrial applications.
- 2.5 Some of the processes indicated would include materials preparation facilities such as powder processing, mixing, milling, forming, pressing, furnacing, chemical vapour deposition and finished product shaping. Laboratory facilities would be provided for wet

chemical and instrumental analysis, physical testing and applications testing. Some of the processing equipment would be operated in temperature controlled and clean room environments, with several processes requiring industrial gases, process cooling water and compressed air techniques.

2.6 In support of the application is a Design and Access Statement (2 December 2011).

2.7 Extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Harwell Parish Council – “No objections to this application”

3.2 Chilton Parish Council – “Fully supports this application and has no objections”

3.3 Three representations from neighbouring business interests have been received:

- Two on behalf of Diamond Synchrotron expressing concerns about the potential impact of vibration from the use of presses and other activities in the new building on the operational sensitivities of the diamond synchrotron facility (Director of the Research Complex at Harwell (RCaH) and from Commercial Manager at Diamond Light Source Ltd)
- One on behalf of Rutherford Appleton Laboratory which enthusiastically supports the application (Head of Laboratory Operations)

Specialist consultees responses

3.4 County Highway Engineer – no objection in principle, subject to agreeing a travel plan and securing a financial contribution for two real time information bus shelters.

3.5 County Archaeologist – the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, therefore a field evaluation is required before any development is approved or takes place. A written scheme of evaluation has been agreed, and an update on the programme for carrying out the field evaluation works will be given at the meeting.

3.6 Ecologist – no objections.

3.7 Landscape Architect – the proposed landscape scheme is acceptable subject to providing hedging along the whole of the rear site boundary and making provision for wider planting belts within the car parking area at the front of the site.

3.8 Public Art Officer - The planned expansion of the Harwell research complex is an exciting opportunity for the arts to assist the development and the area. This is the first phase in the expansion programme, so it is advantageous to look at opportunities within the local area that each phase could contribute towards, or each development phase could consider incorporating works of art within its own build programme.

3.9 Drainage Engineer – work needs to be carried out in accordance with the flood risk assessment and drainage strategy report submitted with the application.

3.10 Thames Water - no objection on water supply grounds, and public sewers in the vicinity of the site need to be safeguarded to enable operational access.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 There is no planning history on this specific site.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011

- 5.1 Policy DC1 requires new development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings.
- 5.2 Policy DC6 requires hard and soft landscaping to protect and enhance the visual amenities of the site and its surroundings and to maximise nature conservation and wildlife habitat creation.
- 5.3 Policies DC7 and DC8 require necessary waste storage and collection arrangements to be in place and that essential infrastructure is provided.
- 5.4 Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.
- 5.5 Policy NE6 requires new development within the AONB to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.
- 5.6 Policy E7 identifies the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus as a centre for employment growth.

Other policy guidance

- 5.7 Planning Policy Statement 1 : Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
Planning Policy Statement 9 : Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
Planning Policy Statement 10 : Planning for Sustainable Waste Management
Planning Policy Guidance 13 : Transport
Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning
Planning Policy Guidance 24 : Planning and Noise

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Principle

- 6.1 The site lies within the designated Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, therefore the proposed development is acceptable in planning policy terms. The proposed use is compatible with the overall hi-tech specialist employment spectrum that the site is allocated to foster and encourage.

Layout and siting

- 6.2 The layout for both the full and the outline proposal addresses the frontage road to the south of the site. The building is stepped back from the front boundary to allow a landscaped car parking area to the frontage of the site. The service area is located to the rear within a fenced compound and would be accessed from the single access point into the site from Fermi Road.

Access and parking

- 6.3 No issues in regard to parking or access have been raised. The submitted travel plan will need to link into the overall campus travel plan and be updated for the specific needs of the site and users. To assist in sustainable transport provision, two real time information bus shelters are sought through a section 106 agreement.

Drainage and land contamination

- 6.4 There are no drainage or land contamination issues identified to hinder the

development of the site, provided the development is carried out in accordance with the flood risk assessment and drainage strategy report submitted with the application.

Public art

- 6.5 A contribution is sought for the provision of public art for this development as part of a campus wide public art feature.

