

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO.

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2 August 2006

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**ERECTION OF 5 No THREE STOREY BUSINESS UNITS WITH
ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING AND LANDSCAPING
3 ACRE SITE, PRINCETON DRIVE, TEESDALE, THORNABY
APPLICATION No 06/0853/FUL
Expires 21 August 2006**

SUMMARY

This application seeks permission for the erection of 5 No three storey business units (office buildings) on a corner site at Princeton Drive and Harvard Way Teesdale, an undeveloped site extending to 1.25 hectares adjacent to Stockton Riverside College. The five units are of a contemporary design with walls finished in a mix of brickwork and curtain glazing and a curved roof finished in aluminium profile sheeting. In total some 6576 sqm (70,785 sq ft) of office floorspace will be provided. The site is part of a larger area previously with outline approval for offices but subsequently developed for education purposes.

The development will utilise the existing vehicular access off Princeton Drive. Overall parking provision is 220 spaces with additional cycle parking provided. Peripheral landscaping is provided principally along the main Princeton Drive frontage

A formal Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan accompany the application. The Highways Agency and the Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy raised concerns about the Transport Assessment and as a result the document has been revised and further comments are awaited. Neighbours have raised concerns about parking and other issues some of which can be resolved by appropriate planning conditions. The landscape architect is concerned that the depth of peripheral planting particularly to Harvard Way is insufficient, but to increase planting depth would mean the loss of parking or a re-design of the layout.

On balance the development is considered satisfactory but traffic concerns need to be resolved before any approval can be granted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that subject to the recently submitted revised Transport assessment being satisfactory to the Highways Agency and the Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy, determination of the application be delegated to the Head of Planning Services and with the approval subject to the following conditions and any others arising from the unresolved highway concerns:

1. ***The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans or as otherwise may be subsequently agreed in writing with the Local Planning authority:***

Drawing numbers: B604 –100 rev D; B604 –101-112

Reason: To define the consent

2. ***A detailed scheme for landscaping and tree and or shrub planting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development authorised or required by this permission is commenced. Such a scheme shall specify types and species, layout contouring and surfacing of all open space areas. The works shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the date of planting die, are removed, become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.***

Reason: To ensure satisfactory landscaping to improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity

3. ***No development shall take place until a schedule of landscape maintenance for a minimum period 5 years has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The schedule shall include details of the arrangements for its implementation. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved schedule***

Reason: In the interests of amenity and the maintenance of landscaping features on the site

4. ***Construction of the external walls and roof shall not commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the structures hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.***

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control details of the proposed development.

5. ***No Development hereby approved shall commence on site until a Phase 1a+b desk study investigation to involve hazard identification and assessment has been carried out, submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The study must identify industry and geologically based contaminants and include a conceptual model of the site. If it is likely that contamination is present a further Phase 2 site investigation scheme involving risk estimation shall be carried out, submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any development hereby approved commences on site.***

Reason: To ensure the proper restoration of the site.

6. ***No development hereby approved shall commence on site until a remediation scheme to deal with contamination of the site has been***

**submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall identify and evaluate options for remedial treatment based on risk management objectives. No Development hereby approved shall commence until the measures approved in the remediation scheme have been implemented on site, following which, a validation report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The validation report shall include programmes of monitoring and maintenance which will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the report.
Reason: To ensure the proper restoration of the site.**

- 7. A survey of the site shall be conducted to test for the presence of landfill gas within the existing ground. The results of this survey shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and written agreement shall be reached over any gas monitoring or control measures, which may need to be exercised.**

Reason: To reserve the rights of the Local Planning Authority to agree these details to ensure the proper restoration/development of the site.

- 8. Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The volume of the bunded compound should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10%. If there is multiple tankage the compound should be at least equivalent to the capacity of the largest tank, or the combined capacity of interconnected tanks plus 10%. All filling points, vents, gauges and sight glasses must be located within the bund. The drainage system of the bund shall be sealed with no discharge into any watercourse, land or underground strata. Associated pipework should be located above ground and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank overflow pipe outlets should be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund**

Reason: to prevent pollution of the water environment.

- 9. Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water, sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and hardstandings shall be passed through an oil interceptor designed and constructed to have a capacity and details compatible with the site being drained. Roof water shall not pass through the interceptor**

Reason: to prevent pollution of the water environment.

