

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new central science laboratory building for the Faculty of Natural Sciences on the University Campus.

The development consists of a new 5 storey building measuring 41.2 metres in maximum roof height internally connected to the existing Lennard Jones Building. The total floor area of the development is approximately 6000 square metres. Existing fume extraction chimneys on the Lennard Jones Building are to be extended in height to 48 metres and will run up the side of the new facility.

The development is needed to house additional modern teaching laboratory space due to anticipated student growth in scientific academic study.

The site lies outside of the Grade II Registered Parkland and Garden of Special Historic Interest at Keele Hall. It does however fall within the Landscape Maintenance Area defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The 13 week period for the determination of this application expires on 4th May 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

PERMIT subject to conditions relating to the following:-

- 1. Time limit.**
- 2. Approved drawings.**
- 3. Materials.**
- 4. Tree protection measures.**
- 5. Landscaping details.**
- 6. Noise assessment for ventilation, extraction systems and other plant.**
- 7. Prior approval of a construction management plan.**

Reason for Recommendation

The extra space proposed is required to meet an area of student growth identified by the University and to create modern teaching environments fit for function. The design of the new facility is considered to represent high quality attractive development which will be a focal point on the campus for scientific study. Existing high amenity value trees opposite the development can be retained and protected. Parking is to be managed by the University in a campus wide approach taking into account other agreed developments.

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

The proposed new central teaching space building is on land which presently serves as a car parking area directly behind the Lennard Jones Building which it will be internally connected to. Internally the new building is to provide the following teaching facilities/areas:-

- Ground floor – Physics/electronics and dry laboratory.
- 1st floor – laboratory spaces.
- 2nd floor – flexible dry laboratory space.
- 3rd floor – a computer based laboratory.

- 4th floor – an internal and partly external plant equipment area.

The applicant has confirmed that the development will replace the existing dated laboratory spaces within the Lennard Jones; William Smith; Jack Ashley and Colin Reeves Buildings on the University Campus. The existing dated laboratory spaces, within those buildings, are to be re-utilised for research and general office accommodation.

The site lies outside of, but adjacent to, the Grade II Registered Parkland and Garden of Special Historic Interest at Keele Hall. It does however fall within the Landscape Maintenance Area defined on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map. The key issues therefore to consider are:-

1. Is the design of the development, including the impact on the special character of the nearby grade II Listed Chapel, historic parkland, and on the landscape as a whole, acceptable?
2. Is the impact on existing trees acceptable?
3. Are there any highway safety concerns in relation to the car parking provision?

1. Is the design of the development, including the impact on the special character of the setting the Grade II Listed Chapel, nearby historic parkland, and on the landscape as a whole, acceptable?

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. The policy is consistent with the NPPF.

With respect to heritage protection policies. CSS Policy CPS2 seeks to preserve and enhance the historic character and appearance of the Borough. Saved Local Plan policy B5 states that the Council will resist proposals that would adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building.

Keele Chapel is approximately 165 metres to the east of Lennard Jones. Both buildings are adjacent to a main pedestrian route/footpath running through the campus. Ground levels slope significantly downwards from the application site to the Chapel. The development proposal is approximately 14.5 metres taller than the Chapel spire taking into account the sloping ground levels. There are also 3 intervening large campus buildings between Lennard Jones and the Chapel to take into account.

The design of the new building proposed incorporates a number of key details:-

- The external facing materials proposed include substantial areas of "pre-oxidised" copper cladding which gives a dark recessive colour (to match the existing Lennard Jones Wet Lab Building), Staffordshire Blue brickwork and glazing.
- A glazed concourse which is designed to link to the existing Lennard Jones Building. The area incorporates full height glass walls and glass roof areas. The type of glass to be used is specifically engineered to allow solar gain but also ensure the building does not overheat in summer in order to comply with Building Regulations. Some of the roof glasswork of this area of the building has been reduced with this in mind and in the area around the central atrium will instead comprise of cladding matching the rest of the building.
- Plant equipment spaces containing fume extraction systems are deliberately concealed within the 5th floor using a combination of copper cladding and grey aluminium louvres.
- A permeable "grasscrete" perimeter strip around building is to provide a maintenance strip. The building has been designed so existing mature trees directly opposite the proposed main

entrance area are to remain in situ. The proposed landscaping strategy is to protect those existing mature trees from harm and to retain the grassed area around them.

The architecture of the building is well thought out in terms of core design principles. The facades of the building have a bespoke high quality contemporary appearance achieved through a mixture of successful detailing and the specific combination of materials to be utilised.

