

**Application 16/01778/MMA**

**Planning, Transport & Sustainability Division  
Planning and Rights of Way Panel (West) 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
Planning Application Report of the Planning and Development Manager**

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| <b>Application address:</b><br>224 Portswood Road, part of the former Portswood Bus Depot, at the junction of Portswood Road and Belmont Road, Southampton.   |                                   |                             |   |
| <b>Proposed development:</b><br>Development of the site to provide 330 Purpose Built Student Accommodation flats (435 bed spaces) in three buildings of between 3-storey's and 6-storey's plus lower ground floor level with vehicle access from Belmont Road and associated landscaping. |                                   |                             |   |
| <b>Application number</b>   | 15/01158/FUL                      | <b>Application type</b>     | FUL   |
| <b>Case officer</b>   | Jenna Turner                      | <b>Public speaking time</b> | 15 minutes                                  |
| <b>Last date for determination:</b>   | 28.10.2015                        | <b>Ward</b>                 | Portswood                                   |
| <b>Reason for Panel Referral:</b>   | Major application with objections | <b>Ward Councillors</b>     | Cllr O'Neill<br>Cllr Claisse<br>Cllr Norris |

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| <b>Applicant:</b> Orchard Homes (Portswood) Ltd | <b>Agent:</b> Paris Smith LLP |
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| <b>Recommendation Summary</b> | <b>Delegate to Planning and Development Manager to grant planning permission subject to criteria listed in report</b> |
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| <b>Community Infrastructure Levy Liable</b> | <b>Yes</b> |
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**Reason for granting Permission**

The development is acceptable taking into account the policies and proposals of the Development Plan as set out below. Other material considerations including parking pressure, impact on neighbouring amenity, design and character; and the loss of the post office and gym on the site have been considered and are not judged to have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application, and where applicable conditions have been applied in order to satisfy these matters. The scheme is judged to be in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and planning permission should therefore be granted. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority offered a pre-application planning service and has sought to

work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner as required by paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). “Saved” Policies – SDP1, SDP4, SDP5, SDP7, SDP9, SDP10, SDP11, SDP12, SDP13, CLT5, CLT6, H1, H2, and H7 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review – Amended 2015 as supported by the adopted LDF Core Strategy (amended 2015) Policies CS3, CS4, CS5, CS7, CS13, CS15, CS16, CS18, CS19, CS20 and CS25 and the Council’s current adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance. The guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) is also relevant to the determination of this planning application.

| <b>Appendix attached</b>          |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Habitats Regulation Assessment | 2. Development Plan Policies |
| 3. Planning History               |                              |

### **Recommendation in Full**

1. That the Panel confirm the Habitats Regulation Assessment in **Appendix 1** of this report.
2. Delegate to the Planning and Development Manager to grant planning permission subject to the confirmation from Natural England that they remove their holding objection and subject to the completion of a S.106 Legal Agreement to secure:
  - i. Financial contributions towards site specific transport contributions for highway improvements in the vicinity of the site in line with Policy SDP4 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (March 2006), policies CS18 and CS25 of the adopted LDF Core Strategy (2010) and the adopted SPD relating to Planning Obligations (September 2013);
  - ii. In lieu of an affordable housing contribution an undertaking by the developer that only students in full time education higher education be permitted to occupy the development and that the provider is a member of the Southampton Accreditation Scheme for Student Housing (SASSH) (or equivalent) in accordance with Local Plan Policy H13(v).
  - iii. Financial contributions towards Solent Disturbance Mitigation Project (SDMP) in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), saved policy SDP12 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (as amended 2015), CS22 of the Core Strategy (as amended 2015) and the Planning Obligations SPD (September 2013). Measures to mitigate the pressure on European designated nature conservation sites in accordance with Policy CS22 of the Core Strategy and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
  - iv. Submission of a highway condition survey to ensure any damage to the adjacent highway network attributable to the build process is repaired by the developer.
  - vi. The submission, approval and implementation of a Carbon Management Plan setting out how carbon neutrality will be achieved and/or how remaining carbon

emissions from the development will be mitigated in accordance with policy CS20 of the Core Strategy and the Planning Obligations SPD (September 2013).