Other issues – vibration

- 6.6 Concern has been raised by the operators of the UK National Synchrotron Facility (the Diamond Light Source Synchrotron experimental facility) on the grounds of potential vibration from the use of presses and other activities generating vibrations transmitted through the ground which could, it is suggested, require the potential shut-down of the highly precision operational processes at the synchrotron.
- 6.7 Details of the concern and the operational tolerances of the vibration displacement have been requested so that these concerns may be taken into account. Diamond Light Source letter of 18 January 2012 provides an account of the concern raised. The applicant has been advised of these concerns and asked to consider the press operation vibration implications of their equipment and how this can be dampened to limit any ground vibration issues. An update on this issue will be reported at the meeting.
- 6.8 A copy of the Diamond Light Source letter dated 18 January 2012 supporting the development but airing concern on vibration issues is **attached** at appendix 3.
- 6.9 The possible vibration tolerances are at minute levels, namely 0.78 micrometers per second. The issue of possible vibration is not usually at these small levels a planning matter of concern. This is because these levels would be generally not noticeable to the public or cause any concern to structural integrity of buildings.
- 6.10 In retrospect it would have been more practical to have been considered by the Harwell Estate partners when commissioning the roll out of development sites at the Science and Innovation Campus, especially given the highly operational sensitivities of the internationally renown synchrotron operation. However whilst this is still a operational management matter for the Harwell Estate partners, the application has been made and requires a determination as to its planning acceptability.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal is considered to address the requirements of a high technology campus style park development, with a building of bespoke design within a landscaped site.
- 7.2 The operational uses of the building have generated some concern on vibration caused from the use of presses as part of the manufacture and testing of products being developed as part of the business proposed for the site. These matters are in discussion and an update will be provided at the meeting.
- 7.3 Subject to the assessment of an acceptable resolution of any user based operational issues, the proposed development is acceptable within the overall concept of the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **That the decision to grant planning permission be delegated to the head of planning in consultation with the committee chairman, subject to the resolution**

of the vibration concerns raised by the operators of the Diamond Synchrotron, the prior completion of a section 106 agreement to secure contributions to public art and the provision of two real time information bus shelters, and subject to the following conditions:

1 Time limit – Hybrid application (outline and full)

For those parts of the development

- 1) for which full permission has been sought (Phase 1) the development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years from the date of this permission and
- 2) for which outline permission has been sought (Phase 2) the details of the layout, scale and appearance of the development, the landscaping of the site and the means of access to and within the site (the “reserved matters”) shall within a period of three years from the date of this permission, be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development comprising of the outline parts (Phase 2) shall be commenced prior to the approval of all of the reserved matters, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with all of the reserved matters within a period of two years from the date of the last reserved matter approved.

2 Approved plans

This permission shall relate to the submitted application plans and drawings or as subsequently amended as agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

3 Materials (samples)

The development shall be built using only the external materials specified on the forms and/or shown on the approved drawings the subject of this planning permission, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

4 Ground levels

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted a plan showing the existing ground levels of the site and the proposed slab levels of the building to be erected shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

5 Floor space

The development hereby permitted shall not exceed the following gross external floor space:

- 5,165sqm sq metres of Class B1 (a) and (b) office under phase 1; and
2,600sqm sq metres of Class B1 (a) and (b) office under phase 2.

6 Additional floor-space

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order), no mezzanine floor shall be constructed, assembled or inserted in any of the buildings hereby permitted without the prior grant of planning permission.

7 Building height

The buildings hereby permitted shall have ridge heights no higher than 12 metres above existing ground levels.

8 No Piling foundations

Development approved by this permission shall not include the piling of foundations.

9 Restriction on outside storage

No materials, finished or unfinished products or parts, crates, pallets, waste, skips or other items shall be stored or stacked outside any building on the site except within the allocated areas within the fenced and enclosed service yard to the rear of the building.

10 Boundary details

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted and notwithstanding any matters shown on the approved plan(s), full details of the proposed treatment of all external and internal boundaries to the site shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary treatment shall be completed in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of each building to which that treatment relates and forming part of the development.

