

The application is for the approval of reserved matters for the erection of a Digital Research and Education Centre with associated car parking and landscaping.

The reserved matters submitted for approval are all the matters of detail comprising access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

This application for approval of reserved matters follows the granting of an outline planning permission for buildings accommodating academic functions; staff and student residences; employment uses directly related to or complementary to the University's core activities; and Class B1 uses directly related to the University's functional activities but excluding manufacturing or storage of large tonnages or mass production of goods (Refs. 05/01146/OUT and 17/00934/OUT). The original consent also granted full planning permission for various engineering works that include the creation by cut and fill of levelled plots, some hard and soft landscaping and the creation of the road network serving these plots. Those works were all undertaken.

The site is part of that allocated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map for employment/higher education-led development (Proposal E8). The site lies within an area which on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map is excluded from the Green Belt but lies within an Area of Landscape Maintenance. The site is covered by Policy area E8 (on development at Keele University and Keele Science Park). The site lies outside of 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 the 4th June but the applicant has agreed to an extension of time to 26th June 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

PERMIT subject to conditions relating to the following:-

- 1. Link to outline planning permission and conditions**
- 2. Approved drawings**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Tree protection plan**
- 5. Detailed planting proposals**
- 6. Provision of the access, parking, turning and servicing areas in accordance with the approved plans**
- 7. Submission of a travel plan**
- 8. Submission of details of secure weatherproof cycle parking for students and staff.**

Reason for Recommendation

The proposed use is considered to comply with the terms of the outline consent. Subject to the imposition of conditions the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are considered acceptable. The proposed development therefore accords with the development plan for the locality indicated below and there are no material considerations which would justify a refusal of this reserved matters submission.

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

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The proposed use as a digital research and education centre falls within the scope of the uses and the parameters of the development mix specified in the outline consent and therefore the main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:-

- Are the siting and design of the building acceptable and would there be any significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area?
- Would there be any impact on the existing trees and is the submitted landscaping appropriate?
- Is the level of car parking proposed acceptable?

Are the siting and design of the building acceptable and will there be any significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area?

The proposals comprise two phases of development. Phase 1 would contain workspace for Small and Medium sized Enterprises as well as some specialist space for both external business and University research and use and Phase 2 would comprise a proposed future addition containing teaching and learning spaces.

The development would be located in the northern part of the wider Science Park adjacent to the hotel currently under construction and in close proximity to the Smart Innovation Hub and the recently approved Veterinary School. The building would be positioned to the south-west of the site fronting onto University Avenue with car parking to the rear and access via a new access route to the north serving the hotel.

The building would comprise three storeys and would be approximately 17 metres in height. The ground floor would be constructed of brick and the upper two floors would comprise rainscreen cladding and ceramic baguettes (a decorative building material). The windows and doors would be aluminium.

The outline planning permission, 17/00934/OUT, was supported by Design Guidance and a condition of the permission specified that any reserved matters coming forward for approval shall comply with that Design Guidance. The proposed building would be within Zone A in the Guidance. Zone A is the northern part of the wider site and the Guidance states that to respond to its more direct relationship with the Medical School, Innovation Centres and University Campus, Zone A's infrastructure has been implemented in a more overtly urban manner. It states that buildings within this zone will need to have regular, defined and active frontages, with hard and soft landscaping also reflecting the order and rhythm. Building forms will need to respond to urban opportunities and features such as junctions of routes, activity nodes and important visual axes. It states that it is important that building heights appear consistent as this formality is an essential part of Zone A's character.

In consideration of the proposal, the Urban Vision Design Review Panel (UVDRP) considered the proposed scale of the building and form to be appropriate for the site context. They welcomed the design approach to the project and considered the work undertaken to be comprehensive, demonstrating a good understanding of site context. The Panel made the following recommendations relating to refinement of the design:

- Provision of a set of plans to show the scheme within the wider site context
- Strengthening of the landscape framework including a strategic overview and utilising this information to inform the landscape proposals
- Strengthening the proposals for the site frontage and building entrance including repositioning the building further to the north, articulating the southwest gateways and strengthening the main entrance
- Ensuring the robust design concept is evident in the building's architectural appearance
- Increasing the visual height of the ground floor and ensuring a place making approach to the access route and car park.

The architect has addressed some of the above recommendations through the submission of a site context plan, revisions to the landscape proposals to create a better sense of arrival, refinement of the design to give a simple restrained approach and a review of the treatment of the ground floor to simplify it and accentuate its verticality.