- vii. Submission of a Training & Employment Management Plan committing to adopting local labour and employment initiatives, in accordance with Policies CS24 & CS25 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document - Adopted Version (January 2010) and the adopted SPD relating to Planning Obligations (September 2013).
  - viii. Submission and implementation of a Travel Plan.
  - ix. Submission and implementation of a Waste Management Plan.
  - x. Provision of on-site CCTV coverage and monitoring in line with Policy SDP10 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (March 2006) as supported by LDF Core Strategy policies CS13 and CS25.
  - xi. Submission and implementation of a Student Intake Management Plan to regulate arrangements at the beginning and end of the academic year.
  - xii. Restrictions to prevent future occupiers benefitting from parking permits in surrounding streets. No student, with the exception of registered disabled drivers, shall be entitled to obtain parking permits to the Council's Controlled Parking Zones.
3. In the event that the legal agreement is not completed within 2 months of the panel meeting the Planning and Development Manager be authorised to refuse permission on the ground of failure to secure the provisions of the Section 106 Legal Agreement.
  4. That the Planning and Development Manager be given delegated powers to add, vary and /or delete relevant parts of the Section 106 agreement and/or conditions as necessary.

## **1 The site and its context**

- 1.1 The application site is part of a wider site which previously contained the First Bus depot. The bus depot buildings have since been demolished, the site cleared and part recently developed to provide the Sainsbury's supermarket.
- 1.2 This application relates to the north-east part of the former bus depot site and adjoins Portswood Road to the north, the new vehicular access to Sainsbury's to the west and Belmont Road lies to the east and south of the site boundary. Not included as part of this application, is the final parcel of land relating to former bus depot site which lies to the south of the supermarket, to the corner of Belmont Road and St Denys Road.
- 1.3 The application site itself is subject to a significant change in levels; Portswood Road slopes up from east to west at this point and the land also

falls towards Belmont Road. The site is subject to group Tree Preservation Order which comprises a mixed species group to the north-east corner of the site, a group and group outside the south-east corner of the site, along Belmont Road.

- 1.4 The context is varied and comprises the vibrant District Centre, just over 100 metres to the west, together with more traditional residential streets, which includes Belmont Road. The neighbouring Sainsbury's supermarket is a two-storey, flat-roof building, although steps up in height from 12 to 17 metres on the Portswood Road frontage.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission to develop the site to provide purpose-built student accommodation. Following concerns raised by officers regarding the scale and design of the building, the scheme has been amended since originally submitted. In particular, the height of the Portswood Road frontage has been reduced and the design amended to reduce the perceived massing of the building.
- 2.2 The accommodation is comprised of 3 blocks of accommodation arranged around a central courtyard area. A mix of student accommodation is provided in the form of cluster flats (small groups of study bedrooms arranged around a communal kitchen), 1-bedroom flats and self-contained 2 and 3-bedroom flats.
- 2.3 **Block A** fronts Portswood Road and the amendments to the scheme have mostly affected this part of the proposal. In terms of scale, initially the application proposed part 4 and part 6-storey frontage to Portswood Road. This block now steps up from 4-storeys from the corner with Belmont Road, to a 5-storey central section and the 6-storey element is limited to the section of building adjacent to the access to the supermarket. This block has been designed to take advantage of the change in levels on the site, meaning an additional lower level of accommodation is provided to the rear, although only apparent from the central courtyard of the development.
- 2.4 Block A also incorporates the main entrance to the development, located at the corner of the building, adjacent to the vehicular access to Sainsbury's. This entrance leads to the main reception of the development and a stepped access to the internal courtyard. The lower level courtyard can also be accessed by an internal lift. The ground floor of Block A also incorporates common room areas and a gym. The lower level of Block A comprises the main servicing and storage areas for the building, including cycle storage and room for a standalone Combined Heat and Power system.
- 2.5 In terms of form, Block A has a flat-roof appearance and the 4 and 5-storey sections would be finished using a buff facing brick. The 4-storey section would be set-back from the boundary with Portswood Road by between 5 and 17 metres to enable the retention of the protected tree group to the corner. The 5-storey central section is set back from the 6-storey corner section of

building by approximately 1 metre. The 6-storey element would be finished in using a contrasting rainscreen cladding.

