
APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application
APPLICATION NO: 08/00083/FUL
APPLICANT: Clanfield Properties Ltd
AGENT: Owen Davies Architects
SITE ADDRESS: Horseshoe Park, Horseshoe Bridge, Portswood
PROPOSAL: Erection of a five-storey office building with associated parking (17 spaces) and vehicular access from Drummond Drive.

RECOMMENDATION: Delegate the Development Control Manager to grant planning approval subject to:-

1. The application be referred and not being "called in" for determination.
2. The applicant entering into a Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure:
 - i. a financial contribution towards site specific transport contributions for highway and street scene improvements in the vicinity of the site
 - ii. a financial contribution towards strategic transport contributions for highway network improvements in the wider area as set out in the Local Transport Plan
 - iii. repairs to any damage to the public highway arising from the build process.

Or That the D C Manager be authorised to refuse permission if the Section 106 Agreement has not been completed within the statutory target period for the development (13 weeks in this case from the date of receipt) on the ground of failure to secure the provisions of the Section 106 Agreement.

REPORT

SITE AND SURROUNDS

The application site has an area of 0.2 hectares and comprises undeveloped land which is safeguarded for employment use. The site is situated between Thomas Lewis Way the Network rail mainline to London. The triangular shaped plot consists of unmade bare ground which is bound by steeply sloping banks to Horseshoe Bridge Road and Drummond Road which run adjacent to the site.

Land immediately to the west is occupied by a railway transformer compound which is enclosed by steel palisade fencing. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is

gained via Drummond Drive. Mature planting aligns the embankment and shields the site from Thomas Lewis Way.

The immediate area is predominately commercial in nature. A four-storey office building (Thomas Lewis House) is located at the corner of Horseshoe Bridge and Thomas Lewis Way. The Empress Road Industrial Estate is located immediately to the south-west and is safeguarded for light industrial and general industrial uses. St Denys Railway Station is located approximately 250m to the north of the application site.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks to provide a five-storey office building with a floor area of 1800m² on this site. The building would incorporate an undercroft car parking area to accommodate 17 car parking spaces, including 2 no. disabled parking bays.

The building would be centrally located within the plot and cut into the embankment to provide a four-storey frontage, dropping to five-storey into the site. The main pedestrian access would be served by a ramped bridge link, adjoining the Drummond Drive/Horseshoe Bridge public footway. Vehicular access would be from Drummond Drive, via a tarmac driveway.

The build design has a shallow pitched roof form and incorporates projecting full height glazed bays within the front and side elevations. The face materials comprise a mix of masonry block work at the lower level and red face brick, buff feature brick and blue tinted glass on the upper levels. The roof would be finished with blue/black artificial slates with powder coated dark blue fascia. The undercroft will be enclosed by galvanised steel grills, coloured dark blue.

Bin storage is proposed to be located near the vehicular access point. Secure enclosed cycle storage for 18 bicycles will be located to the south of the building and accessed through the vehicular undercroft. The remaining areas of embankment will be enhanced with soft landscaping. A small garden area is proposed to the south of the building to provide an external amenity area for office workers.

KEY ISSUES

The key issues in consideration of the application are:

1. The principle of use / departure from local plan
2. Transportation matters
3. Design

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

02/01347/FUL

Erection of 3 industrial buildings with ancillary office accommodation and associated parking.

Conditionally Approved 13.10.03.

03/00701/FUL

Additional first floor offices to unit 1 of consented scheme.

Conditionally Approved 16.12.04

06/00547/FUL

Erection of a detached six-storey building to provide 21 x two-bedroom flats.

Refused on 11.07.06 for the following reasons:

1. Contrary to land use (employment) allocation
2. Incompatibility with nearby commercial activity
3. Unacceptable residential environment for future occupants
4. Failure to secure S106 agreement

This application (06/00547/FUL) was subsequently dismissed at appeal on 13 April 2006. A copy of this decision is attached as **Appendix 1**

07/01195/FUL

Erection of a five-storey office building with associated parking and vehicular access from Drummond Drive.

Withdrawn on 01.11.2007

PLANNING POLICY

PPS6 – Sequential Test

The proposed office building is a main town centre use to be located within an out of town location. A Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres assessment has been submitted in support of the application. There is some uncertainty about the completeness of the sequential test applied and the true demand and need for new office space. However, the development is not of a nature or scale that would have a diminishing impact on the vitality and viability of the nearby centres (City Centre and Portwood District Centre). PPS6 advises that Local Planning Authorities should be realistic in considering whether sites are suitable, viable and available. The development provides a high level of accessibility and an employment use that would sit comfortably alongside adjacent light industrial, research and office uses. Importantly, the proposal is considered to be a balanced solution to help bring forward an employment use on an allocated employment site.

Adopted Local Plan Review (March 2006)

1) Principle:

The site is allocated and safeguarded for employment uses under policy REI11 (xvi) of the Adopted Local Plan Review (March 2006), specifically light industrial and research and development uses within use class B1 (b) and B1(c). Policies REI15 and REI16 of the Adopted Local Plan Review (March 2006) identifies those sites where B1 office development should be located in principle. Therefore the proposed application for office development is a departure from the local plan and has been advertised accordingly.

2) Accessibility and Parking:

The applicants have attempted unsuccessfully to bring the site forward for light industrial and research and development uses, since 2003. Residential development has been ruled out by the Councils refusal and the subsequent appeal dismissal of application 06/00547/FUL. Office development would appear to be the only remaining use to be realistically appropriate for this site

The Local Plan Review highlights that B1(a) office uses will be resisted in RE111 areas where such a development would result in vehicular access through a residential area. However the application site is an isolated parcel of land, with no residential development in close proximity to the site.