In the context of the existing buildings, particularly the hotel, and the recently approved veterinary school, the height of the building as proposed is considered to be acceptable in this location. The crisp contemporary design is considered appropriate and subject to a condition requiring agreement of the cladding and brick colours, your Officer is satisfied that the proposed materials are acceptable.

The siting, design and materials are therefore considered to be appropriate and it is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Would there be any impact on the existing trees and is the submitted landscaping appropriate?

There is existing woodland to the north-east of the site, part of which is included in Tree Preservation Order 2. The Landscape Development Section raises no objections to the development subject to a condition regarding tree protection. Subject to such a condition, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on the existing trees.

The landscape proposals comprise an area of soft landscape to University Avenue and hard landscape adjacent to the building frontage. Tree planting is proposed to the eastern, western and northern boundaries of the building, to the northern edge of the access route and within the car park. The Landscape Development Section has no objections to the planting proposals and overall the landscaping is considered appropriate to the development.

Is the level of car parking proposed acceptable?

A total of 94 car parking spaces (including six spaces for people with disabilities) would be provided to the rear of the proposed building along with 5 electric vehicle charging points, 6 motor cycle spaces and 44 cycle spaces.

Paragraph 108 of the NPPF states, inter alia, that development should ensure that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users and paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Paragraph 110, inter alia, states that applications for development should create places that minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

Policy T16 of the Local Plan, adopted in 2003, states that development will not be permitted to provide more parking than the levels set out in an appendix. The proposed development comprises a mix of business and teaching and learning spaces. The car parking standards in the Local Plan do not specify a standard for University teaching and learning space but for business uses, a maximum of 1 space per 30 square metres of floorspace is recommended. On this basis, a maximum of 87 spaces

would be required for Phase 1 of the scheme. As stated above, a total of 94 spaces are proposed for both phases of development.

The University are seeking to actively manage estate car parking availability holistically and given the mix of the uses proposed, the level of car parking is considered appropriate and should not undermine longer term efforts to achieve modal shift through Travel Planning. The proposal would fall within the trip envelope for the wider development site as set out in the outline consent and bearing in mind that the Highway Authority has no objections to the development subject to planning conditions, it is concluded that there are no highway safety concerns arising from this development that would warrant the refusal of planning permission.

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 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
Policy T16: Development – General Parking Requirements

Other Material Considerations include:

National Planning Policy

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) \(2019\)](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance \(March 2014\)](#)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document \(2010\)](#)

[Planning for Landscape Change - SPG to the former Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan](#)

[Waste Management and Recycling Planning Practice Guidance Note](#) approved in 2003 and last updated in February 2016

Relevant Planning History

05/01146/OUT (A) Full planning permission for engineering operations including plateau formation, earthworks, layout of road network, cyclepaths and footpaths, drainage works and other ancillary works

(B) Outline planning permission for development for (a) academic function's; (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 - Approved

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Views of Consultees

The **Environmental Health Division** makes no comments.

The **Highway Authority** has no objections subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the provision of the access, parking, turning and servicing areas in accordance with the approved plans, submission of a travel plan and the submission of details of secure weatherproof cycle parking for students and staff.

The **Landscape Development Section** has no objections subject to the submission of detailed planting proposals and a Tree Protection Plan to BS5837:2012 for the adjacent woodland to the northeast, part of which is included in Tree Preservation Order number 2.

The **Conservation Officer** makes no comments.

Historic England makes no comments.

Staffordshire County Council Flood Authority has no objections.

The **Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor** makes the following recommendations:

- Offenders should be denied the opportunity for a vehicle to approach the building and use it to force entry.
- The external materials will need to provide an appropriate level of intruder resistance.
- The simple straight external lines of the building and avoidance of recesses should be beneficial in aiding both natural and CCTV surveillance.
- The merits of appropriate monitored CCTV coverage should be fully explored and should be extended to the car park and cycle parking.

Keele Parish Council has no comments or objections.

No comments have been received from **The Gardens Trust** and **National Grid** and given that the period for comment has ended it must be assumed that they have no comments to make.

Representations

None received.

Applicant's/Agent's submission

The application is accompanied by the following documents:

- Design and Access Statement
- Drainage Strategy
- Ecological Appraisal
- Bream Pre-Assessment Report

All of these documents are available for inspection as associated documents to the application in the Planning Section of the Council's website via the following link <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/20/00162/REM>

Background papers

Planning files referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

4th June 2020