- 2.6 **Block B** adjoins Block A, connected by an internal corridor and is positioned parallel with the access to Sainsbury's. This block would also be 6-storeys in height and is set off of the boundary with Sainsbury's by over 5 metres and away from the boundary with Belmont Road by approximately 36 metres. Tree planting is proposed between the building and the boundary with Sainsbury's. As with Block A, due the change in levels across the site, Block B also incorporates a lower level of accommodation, apparent from the internal courtyard.
- 2.7 **Block C** is physically detached from Blocks A and B, although the primary entrances to the building are via the internal courtyard. This block is set back by approximately 4 metres from the boundary with Belmont Road to accommodate a new row of tree planting to the Belmont Road frontage. Block C is predominantly 3-storeys in height with pitched roof and gable ends facing Belmont Road. The block steps up to a 4-storey element adjacent to the boundary with the Sainsbury's store, although this angles away from the Belmont Road frontage.
- 2.8 A total of 10 car parking spaces would be provided to the north-east of the site and accessed from Belmont Road. The intention is that access to these parking spaces would be controlled and mainly used to manage the arrival and departure of students at the start and end of the academic year.

### **3 Relevant Planning Policy**

- 3.1 The Development Plan for Southampton currently comprises the "saved" policies of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (as amended 2015) and the City of Southampton Core Strategy (as amended 2015). The most relevant policies to these proposals are set out at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.2 The site is not identified for development within the adopted Development Plan. Major developments are expected to meet high sustainable construction standards in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS20 and Local Plan "saved" Policy SDP13.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and replaces the previous set of national planning policy guidance notes and statements. The Council has reviewed the Core Strategy to ensure that it is in compliance with the NPPF and are satisfied that the vast majority of policies accord with the aims of the NPPF and therefore retain their full material weight for decision making purposes, unless otherwise indicated.

### **4 Relevant Planning History**

- 4.1 There have been a number of previous applications for the whole bus depot site seeking the redevelopment of the site for a supermarket and residential

accommodation. The planning history includes 3 previous planning permissions. The relevant planning history of the site is summarised in **Appendix 3** of this report.

## **5 Consultation Responses and Notification Representations**

5.1 Following the receipt of the planning application, a publicity exercise in line with department procedures was undertaken which included notifying adjoining and nearby landowners, placing a press advertisement (07.08.15) and erecting a site notice (07.08.15). At the time of writing the report **33** representations have been received from surrounding residents and interested parties which includes from Ward Councillor Claisse, the Highfield Residents Association, the Portswood Residents' Gardens Trust and Portswood Central Residents Association. The following is a summary of the points raised:

5.2 *Portswood already has an excessive student population which has an impact on existing residents in terms of noise and disturbance as well as the mix and balance of the character of the area. The proposal will exacerbate these impacts significantly. New student accommodation should be dispersed more widely throughout the city and not concentrated within the Portswood and Highfield Areas.*

Response:

Saved policy H13 of the Local Plan Review guides the location of student accommodation to locations that are easily accessible to the educational establishments by foot, cycle or public transport. Since the site is within walking distance of the University of Southampton and accessible to the Uni Link Bus stops, the proposal would fulfil this aim. The development is designed to take access from Portswood Road meaning the future occupants can access the District Centre, with its shops and facilities and public transport links to the city centre, whilst avoiding quieter residential streets as primary access routes.