11 Landscaping scheme (implementation)

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the details as shown on the submitted plans and documentation to a programme ensuring the completion of the scheme during the planting season next following the completion of the building(s), or such other date as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the landscaped areas shall be maintained for a period of 5 years or until established, whichever may be the longer. Any trees or shrubs removed or which in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, are dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size to those originally required to be planted

12 Car parking

The approved parking spaces shall be constructed, drained, laid and marked out in accordance with the specification of Oxfordshire County Council for such works prior to the occupation of the buildings hereby permitted. Thereafter these areas shall be kept permanently free of any obstruction to such use.

13 Visibility splays

Notwithstanding the submitted drawings and prior to work commencing on site details of improvements to the visibility splays at the entrance to the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out in full prior to the occupation of any of the buildings hereby permitted.

14 Drainage details

Development shall not begin until full drainage details have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. These shall include -

1. surface water drainage incorporating sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development,
2. foul water drainage to serve the site,
3. land drainage for open areas, water features and ditches that may be present,
4. work to be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy report produced by Baynham Meikie Partnership reference NSB/8302 rev B dated December 2011

The approved drainage scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed and shall accord with the approved Phasing Plan, or such variations thereof as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority and shall be carried out in full prior to the occupation of any of the buildings hereby approved.

15 **Scheme of Archaeological Investigation**

No development shall take place until an archaeological field evaluation has taken place and the findings submitted in a written report to the local planning authority for approval. The field evaluation shall aim to define the character and extent of the archaeological remains within the application area and thus indicate the weight that should be attached to their preservation so as to minimise or avoiding damage to any archaeology.

Should findings require a more significant study a written scheme of archaeological investigation (including a staged programme of archaeological excavation, mitigation, recording any finds and all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publishing the results) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The approved written archaeological field evaluation findings report and any written scheme of investigation shall be prepared by a competent archaeologist or a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the local planning authority and shall be implemented and maintained during the period of any ground works and subsequent construction taking place.

16 **Land contamination**

Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the District Planning Authority no development approved by this planning permission shall be commenced until:

a) A desktop study has been carried out which shall include the identification of previous site uses, potential contaminants that might reasonably be expected given those uses and other relevant information, and using this information a diagrammatical representation (Conceptual Model) for the site of all potential contaminant sources, pathways and receptors has been produced.

b) A site investigation has been designed for the site using the information obtained from the desktop study and any diagrammatical representations (Conceptual Model). This should be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to that investigation being carried out on the site. The investigation must be comprehensive enough to enable:

- a risk assessment to be undertaken relating to groundwater and surface waters associated on and off the site that may be affected
- refinement of the Conceptual Model
- the development of a Method Statement detailing the remediation requirements

c) The site investigation has been undertaken in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority and a risk assessment has been undertaken.

d) A Method Statement detailing the remediation requirements, including measures to minimise the impact on ground and surface waters, using the information obtained from the Site Investigation has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. This should be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to that remediation being carried out on the site.

17 **Contamination verification report**

Upon completion of the remediation detailed in the Method Statement a report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority that provides verification that the required works regarding contamination have been carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement(s). Post remediation sampling and monitoring results shall be included in the report to demonstrate that the required remediation has been fully met. Future monitoring proposals and reporting shall also be detailed in the report.

18 **Lighting controls**

The pedestal lights hereby permitted to the car park and the access road thereto shall be switched off on any day between the evening closure of the facility on site or 9.00pm which ever is the later and on the succeeding day the opening up of the facility or 7.00am which ever is the later.

19 **Travel plan update**

Prior to the first occupation of the building as hereby approved the an updated travel plan shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The travel plan shall be updated within the overall framework of the Harwell Campus Travel Plan Scheme to reflect present day travel and transit requirements and provision. The updated travel plan shall include regular monitoring, updating and promotional measures to encourage users of the building to embark on sustainable travel choices and shall be actively implemented throughout the occupancy of the building hereby approved.

20 **Wheel wash**

No construction work shall be commenced until a Code of Construction Practice to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority detailing wheel-washing facilities for all construction traffic.

Author / Officer: David Rothery – Major Applications Officer
Contact number: 01235 540349
Email address: david.rothery@southandvale.gov.uk