- 10. There shall be no discharge of foul or contaminated drainage from the site into either groundwater or any surface waters, whether direct or via soakaways.**

Reason: to prevent pollution of the water environment.

- 11 Floor levels of the building hereby approved shall, as indicated on Drawing No B604-100 rev D, be 5.25m AOD unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: To provide nominal protection from future flooding of the area.

- 12. Development works on site shall not occur outside the hours of 8.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. weekdays, and 8.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. on a Saturday, and there shall be no works carried out on Sundays.**

Reason: In the interest of the occupants of neighbouring premises

- 13. Prior to the occupation of each building hereby permitted, details for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Sustainable Travel Plan for the employees and visitors to the premises shall be submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include proposals to meet the objectives for sustainable travel as set out in the Framework Travel plan accompanying the application, to include: targets for mode share, provision of public transport services, provision for cycling and walking to and from the development site, timescales for implementation, monitoring, reporting on and review of the plan.**

Reason: In the interests of sustainable development and to reduce the impact of development traffic on the adjacent trunk road network.

- 14. The business units hereby permitted shall only be used for uses within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987 or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification.**

Reason: to define the consent and to enable the local planning authority to retain control over the development

The following development plan policies were relevant to the permission hereby granted:

**Stockton on Tees Local Plan policies EN17 TR5, TR6
Tees Valley Structure Plan Policies EMP2 and EMP3
PPG13**

THE PROPOSAL

1. This application seeks permission for the erection of 5 No three storey business units (office buildings) on a corner site at Princeton Drive and Harvard Way Teesdale. It is an undeveloped site extending to 1.25 hectares adjacent to Stockton Riverside College to the north and its new extension currently under construction to the west. Opposite to the south on the other side of Princeton Drive, are grassed mounds forming a screen to the rail line. To the west on the other side of Harvard Avenue is a Nursing Home, north of which are residential properties (Trinity Mews).
2. The site is currently in partial use as a contractor's compound used in the construction of the adjacent college extension, which is nearing completion. The ground level is significantly lower than the college building land and as with the construction of that building, the site will need to be built up to provide a similar floor level and satisfy the requirements of the Environment Agency because of concerns over flooding. The five business units need to have a minimum floor level above 5.00m AOD.
3. The buildings are of a contemporary design with walls finished in a mix of brickwork and curtain glazing and a curved roof finished in aluminium profile sheeting. Three (units 2-4) have a floor space each of 1200 sqm (12,915 sq ft) with the other two units (1 and 5) being slightly larger with each having a floorspace of 1488 sqm (16,014 sq ft). In total some 6576 sqm (70,785 sq ft) of office floorspace will be provided. Four of the units are arranged around a central

hub with the fifth located on the northern part of the site adjacent to the existing car park for Riverside College.

4. The development will utilise the existing vehicular access off Princeton Drive. Overall parking provision is 220 spaces with additional cycle parking provided. Peripheral landscaping is provided principally along the main Princeton Drive frontage where the depth available for planting is over 5m. Along Harvard Avenue the depth varies between 1.5-2.5m and on the other boundaries shared with the college the depth varies between 1-2m. Tree planting within the site along the internal roads is also proposed together with some small areas of soft planting. Also proposed are a number of small "refuse" areas enclosed by wooden fencing, an electricity substation and a security barrier at the entrance.
5. A formal Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan accompany the application.
6. The site is part of an area that has previous approval for office development granted in May 1998 (98/0005/P) but part of that land was subsequently developed as Stockton Riverside College. A further application to develop the remainder of the site for office development (00/2037/P) was withdrawn after initially protracted delays in agreeing the Transport Assessment and subsequently because part of the site was taken over for the new extension to Riverside College that is currently nearing completion. The present application relates to the residual land.

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy

7. HITEP comments:

"In terms of the above application the Application for Planning Permission stipulated that the gross floor space for the proposed development was 6576m². However, the Transport Assessment undertaken by Faber Maunsell in May 2006 stated that the gross floor space for the proposed development was 4650m². Obviously, such a discrepancy will result in higher trip generation to and from the proposed development and therefore have a greater impact on the surrounding road network highlighted within the report. It is for this reason that Stockton Borough Council are unable to comment on this application until this issue is rectified."