5.3 *Concern with the practicality of drop-off and collection arrangements for new students and that insufficient car parking on site will result in further on-street car parking pressures within the vicinity of the site.*

Response:

The application is supported by a Student Intake Management Plan which sets out how the arrivals and departures of students will be managed. The implementation of this management plan is proposed to be secured through the section 106 legal agreement (see recommendation 2 xii above). It is also recommended to introduce a residents parking scheme within the vicinity of the site and to prevent occupiers of the development from being issued with on-street car parking permits. These controls together with excellent accessibility of the site is considered to adequately manage the travel demands of the development.

5.4 *The amount of accommodation proposed is excessive.*

Response:

Core Strategy Policy CS5 supports high density development in the most

accessible locations of the City, which includes District Centre locations. Furthermore, saved Local Plan Policy SDP9 supports the location of taller buildings in and adjacent to District Centres. As noted above, the site has excellent sustainable transport links to the University, City Centre as well as direct access to the facilities within the District Centre. The development of the site to provide a significant amount of student accommodation is, therefore, considered to be appropriate.

- 5.5 *The scale would be imposing and overbearing when viewed from nearby residential properties and result in over-shadowing/loss of light to them. The design appears utilitarian.*

Response:

As set out in section 2 above, the scheme has been amended since originally submitted to address concerns relating to the scale and design of the proposal. The largest scale buildings on site are proposed to be located on the Portswood Road frontage and adjacent to the existing Sainsbury's store. Where buildings would have a closer relationship to existing domestic residential properties, the scale is reduced to closely follow the parameters of the outline planning permission. The application is accompanied by a shadow analysis and this demonstrates that the proposal would not generate harmful over-shadowing to neighbouring residents.

- 5.6 *The need for family housing and affordable housing is acute and developing the site for student accommodation misses an opportunity to address other housing need.*

Response:

The application site is not allocated for general purpose residential accommodation in the adopted Development Plan and the Council has identified a supply of sites to meet its housing need, which does not include the application site. The application needs to be assessed in terms of whether the principle of the proposed use is acceptable and not whether an alternative use may be preferable.

- 5.7 *As the development would be privately run, there is no guarantee that the development would be used for students.*

Response:

As set out in recommendation 2 ii above, a clause would be added to the section 106 legal agreement to restrict the occupancy of the development to students.

- 5.8 *Concern with the lack on on-site management.*

Response:

The application submission sets out that there would be on-site management of the accommodation which will sign up to the Southampton Accreditation Scheme for Student Housing (SASH). This is proposed to be secured through the section 106 legal agreement.

- 5.9 *Loss of trees and the proposed tree planting will take a long time to mature.*

Response:

The application is designed to enable the retention of the significant protected

tree group to the corner of the Portswood Road and Belmont Road and proposes replacement tree planting along Belmont Road, enhanced tree planting along the boundary with Sainsbury's, new tree planting along the frontage of the development with Portswood Road together within tree planting within the internal courtyard of the development. The impact on the landscape setting of the site is, therefore, considered to be acceptable.

- 5.10 *Concern that the site is being considered in isolation to the other residential parcel on the wider Portswood Bus depot site.*

Response:

Sainsbury's supermarket does physically separate the application site from the last section of the former Portswood Bus Depot site and the application proposal can, therefore, be considered on its own merits without prejudicing the future delivery of the remainder of the site.

- 5.11 *The proposal would not preserve or enhance the special character of the Portswood Residents Garden Conservation Area.*

Response:

The proposed development would not be visible from the Conservation Area and is not part of the direct setting of the Conservation Area. As such, the Council's Historic Environment Group Leader has raised no objection to the proposal.

- 5.12 *Concern with the impact of the proposal on local drainage.*

Response:

Southern Water have not objected to the application and conditions are recommended to secure adequate drainage for the development.

- 5.13 *The use of buff bricks is out-of-character with the area.*

Response

Existing buildings within the context of the site are finished in a variety of material treatments which also includes buff/yellow bricks (including nos. 160-162, 180-188, 297, 317, 327 Portswood Road as well as the flats directly opposite the site). The materials suggested indicate that a high-quality finish to the building would be achieved and as such, are considered to be appropriate.

