JOINT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

18 October 2023
10.00 am - 1.20 pm

Present: Councillors Bradnam (Chair), S. Smith (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Porrer, Smart, Thornburrow, Cahn, Fane, Hawkins and Stobart

Officers Present:
Strategic Sites Manager: Philippa Kelly
Legal Adviser: Keith Barber
Principal Planning Officer: Mike Huntington
Strategic Sites Team Leader - Emerging Growth Sites: Jonathan Brookes
Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe
Meeting Producer: Sarah Steed

Other Officers Present:
Principal Transport Officer in the Transport Assessment Team: Tam Parry (Cambridgeshire County Council)

Developer Representatives:
Kadans Science Partner: Edward Joslin

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/46/JDCC Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Flaubert (Councillor Levien attended as an alternate).

Apologies were also received from South Cambridgeshire District Councillor R Williams.

23/47/JDCC Declarations of Interest

Item	Councillor	Interest
23/48/JDCC	Baigent	Personal: Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign
23/48/JDCC	Stobart	Personal: Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign

23/48/JDCC	Thornburrow	Personal: Previously worked for the Architectural Team and worked on the detail of the existing building
23/48/JDCC	Bradnam	Personal: County Councillor and District Councillor for the immediate neighbouring area. Discretion unfettered

23/48/JDCC 23/00835/FUL - Taylor Vinters Merlin Place 460 Milton Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 0DP

The Committee received an application for full planning permission.

The application sought approval for the demolition of 2,730 sqm (GIA) office building (use Class E(g)(i)) and erection of 13,096 sqm (GIA) of research and development accommodation (use Class E(g)(ii)), including ancillary accommodation broken down as follows:

i. Office accommodation (4,648 sqm)
ii. Laboratory space (4,388 sqm)
iii. Café (161 sqm)
iv. Ground floor car park incorporating 45 no. car parking spaces (1,047sqm)
v. Plant space (924 sqm)
vi. Cycle parking spaces (276 for staff and 37 for visitors, total 313)
vii. Access and circulation areas, engineering works and footpaths/cycleways
viii. Drainage and servicing infrastructure, and
ix. Hard and soft landscaping.

The Committee received representations in objection to the application from Cambridge Past, Present & Future which was read by the Committee Manager.

The representation covered the following issues:

i. Past Present and Future were Cambridge's largest civic society, who aims to ensure that new development protects and enhances the built and natural environment of the city.
ii. Objected to the proposed development because of the mass and bulk of the proposed building and the visual impact it would have on Milton Road, which was a main approach into Cambridge and Northeast Cambridge.

iii. The application had been objected to by the Cambridge Quality Panel, the City Council Tree Officer, the Greater Cambridge Landscape Officer and Urban Design Officer.

iv. The Quality Panel and the Urban Design Officer objected to the mass of the building. The case officer considered the height of the proposal was in accordance with Northeast Cambridge Area Action Plan. This argument did not overcome the objection to the mass of the building.

v. The building had been described as having three elements: a south tower, a west lab block and an east office block. Did not consider there was sufficient articulation between these elements to break up the mass. There was no significant variation in height across the plot. The additional height of the 'lantern' element is lost beside the roof plant and flues and the east and west elevations have no articulation.

vi. The Quality Panel and the landscape and urban design officers objected to the size of the building being too big for its plot resulting in poor public realm. The case officer argued that the site was not a suitable location for a significant area of public realm. This was a poor response to the objection.

vii. Large buildings required significant space around them. Just because a site was located on a main vehicular thoroughfare did not mean that substandard public realm should be provided. The site was in a central and prominent location in the Northeast Cambridge development, so it was important for it to have high quality public realm.

viii. The Tree officer objected to the loss of thirty-four trees and the lack of space and sunlight to allow retained and new trees to grow to their maturity. The case officer's response was to request S106 contribution towards off-site planting.

ix. Considering the objections to the mass and footprint of the building this was an inappropriate response. A less bulky and smaller building would overcome these objections and allow better landscaping of the trees.

x. Members should give significant weight to the environmental harm, the impact on street view and skyline, the creation of poor public realm and the loss of trees. This harm was not outweighed by the economic and social objective. These objectives could still be met on this site with a better design which would overcome the environmental harm.

xi. Requested that the application was refused as contrary to policies 57 (Design), 59 (Landscape and Public Realm) and 60 (Tall buildings and skyline)

Mr Edward Joslin of Kadans Science Partner addressed the Committee in support of the application.