Although the new science facility is taller than the Chapel it would be read in the context of other large intervening campus buildings which it is grouped with. Taking into account surrounding development and that the architectural qualities of the new building are also perceived favourably there is no harm to the setting of the Chapel.

Moreover the position, scale and appearance of the building does not impact harmfully on the registered Park and Garden the nearest part of which is situated diagonally opposite across Keele Hall Road. Contextually the Historic Park and Garden incorporates halls of residence and other University buildings the latter of which the proposed building is nestled amongst. There are also tall mature trees around the periphery of the campus internal estate road and located more centrally which the new building will be seen against and integrated with.

Overall the design of the new building is thought to be of high quality. It will provide a positive focal point to the appearance of the campus also taking into account the buildings anticipated status as a key campus science building.

It is also noted that the University have planned for a range of security features within the design inclusive of CCTV provision. The details of which have been submitted by the applicant post receipt of the initial concern by Staffordshire Police that such details were not planned for.

2. Is the impact on existing trees acceptable?

Saved Local Plan Policy N12 states that the Council will resist development that would involve the removal of any visually significant tree, shrub or hedge, unless the need for the development is sufficient to warrant the tree loss and the loss cannot be avoided by appropriate siting or design. Where exceptionally, permission can be given and trees are to be lost through development, replacement planting will be required on an appropriate scale and in accordance with a landscaping scheme. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to set out what measures will be taken during the development to protect trees from damage.

There are two tall mature oak trees which are impacted upon by the proposal which have high amenity value. The development has been designed specifically with tree retention in mind. Subject to planning conditions ensuring tree protection measures are carried out the Landscape Development Section advise there is no objection to the proposal.

3. Are there any highway safety concerns arising from car parking provision?

The proposed building will require the removal of 30 existing car parking spaces to the rear of the Lennard Jones Building. The University is proposing to resurface and white line an existing car park on land in front of the Colin Reeves Building to the north, but this will not in itself add any spaces.

Existing car parking is to remain to the front of the Lennard Jones Building. The applicant has also submitted a plan indicating the position of 15 temporary construction contractors' onstreet car parking spaces during the construction period. Those particular spaces are some distance away from the application site close to the main entrance point of the University Campus.

The Highway Authority have no objections to the development proceeding subject to the agreement of parking details by planning condition. The University are seeking to actively manage estate car parking availability holistically in conjunction with other recently agreed development proposals for the replacement of campus accommodation buildings as to ensure there is no wider detriment to public roads. Members will recall the conditions subject to which they resolved to approve the Keele accommodation masterplan proposals at their meeting on the 22nd March. In the circumstances there

is not considered to be any clear purpose in imposing the condition suggested by the Highway Authority.

APPENDIX

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 B5: Control of Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
Policy N17: Landscape Character – General Considerations
Policy N19: Landscape Maintenance Areas
Policy N12: Development and the Protection of Trees

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

None relevant.

Views of Consultees

The **Highway Authority** have no objections subject to conditions requiring further details of the car park to be provided and its retention:-

Staffordshire Police have no objection to this planning proposal. However they comment it is disappointing that the planning documentation, notably the Design and Access Statement appears entirely devoid of any references to security provision for the development.

County Council as **Local Lead Flood Authority** has no comments to make given the low flood risk of the site

Keele Parish Council - no comments having been received by the due date it must be assumed that the Parish have no comments to make.

The **Conservation Area Working Party** welcomed the additional section drawings provided by the applicant which were useful in understanding the relationship between the proposed extension and the Listed Chapel. The Working Party felt that the proposal was likely to have little impact on the setting of the Chapel but was concerned over the potential impact on the setting of the historic landscape particularly with the glass upper storeys and the night-time distance views.

Environmental Health Division have no objections subject to conditions relating to noise generating plant and a Construction Management Plan.

The Council's **Urban Design and Conservation Officer** comments that given the context of this building and its location that the development will not harm the setting of the Chapel in any significant way. It may have limited impact on the setting historic park and garden and views into and out of it, but given the current context of this part of the University and the fact that this central area was not included with the (registered) park there are no further observations to make.

The **Landscape Development Section** have no objections subject to appropriately worded conditions seeking agreed modifications to the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement which are then to be implemented as well as the submission of further landscaping details.

Representations

None received

Applicant's/Agent's submission

Application forms and indicative plans have been submitted along with a Design and Access Statement, Pollution Risk Assessment, Noise Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Ecological Report, and Phase 1 and 2 land Contamination Reports. The application documents are available for inspection at the Guildhall and via the following link

<http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/plan/17/00091/FUL>

Background papers

Planning files referred to

Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

11th April 2017