8. In response the applicant has revised the Transport Assessment and further comments on the new TA are awaited.

Highways Agency

9. Has requested more technical information on traffic generation and as with the HITEP comments, the applicant has revised the TA to take account of the concerns of the HA. The revised comments of the Agency are awaited.

Landscape officer

10. Comments that the hard and soft landscaping design within the development appears to be well thought out and welcomes the attention to detail along the main road axis within the centre of the site. However, he is critical of the depth of planting strip around the site particularly along the Harvard Avenue where it is only 1.5- 2m wide at the narrowest point. He considers there should be a minimum width of 5m to create a substantial tree belt with a strong mix of trees. However,

he recognises this would require the loss of some parking and suggests the applicant considers the option of reducing the number of units.

The Environment Agency

11. It has no objection in principle but recommends a number of conditions to prevent pollution of the water environment. It also comments about possible past contamination and the proximity of former tip sites.

Environmental Services

12. Also raises the issue of possible past contamination and suggests condition relating to this issue as well as restriction on hours of construction

Northumbrian Water

13. Comments on the need for a separate system of drainage for foul and surface water and that the applicant should be aware that a public sewer affects the site.

Publicity

14. The application has been advertised on site and in the press. Neighbours have been individually notified of the application and two letters of objection have been received from residents in Trinity Mews.

15. The occupant of 26 Trinity Mews is concerned about parking facilities in that local residents already have problems with on street as she considers the surrounding businesses do not have adequate parking. The problem is getting worse and this development would exacerbate things. Also she is concerned that with vehicles spilling out onto the road, cars parked part on and part off the road (as happened elsewhere) could damage the roadside grass verges.

16. The occupant of 11 Trinity Mews makes a number of comments:

- Doesn't consider the site could accommodate more than one unit
- Concerned that the buildings are 4 storey on one elevation and understood maximum height for the area was to be 3 storey.
- Not convinced there is a demand for more units given other vacancies on Teesdale
- No indication of the nature of the use or hours of operation.
- Mix of uses – considers this sector is academic which is helpful in giving residents a respite in the summer.
- Does not agree that the development will only have a slight impact on traffic. Already have major problems at peak time.
- Concerned at light pollution from the street lighting for the development, (20 ft high) the location and numbers of which are not indicated.
- As the site is currently being used by contractors construction Phase 2 of Riverside College is concerned as to where contractor equipment and materials will be sited. Also concerned as to how long the work will take.

17. The Council For The Protection Of Rural England (CPRE) comments:

“Our comment here relates to the design and layout of the buildings. The river is of significant visual importance so any adjacent new build should be of high design value and should enhance the view around and across the river valley, not block or impede this. Position is also important to ensure gaps between the buildings do not function as wind channels. We would like to ensure that sufficient trees are included within the landscaping to minimize the impact of the development.”

PLANNING POLICY

18. Section 54a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that all planning applications have to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area. In this case the Development Plan is the Stockton BC Local Plan, and the Tees Valley Structure Plan.
19. Policy EN17 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan allocates the land at Teesdale as appropriate for a range of uses including industry, commerce, housing, sport, recreation, tourism and education.
20. Policies TR5 and TR6 relate to cycle provision within the site.
21. Policy EMP2 of the Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) states priority will be given to the development of business and industrial premises on brownfield sites which recycle degraded or unused land; are well served by public transport and have good links with footpath and cycleway networks.
22. Policy EMP3 of TVSP states priority will be given to the development and re-use of offices in Town and District Centres.
23. In terms of National Planning policy, regard must be had to various Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes. Of particular relevance is PPG 13 "Transport".

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

24. The application site is allocated for development in the Stockton on Tees Local Plan and planning permission has previously been granted for office building on this site. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle. Offices are clearly an appropriate form of development in this location. The site is also former industrial land, as was the rest of the Teesdale site before regeneration began in the 1990s. As such it complies with policy EMP2 of the Tees Valley Structure Plan. It is noted that policy EMP3 of the same plan states priority should be given to Town and district centres but given the history of the site and other planning policies it is considered that there is a clear justification for the development.
25. Nevertheless, there are a number of issues with the proposal arising from the consultation response and the concerns of local residents, which need to be considered and are material as to whether detailed permission for the scheme can be granted.