### **Consultation Responses**

- 5.14 **SCC Highways** – No objection subject to securing a refuse management plan and student intake management plan. The section 106 legal agreement will also require improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes to the university, bus stops and the District Centre. There will also need to be a funded consultation with local residents on the implementation of a parking permit scheme, and subject to the outcome of the consultation, the implementation of that scheme.
- 5.15 **SCC Heritage and Conservation** - No objection or conditions suggested.
- 5.16 **SCC Sustainability Team** – No objection subject to conditions to secure



energy and water efficiency measures.

- 5.17 **SCC Environmental Health (Pollution & Safety)** – No objection subject to conditions to minimise disruption to residents during the construction process.
- 5.18 **SCC Environmental Health (Contaminated Land)** - No objection subject to conditions to secure a contaminated land assessment and any required remediation measures.
- 5.19 **SCC Ecology** – No objection.
- 5.20 **SCC Trees** – The existing trees on site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. It is accepted that some trees are of poor quality, but collectively their landscape value is significant. The degree of tree removal and replacement is not clear at this time. Any replacement trees must be given sufficient room to achieve their full potential and this does not appear to be possible within the current layout. *This is discussed in more detail below.*
- 5.21 **SCC City Design** – Initially raised concern with the lack of articulation to the Portswood Road frontage. A step change of the building would assist with this and assimilating the scale of the building into the Portswood Road street scene. Requested verified views of the development from Belmont Road. The scheme has been amended to address these points.
- 5.22 **Southern Water** – No objection. Suggest a condition be imposed to secure the necessary sewerage infrastructure to service the development and to secure details of surface water disposal.
- 5.23 **Natural England** – Holding Objection. Concerned that the impact of the development on the New Forest National Park has not been adequately assessed.
- 5.24 **Environment Agency** – No objection or conditions suggested.

## **6 Planning Consideration Key Issues**

- 6.1 The key issues for consideration in the determination of this planning application are:
  - (i) The principle of this development;
  - (ii) The suitability of the design;
  - (iii) The impact on the living conditions of nearby residents;
  - (iv) Impact on trees;
  - (v) Highways and parking and;
  - (vi) The direct local impacts, including on protected habitats.
- 6.2 (i) Principle of Development
  - 6.2.1 CS16 of the Core Strategy confirms that ‘in response to concern about the concentration of student accommodation within parts of the city, the Council will work in partnership with universities and developers to assist in the

provision of suitable, affordable accommodation for students to relieve the pressure on housing markets". This policy confirms the Council's dual approach of delivering purpose built student accommodation whilst simultaneously managing the conversion of existing family housing to HMOs to relieve the pressure on local markets. Since the application proposes purpose-built accommodation for students, it would be consistent with this approach. In addition to this, 'saved' Local Plan Policy H13 supports the delivery of student accommodation in locations accessible to the Universities and where there is an identified need. The location of the site, at the edge of the District Centre, with excellent public transport links to the city centre and, approximately 900 metres walking distance to the University of Southampton is appropriate for a significant level of student accommodation.

6.2.2 The application is accompanied by a detailed Student Need Assessment. This sets out that currently there are some 31,000 students in the city and 12,000 existing student bed spaces. This number includes sites with planning permission for student accommodation and sites where student accommodation is under construction. The residual students either live in their own/parental home or rely on private sector landlord markets in HMOs. The proposal would meet a demonstrable need for further student accommodation and would bring a long-term vacant site back into active use, as such, the principle of development is, therefore, acceptable.

### 6.3 (ii) Suitability of the Design

6.3.1 It is acknowledged that the context of the site typically comprises buildings of between 2 and 4 storeys, however, the Council's policy framework recognises that taller buildings can be appropriate in certain specified locations. In particular, 'saved' Local Plan Policy SDP9 confirms that tall buildings (those which are 5 or more storeys) are generally permitted on major sites and in and adjacent to the district centres. The principle of a taller building in this location is, therefore, supported by the adopted Development Plan. The taller sections of the building are limited to the Portswood Road frontage of the site. The development steps up from 4-storeys at the corner with Belmont Road, to the tallest section adjacent to Sainsbury's. The 6-storey element now provides a 'book-end' to the access to Sainsbury's, reflecting the tallest point of the Sainsbury's store, directly opposite the site.

