

The Application seeks full planning permission to vary condition 2 of planning permission 11/00058/FUL which was granted in 2011 for the construction of three-storey business accommodation to be known as Innovation Centre 5 (IC5) with the provision of workshops on the ground floor and offices on the first and second floors, with associated parking and landscaping, at Keele University Science and Business Park. Condition 2 lists the approved drawings. The proposal seeks consent for certain amended details on the elevations of the building.

The site is part of that allocated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map for employment/higher education-led development (Local Plan Proposal E8) and it also lies within an Area of Landscape Maintenance. Part of the site, although not that part on which the building is to be sited, is within the Grade II Registered Parkland and Garden of Special Historic Interest at Keele Hall.

The 13 week period for the determination of this application expires on 1st July 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

Permit, subject to conditions relating to the following: -

- 1. Approved drawings**
- 2. Approval of colour finish of louvres**
- 3. All other conditions of 11/00058/FUL to continue to apply**

Reason for Recommendation

Subject to control over the colour of the proposed louvres, it is not considered that the proposed amendments would have such a significant adverse impact upon the quality of the design of the building to justify a refusal.

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application

The proposal is considered to be a sustainable form of development in compliance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and no amendments were considered necessary.

Key Issues

Full planning permission is sought to vary condition 2 of planning permission 11/00058/FUL which was granted in 2011 for the construction of three-storey business accommodation to be known as Innovation Centre 5 (IC5). The building as approved has three units or Wings. Condition 2 lists the approved drawings.

Full planning permission was granted in February 2012 for amendments to the elevations (Ref. 11/00655/FUL) but that permission has now expired. That approval included the omission of brise soleil (projecting external sun shades) above the ground floor windows of Unit B and the addition of aluminium louvres to the end elevation of Unit C.

The amendments now proposed comprise the following:-

- Omission of the brise soleil) above the second floor windows on all elevations
- Omission of vent grilles on all elevations
- Addition of aluminium louvres to the end elevation of Unit C
- Roof height of all blocks to be raised by 75mm
- Amended brick type

The changes proposed to the design would have no impact upon the character and appearance of the Historic Park and Garden and therefore, the sole issue to consider is the acceptability of the amended design of the building.

Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 64 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

CSS Policy CSP1 states that new development should be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent's unique townscape and landscape and in particular, the built heritage, its historic environment, its rural setting and the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres. It states that new development should protect important and longer distance views of historic landmarks and rural vistas and contribute positively to an area's identity and heritage (both natural and built) in terms of scale, density, layout, use of appropriate vernacular materials for buildings and surfaces and access. This policy is considered to be consistent with the NPPF.

The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance SPD (2010) seeks to provide a local context for design decisions and there is a specific section on employment design guidance. The guidance is generally at a higher urban design level rather than about individual components of a building.

It is not considered that the omission of the vent grilles or the increase in the height of the blocks by 75mm would have any material impact upon the appearance of this substantial building. In the approved scheme, all windows were to incorporate brise soleil or external sun shades projecting out by about 0.5 metre. It is now proposed to omit the brise soleil above the second floor windows of all elevations. The applicant considers that the overhang from the roof would provide shade over the second floor windows and that visually, the brise soleil would be indistinguishable from the roof overhang. The brise soleil on the windows of the first floor would remain and given the roof overhang, it is not considered that the omission of those at second floor would be a significant loss to the appearance of the building.

The most significant amendment proposed is the addition of aluminium louvres to the end elevation of Unit C. In the original scheme, this elevation facing north east was to remain open with a blockwork surround, so that the fire escape staircases within it between the three floors would be visible and interesting patterns of shadow and light and thus articulation would be provided. In the previous amended scheme (Ref. 11/00655/FUL) it was accepted that the end opening needed to be covered to comply with building regulations requirements to provide weather protection to the stairs. The fire escape side elevations would still remain open. This end elevation would be the most prominent on entering the larger site from the north but the louvres proposed would not form a flat elevation, and they would be set within a blockwork surround. The contrasting textures and materials would ensure that some articulation would remain and the open side openings will still help break up the end section of the building.

The canted wings and the glazed node features between the wings would remain and it is considered that overall, the building would retain some individuality and would remain of a reasonable standard of design. Subject to control over the colour of the proposed louvres, it is not considered that the proposed amendment would have such a significant adverse impact upon the quality of the design of the building so as to justify a refusal. In any event, this revision is identical to that approved in the previous scheme and given that there has been no material change in circumstances since that scheme was approved, it is not considered that any objection could be raised now.

Keele Parish Council state that this is an opportunity to reassess the use of stained timber boarding on the exterior of the building and samples of both the boarding and the brick should be requested. This application is only for amendments to the original extant consent and therefore, it is not considered that it would be reasonable to reconsider the acceptability of the use of timber boarding now.

Policies and proposals in the approved development plan relevant to this decision:-

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) 2006-2026

Policy ASP6: Rural Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality
Policy CSP2: Historic Environment
Policy CSP3: Sustainability and Climate Change
Policy CSP4: Natural Assets

Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan (NLP) 2011

Policy E8: Keele University and Keele Science Park
Policy N17: Landscape Character – General Considerations
Policy N19: Landscape Maintenance Areas

Other Material Considerations include:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Planning for Landscape Change – Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Structure Plan

Relevant Planning History

- 05/01146/OUT Outline planning permission for development for (a) academic functions; (b) staff and student residences; (c) employment uses directly related to or complementary to the University's core activities including conference, training, retail and leisure – for use of students, staff, conference delegates and their visitors and in the case of leisure facilities for the wider community; (d) Class B1 uses directly related to the University's functional activities but excluding manufacturing or storage of large tonnages or mass production of goods; and full planning permission for works including formation of development plateaux, roads, footpaths, cycleways and other infrastructure – Approved December 2006 following completion of Section 106 agreement
- 11/00058/FUL Full planning permission for the construction of three-storey business accommodation to be known as Innovation Centre 5 (IC5) with the provision of workshops on the ground floor and offices on the first and second floors, with associated parking and landscaping – Approved April 2011
- 11/00655/FUL Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 11/00058/FUL for the construction of three-storey business accommodation to be known as Innovation Centre 5 (IC5) with the provision of workshops on the ground floor and offices on the first and second floors, with associated parking and landscaping so as to permit amendments to proposed elevations of Wing B and Wing C – Approved February 2012
- 11/00058/NMA Application for a non-material amendment to provide additional floorspace and flues relating to planning permission 11/00058/FUL – Approved 2014

Views of Consultees

Keele Parish Council states that this is an opportunity to reassess the use of stained timber boarding on the exterior of the building. Samples of both the boarding and the brick should be requested.

Historic England (formerly **English Heritage**) does not wish to comment on this application.

The **Urban Design and Conservation Officer** states that in light of the lapsed application for similar changes under the earlier permission the current amendments will not have any adverse impacts on the Historic Park and Garden.

No comments have been received from the **Garden History Society** by the due date and therefore it must be assumed that they have no observations to make upon the application.

Representations

None received

Applicant's/Agent's submission

Nil

Background papers

Planning files referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

28th April 2015