The Principal Planner, Principal Urban Designer, Principal Transport Officer in the Transport Assessment Team, Strategic Sites Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

i. In consultation with the Sustainability Officer, condition 7 would cover the matter of water usage on site.
ii. Condition 7 required the developer to issue a design stage certificate demonstrating the standard of BREEAM excellence (Building Research Establishment Environment Method) as a minimum standard which included the five water credits in relation to water efficiency.
iii. With regards to Condition 7 there would not usually be the level of detail outlined in the report at this stage of the planning application process. The condition would come before the Planning Officer and be signed off under delegated powers.
iv. The BREEAM requirement included the consideration of water efficiency which would be reviewed by the relevant officers who would assist the applicant to ensure that water efficiency measures on site would be as good as it could be.
v. When a condition had been agreed to follow a particular standard, such as a BREEAM, if that standard changed, the wording of the condition normally stated that if such a rating was replaced then a comparable national measure of sustainability for building design to the equivalent level of measures would be applicable to the proposed development.
vi. Noted the comment that the plant should not be screened but the design should celebrate the energy efficiency panels. Condition 5 covered the external appearance of the building which included the plant.
vii. Was not aware of the end occupier's identity; the final details of the plant were usually tenant specific.
viii. All views of the presentation had been verified, the scale and massing were accurate.
ix. Noted the concerns regarding public realm but there could be a town park immediately opposite the site. There was no guarantee that work would start next year.
x. Could not comment on the business model for the building.
xi. Work on the Northeast Area Action Plan (NEAAP) had been paused pending the outcome of Anglian Water's application for a development consent order for the relocation of the Anglia Water Wastewater

Treatment Plant. Until the (NEAPP) process had been concluded only limited weight could be given to the NEAAP.

xii. Was not aware of the mode share for bus use, train, walking, cycling and car. Suggested the car mode share would be very low, around 7% due the proposed large reduction of car parking spaces on site.

xiii. The area had a welcome connected transport network. The use of the Cambridge North Station had increased steadily since COVID restrictions had lifted. The St Ives to Cambridge Busway was on the network and the greenway to the Waterbeach new town.

xiv. Expected the cycle mode share to be high due to the connectivity of the Chisholm Trail.

xv. It was important to limit the vehicle trips on the A10 south of the A14.

xvi. To mitigate the risk of vehicles parking in residential areas Officers were requesting a contribution towards the implementation of yellow lines.

xvii. The Agricultural Impact Assessment showed the root area of the existing trees close to the boundaries and new trees would have more room to grow.

xviii. Acknowledged that the tree removal plan showed two trees on the north side of the bicycle sheds but were not depicted on the verified views displayed.

xix. The height of the main part of the building would be 24.36 metres high with the upper roof and lantern at 30.55 metres high.

xx. Was reasonable to have some car parking on site, the number of 45 spaces was very low for up to 600 employees.

xxi. The application had provided 43% of cycle parking which Officers deemed as very good meeting local plan standards for both the City and the District Councils.

xxii. The upper tier of the two-tier cycle racks were hydraulic which would aid the user. There was a good provision of Sheffield cycle racks.

xxiii. The City Council had guidance on the type of cycle parking which should be provided on developments; the applicant had met that guidance.

xxiv. Noted the comment that there should be space for the public Voi scooters to be left on site.

xxv. There was no Infrastructure Delivery Plan carrying more than limited weight; the plan was yet to be reviewed and adopted. It was appropriate to consider the infrastructure contributions including S106 funding against the relevant testing which was set out under the Planning Obligation section of the Officer's report at paragraphs 21.7 to 21.13.

xxvi. The S106 contributions had been considered and agreed by Officers to be acceptable.

xxvii. The junction at the northern leg of Cowley Road would be narrowed including the approach to the junction. A tiger crossing would be installed in that area of Cowley Road which would change the highway, slowing vehicles down.

xxviii. Visibility testing had taken place to determine the best location for the pedestrian crossing shown on the Officer's presentation, which was deemed to fit with the Waterbeach to Cambridge Greenway design.

xxix. The footpath from the pedestrian crossing around the site would be widened providing improved access for cyclists to the ramp down to the cycle parking. Once on the ramp, cyclists would be slowing down or getting off their bikes ready to park.

The Committee:

Resolved by 6 votes to 5 to defer the application (a) for want of further information/clarity from the applicant; and (b) to allow the applicant to reflect upon and provide further details to Officers on the following points raised by Members:

i. The access to the building for pedestrians and cyclists (including those with limited mobility) should be improved.
ii. A R-review of proposed cycle paths and navigation; cycle parking facilities, evaluate car parking arrangements.
iii. To adopt an active transport led cycle first approach and that consideration given to provide scooter parking.
iv. A public realm review which should have regard to landscaping and the need to retain existing landscape features wherever possible.
v. Building design, massing, colour and use of materials specifically in regard to its relationship with the surroundings and to overheating.

The production of an updated sustainability strategy and water efficiency providing details of existing and proposed water use with further details of infrastructure requirements to ensure delivery of the water efficiency credits

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm

CHAIR