6.3.2 The amendments to the design, which include a reduction in the scale of the building to achieve a clear graduation in height towards Sainsbury's together with clear breaks in the massing of Block A, result in the frontage appearing as three distinct elements. This is a considerable improvement to the massing and design of Block A as originally proposed and better reflects the more varied character of the area. It is considered that the proposal would successfully finish off this section of the Portswood Road frontage of the former bus depot site and will also assist in integrating the existing supermarket better into the surrounding context. Furthermore, the development will effectively screen the long, blank eastern elevation of the Sainsbury's Store, with high-quality built form. The development has been designed to provide active ground floor uses to Portswood Road, including

the main entrance, reception of the development and a gym. Overall, the submitted information indicates that a high-quality design appearance would be achieved in terms of the choice of materials and architectural detailing.

6.3.3 The remainder of the development closely follows the scale parameters set by the previous outline planning permissions on this site. The development is built around a central landscape courtyard, which provides a sense of space between the blocks, ensuring that the level of development does not appear over-intensive. A perimeter block style layout is achieved, which ensures the development addresses the streets that wrap the site boundaries. Whilst the Belmont Road frontage is a continuous block of development, the design successfully breaks the massing with front gables that reflect the narrower plot widths typical within the area. Furthermore, the built form to Belmont Road would provide enclosure to the street that would limit views to the taller sections of development at the front of the site.

6.3.4 The application proposes a high quality residential environment for occupants of the development. Outlook from habitable room windows would be generally good and residents would have access to an internal landscaped courtyard of over 1000 sq.m in area. The development also provides for internal facilities for residents including common rooms and an on-site gym.

#### 6.4 (iii) Impact on Living Conditions

6.4.1 In terms of the type of accommodation proposed, it is likely that there could be some degree of noise and disturbance given the relatively high-density student occupation of the development. However, Portswood Road is a relatively busy road and the development is designed to take access from Portswood Road rather than the quieter Belmont Road to the rear of the site. In particular, it should be noted that the entrances to Block C are all within the north-western elevation of the building rather than from Belmont Road. As set out above, the application confirms that the development will include management presence on site, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for students or local residents to contact, which should limit any adverse impact on local amenity.

6.4.2 In terms of the physical impact of the proposed building, as noted above, the scale of the development is reduced where a closer relationship to residential neighbours would occur, to closely follow the parameters set by the outline planning permission. The taller buildings on site are set away from properties on Belmont Road by between approximately 43 and 55 metres and with intervening lower-scale buildings limiting views of the taller aspect of the development. This would ensure that the taller buildings would not have an over-bearing impact when viewed from the more domestic scale neighbouring buildings or result in any harmful overlooking.

6.4.3 In terms of sunlight impact, shadow diagrams have been submitted with the application and demonstrate that some overshadowing would occur to the residential properties opposite the site on Portswood Road in the morning and, in the late afternoon, there would be some additional overshadowing to properties at the northern end of Belmont Road. However, for the majority of

the day, nearby residential properties would be unaffected by over-shadowing and as such, there would not be harmful impact on residential amenity.

#### 6.5 (iv) Impact on Trees

6.5.1 As set out above, the Council's Tree Officer has raised concerns that it is not clear from the submission whether there is sufficient space within the development to provide the necessary replacement tree planting. The impact of the previously approved development on trees is a material consideration, particularly since the layout benefits from a resolution to grant planning permission.

6.5.2 The proposed layout of the development is not dissimilar to the approved layout with regards to the impact on protected trees. Both the current proposal and the approved layout, leave a similarly sized undeveloped zone at the north-east corner of the site to enable the retention of the existing protected group. Both the previously approved scheme and the current application would result in the same degree of tree loss along the Belmont Road frontage. It is acknowledged that the current layout is constrained in terms of the level of replacement planting that can be achieved along the Belmont Road frontage, but this is not considered to be a worse situation when compared with the previously approved layout. Furthermore, in discussions with the tree officer, it is considered that an alternative species to that proposed would be more appropriate and can be secured by planning condition. In addition to this, the current application includes a significantly larger internal courtyard which could accommodate additional tree planting when compared with the approved layout. As such, it is considered that, subject to securing the necessary tree protection measures for the retained trees, and securing the necessary replacement trees, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this respect.