The site is situated within an area of “medium” accessibility zone, and a maximum of 17 spaces are allowed under the Councils Maximum Car Parking Standards to support the proposed quantum of development. The application proposes 17 car parking spaces, including 2 no. disabled spaces and 18 cycle parking spaces which accords with policy SDP5 which seeks provision of no more than the maximum standard. The site is located adjacent to Thomas Lewis Way and is therefore well served by buses and approximately 200m from St Denys train station to the north. It is considered that the site is located close enough to the city centre to form reasonable links with it.

Planning policy has no objection to the proposal.

A schedule of relevant policies are provided in **Appendix 2** to this report.

CONSULTATION AND NOTIFICATION

A consultation exercise in line with departmental procedures was undertaken which included notifying nearby commercial occupiers, local ward councillors, placing a press advertisement and erecting a site notice. At the time of writing the report no representations have been received.

Consultations

Highway Development Control – advise that the site is within a medium accessibility area of the City. The number of parking spaces proposed accords with the authorities maximum standard. The level of secure enclosed cycle parking is acceptable and accords with the authorities minimum standard.

To meet the aims of PPG13, contributions are sought from the developer to reduce dependence on the private car. In addition, off site highway obligations will be require, to include a footpath to the front of the new building on the existing highway verge, and provision of a pedestrian phase in the traffic lights on Thomas Lewis Way.

Environmental Health (Land Contamination) – Potentially contaminated site; adequate assessments will need to be carried out on site to determine the likely presence of contaminants; no contaminated materials should be used for infilling or landscaping on site.

Hampshire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer – advises that the vehicle access to the undercroft parking area should be secured by an automated roller

shutter security grille or similar to LPS 1175. The illumination of the vehicle access drive and undercroft should be to at least BS 5489 and be provided by façade and column mounted, anti-vandal, low energy downlighter luminaires under photo-electric sensor control. Low level bollards should not be used. The artificial lighting within the undercroft should be reduced for energy saving during daylight hours. As a minimum, the undercroft parking, vehicle access drive and pedestrian entrance should be under the surveillance of a high quality, colour CCTV system. Planning conditions are recommended

BAA Safeguarding – advise that lighting schemes required during construction and for the completed development shall ensure that there is no light spill above the horizontal. Regard should also be had to the British Standard Code of Practice for the safe use of cranes. No objection raised subject to attached conditions.

Southern Water – raise no objection. Records indicating the approximate position of the public sewer show that a sewer may run through the site. It may be possible to diver the public sewer, so long as this would not result in unacceptable loss of hydraulic capacity, and that the work is carried out at the developer's expense to the satisfaction of Southern Water. A condition should be applied to protect drainage apparatus and an informative should be attached with regards to connection to the public sewerage system.

Sustainability – No objection subject to condition(s) requiring the submission of a report assessing the feasibility of incorporating the following sustainable design measures into the development:

- Energy minimisation and renewable energy or low carbon technologies
- Water efficiency measures
- Urban drainage systems
- Waste management and recycling
- Sustainable construction measures

And written documentary evidence demonstrating that the development will achieve at minimum a rating of very good against the BREEAM standard

Environmental Health (Pollution & Safety) – have no comment to make.

Archaeology – advise that no archaeological condition is required.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

The site is allocated and safeguarded for employment uses under policy RE111 (xvi) of the Adopted Local Plan Review (March 2006). Whilst office development does not strictly accord with the site specific designation for light industrial and research and development uses, it is clear that office development would appear to be an appropriate use for the site, having regard to the applicant's unsuccessful attempts to bring industrial use to the site and the inappropriateness of residential development on this site.

The development would provide 1800m² of office floor space which is relatively small scale and will not undermine the focus of large office development within the city

centre and the nearby district centre of Portswood. The site is located close to main transport routes and is also enough to the city centre to form reasonable links with it.

The proposed office use could acceptably co-exist with neighbouring commercial activity and will have no impact on residential amenity.

Parking

The application site is within an area, which is defined as a medium accessibility zone in the in the Adopted Version of the Local Plan Review, this is defined in relation to principle bus routes and railway stations. The level of parking provision proposed needs to be assessed against the parking standards set out in the adopted Local Plan, which are maximums, therefore careful consideration needs to be made of the implications of the proposed number of spaces. The scheme proposes 17 parking spaces. This level of provision accords with the level of provision that would be acceptable for this type and scale of development in this locality.

Adequate provision has been for the storage of bicycles and facilities for the storage and collection of refuse.

Design

The proposed development is a fairly typical modern office development and is appropriate for this out of town centre commercial location. The design, height, scale, bulk and massing of the building responds to its context, particularly when viewed against the nearby office development at Thomas Lewis House.

The five-storey building will also help to frame Thomas Lewis Way and provide surveillance of the adjacent highway.

Summary

Overall the principal scheme is acceptable, particularly as it would bring the site back into employment use. The level of development is appropriate for the site and the form of development is compatible with neighbouring commercial and industrial activities. The development proposal thereby accords with the provisions of both current and emerging local plan policies.

CORPORATE AWARENESS CONSIDERATIONS

The planning assessment made on this planning application proposal has taken into account the relative importance of Council initiatives and corporate aims as considered appropriate to the formulation of the recommendation reached. For this scheme there has been no significant corporate issue identified.

CONCLUSION

By securing the matters set out in the recommendations section of this report by the completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement, the proposal would be acceptable. The application is therefore recommended for delegated approval to the Development Control Manager.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Documents used in the preparation of this report Background Papers

1(a), 1(b), 2(c), 3(a), 4(s), 6(a), 6(c), 6(f), 6(h), 7(c), 8(a), 9(a), 9(b) and City Plan Review (Adopted Version)

AG 12-03-08 for 01-04-08 PROW Panel