Traffic and Parking

26. Traffic generation arising from the scale and type of development proposed and its impact on the existing road network is a key issue and the reason why the application required a formal Transport Assessment (TA) and why a Framework Travel Plan was provided. The original TA submission made with the planning application had a number of deficiencies highlighted by both the HITEP and the Highways Agency. As a result a revised TA has been submitted. As this was only recently received the views of both the HITEP and the HA are still awaited and their response will be set out in an update report to be prepared. Unless their concerns can be satisfied the application as submitted would be resisted on highway grounds.

27. With regard to parking the development proposes the provision of some 220 spaces to serve the overall development. This equates to 1 space per 30 sqm which is the maximum allowed in the Council's Design Guide. Additionally, secure cycle parking is to be provided. Furthermore, the application is supported with a Framework Travel Plan, the intention of which is to provide a framework for fully detailed travel plans to be prepared by the occupiers of each individual building and tailored to reflect the nature of the work conducted by the occupiers. The production of such individual plans can be secured by a planning condition.
28. Given, the scale of parking to be provided; the requirement to provide detailed travel plans to secure measures such as car sharing, encouragement of walking, and the use of public transport; its sustainable location in respect of public transport which includes the nearby Thornaby Rail Station, it is considered that the development should not give rise to any significant on-street parking problems. The residents concerns about such problems should not be realised given the scale of the controls that can be imposed. If it does become an issue as happened previously elsewhere on Teesdale, the Council can seek to impose a traffic regulation order.

Landscaping

29. The landscape officer approves the internal arrangements for landscaping and particularly the attention to detail. However, he has reservations about the depth available for peripheral planting, wanting a minimum of 5m. On the principal elevation onto Princeton Drive, this is proposed but on the other roadside elevation (Harvard Avenue) the depth has dropped to between 1.5 and 2.5m. It would be preferable to have a greater depth of planting but to increase it in this location would mean reducing car parking levels, which is clearly unacceptable, or total redesigning the scheme, potentially losing one the office blocks. Given that on other sites in Teesdale a similar depth of planting has been agreed it is considered that on balance, the arrangement for Harvard Avenue is acceptable. A reasonable amount of planting is still possible and details of planting can be secured by planning condition.

Design and Scale

30. As outlined above, the design of the units is contemporary and the applicant has selected a development strategy involving the construction of a series of smaller units rather than one or two larger blocks as more prevalent on Teesdale. It is understood the reason is that there is a greater demand for these smaller units for single firm occupancy rather than sharing the larger blocks, which can often be difficult to secure full occupancy. In principle this approach is reasonable and more sustainable. The proposal is for a 3 storey development and it is noted one resident is concerned that it is in reality 4 storey. This is not correct. The design involves utilising the space under the curved roof for plant and equipment and has no external windows. Access is by a stair ladder and the room height does not allow use for any other purpose.
31. Overall the design, layout and scale of the development are considered satisfactory.

Other issues

32. Other residual issues raised by the objects and others have been considered. The site has been previously cleared but possible contamination may remain. Full remediation of the site can be secured by planning condition. A planning condition can control hours of working to prevent disturbance to residents at

weekends and at unsocial hours. Notwithstanding, the comment of the objector, details of the location of the internal car park lighting have been provided. The lighting columns are 6m high which is standard for this type of use and have cowls to ensure light projects downwards. Given this and the distance from Trinity Mews (45m) light pollution from the lighting arrangements should be minimal. Issues such as length of construction works and location of site compound (which is permitted development) are not controllable under planning and accordingly not material to the planning decision.

CONCLUSIONS

33. In principle the development proposed is acceptable, however, there is the outstanding issue regarding traffic generation. Accordingly any approval should be subject to the views of the Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy and the Highways Agency and appropriate conditions. If this matter is not satisfactorily resolved it may necessary to refuse the application on grounds of adverse impact on the local road network detrimentally affecting highway safety. In these circumstances, given the constraint that a decision should be made before the next Planning Committee meets, determination of the application should be delegated to the Head of Planning, for a decision to be issued once the outstanding highways issues have been resolved.

Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Financial Implications: None

Environmental Implications: See report

Human Rights Implications: The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Community Safety implications: None

Background Papers: Application files 98/0005/P, 00/2037/P & 06/0853/FUL

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Ward Mandale & Victoria Ward

Councillors Mrs A Norton,
Mrs A Trainer &
S Walmsley