#### 6.6 (v) Highways and Parking

6.6.1 Saved policy SDP5 of the Local Plan confirms that the provision of car parking is a key determinant in the mode of travel. The adopted Development Plan seeks to reduce the reliance on private car for travel and instead promotes more sustainable modes of travel such as public transport, walking and cycling. The car parking on site would essentially serve the moving in and out of students, meaning effectively, the application would be a car-free scheme. As set out above, the section 106 agreement will secure additional on-street car parking controls, subject to community consultation, and car parking permits would not be generally available to residents of this development. The accessible nature of the site coupled with the limited car parking will meet the aim for sustainable patterns of development, as required by the Council's adopted policies. Furthermore, the controls on local parking, secured by the section 106 agreement will prevent significant over-spill parking on surrounding streets that would be harmful to residential amenity.

6.6.2 The vehicular access to the site would be from Belmont Road, so not to affect the flow of traffic on Portswood Road. The Highways Team are satisfied with

the location and design of this access is acceptable.

6.7 (vi) Protected Habitats Impact and other Direct Local Impacts

- 6.7.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) provides statutory protection for designated sites, known collectively as Natura 2000, including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). This legislation requires competent authorities, in this case the Local Planning Authority, to ensure that plans or projects, either on their own or in combination with other plans or projects, do not result in adverse effects on these designated sites. The Solent coastline supports a number of Natura 2000 sites including the Solent and Southampton Water SPA, designated principally for birds, and the Solent Maritime SAC, designated principally for habitats. Research undertaken across south Hampshire has indicated that current levels of recreational activity are having significant adverse effects on certain bird species for which the sites are designated. A mitigation scheme, known as the Solent Disturbance Mitigation Project (SDMP), requiring a financial contribution of £174 per unit has been adopted. The money collected from this project will be used to fund measures designed to reduce the impacts of recreational activity. This application will comply with the requirements of the SDMP (when the legal agreement is completed) and meets the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 6.7.2 As set out in paragraph 5.23 above, Natural England have lodged a holding objection on the basis that the impact of the development on the New Forest National Park has not been adequately assessed. The New Forest National Park is also a Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation, Ramsar site and contains Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Accordingly, the Council have undertaken an Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Regulations. This Assessment is included as **Appendix 1** to this report and concludes that the development is unlikely to have a significant effect on the designated habitats. As recommended, subject to Natural England agreeing to the Council's approach set out in **Appendix 1**, the development is, therefore, considered to be acceptable in this respect.
- 6.7.3 The application also needs to address and mitigate the additional pressure on the social and economic infrastructure of the city, in accordance with Development Plan policies and the Council's adopted Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document. Given the wide ranging impacts associated with a development of this scale, an extensive package of contributions and obligations is proposed as part of the application.
- 6.7.4 A development of this scale would normally trigger the need for 35% affordable housing in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS15. However, as the proposal is for student accommodation no affordable housing requirement is required. The S.106 legal agreement would include a restriction that occupiers of the flats would be in full time higher education in

accordance with Local Plan Review Policy H13(v).

## **7 Summary**

- 7.1 The proposed development would bring a long-term vacant, previously developed site back into active use. Given the accessibility of the site to the University of Southampton and Southampton Solent University, the provision of further purpose built student accommodation in this location is consistent with the Council's adopted policies and would meet an identified accommodation need. The applicant has worked with officers of the Council to reduce the scale and massing of the development and to provide an enhanced design approach to Portswood Road. The proposal is considered to have addressed concerns initially raised and is, therefore, supportable.

## **8 Conclusion**

- 8.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to a Section 106 agreement and conditions.

OCTOBER 2015