

Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 11th June 2015

Subject: PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 15/01615/FU FOUR STOREY OFFICE BUILDING WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING ON LAND AT THORPE PARK, LEEDS

APPLICANT

Thorpe Park Developments Ltd

DATE VALID

31.03.15

TARGET DATE

30.06.15

Electoral Wards Affected:

Garforth and Swillington

☐ Yes

Ward Members consulted
(Referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity ☐

Community Cohesion ☐

Narrowing the Gap ☐

RECOMMENDATION:

Defer and delegate to the Chief Planning Officer for approval, subject to addressing outstanding issues including any issues Members may raise, the imposition of the specified conditions (and any others which he might consider appropriate).

Conditions:

1. Three year time limit for commencement.
2. Plans to be approved.
3. No encroachment onto Highways England land.
4. Area to be used by vehicles to be laid out.
5. Provision for contractors during construction period.
6. Means of preventing mud on the highway.
7. Details of long and short stay cycle parking.
8. Details of motorcycle parking including anchorage bars.
9. Provision and retention of lockers and showers within building.
10. Maximum development thresholds in accordance with Transport Assessment.
11. Surface water drainage works scheme.
12. Unexpected contamination reporting.
13. Imported soil contamination verification.
14. Schedule of external materials.
15. Landscaping and implementation.
16. Travel Plan and Travel Plan monitoring.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report is presented to City Centre and Strategic Panel due to the fact that the proposal is for the development of a significant gateway plot into Thorpe Park that represents the new design approach being taken under the evolving masterplan. A separate but related reserved matters application for Plot A2 is considered elsewhere on this agenda.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 The proposals seek full planning permission for the construction of a four storey office building with associated parking on Plot 3175 off Century Way, west of the roundabout off Junction 46 of the M1. The building would be accessed from the existing access with Century Way, which serves Plots 3125 and 3150.
- 2.2 The building is designed to maximise natural light whilst seeking to remain within the maximum height restrictions of the approved parameters plans for the wider development. The building seeks to be sympathetic with existing office buildings whilst raising the bar for the standards of construction, in recognition of the context in which the building is proposed. The aim is to create a focal point to the key vistas and approaches to the wider development. Materials proposed include a simple palette of masonry and glazing, with solar shading provided with louvers.
- 2.3 Within the constraints of the proximity of the M1 motorway (in terms of acoustics and air quality) the design of the building follows the following low carbon approaches:
- Energy efficiency plant and heat recovery of ventilation and cooling systems;
 - Automatic zone controlled heating, ventilation, cooling and lighting;
 - LED high efficiency lighting;
 - Low and zero carbon technologies such as air/water source heat pumps and/or photovoltaic systems;
 - Fabric first approach to performance enhancement above minimum standards; and
 - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and water conservation measures.
- 2.4 External access steps are proposed to the south east of the site, faced in a Baggeridge Staffordshire Blue brick, to link with the existing path around the SUDS pond to the south east of the development.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The application site boundary relates to the southern half of the employment allocation that totalled 63 hectares. Plot 3175 is the last remaining plot to be constructed within this phase of Thorpe Park. Plots 3125 and 3150 have already been constructed and are occupied.
- 3.2 With respect to the surrounding area the site is located on the eastern boundary of Thorpe Park and abuts the motorway slip road created to serve the development. Two and three storey office buildings surround the site on three sides (north, south & west) and at the same level. To the east between the application site boundary and the slip road is a large balancing pond set within a landscaped area. These features are approximately 2m lower than the site.

- 3.3 Thorpe Park is allocated as employment land and a 'key business park' in the UDPR. It forms a key part of the Council's employment land supply and provides an attractive regionally significant business park. The land to the west is allocated as Proposed Open Space and to the east is the Green Belt. The UDPR designates a new cycle route running north-south through Thorpe Park and a scheduled ancient monument, Grims Ditch, is located to the immediate west of Thorpe Park.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 09/00829/RM – Reserved matters application for 3 storey 'L' shaped office building with parking for 122 vehicles – Granted 22/05/09
- 4.2 32/152/05/RM – Reserved matters application for three 3 storey office blocks including car parking & landscaping to business park – Granted 03/10/05
- 4.3 32/140/96/FU – Variation to outline condition to extend the total permitted floorspace within the development - Granted 31/03/04
- 4.4 32/356/01/RM – Laying out of new access and roundabout diverting footpaths and bridleway and construction of cycleway/footpath (option 2) – Granted 22/01/02
- 4.5 32/185/00/FU – Re-profiling to proposed business park – Granted 27/04/01
- 4.6 32/199/94/OT – Outline permission Thorpe Park – Granted 04/10/95

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

- 5.1 The applicant engaged in pre-application discussions with officers on the amended design of building and design principles to be adopted in early 2015. The proposals submitted on 31st March 2015 are generally reflective of these pre-application discussions.

6 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

- 6.1 Public consultation on the application has taken the form of formal statutory consultations. A site notice was displayed on 17th April 2015 and the application was advertised in the press on 16th April 2015. The expiry date for these consultations was 08th May 2015 and in response no public comment has been received. No Ward Councillor comments have been received in respect of the application.

7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

7.1 Statutory:

Environment Agency: The application falls outside the scope of matters on which we wish to be consulted.

Coal Authority: Objects due to substantive concern – the applicant has submitted a Mining Statement which draws on previously submitted information to conclude that there are no outstanding issues regarding mining legacy affecting the site but insufficient information has been submitted in support of the application to demonstrate that the site is safe and stable for the proposed development.

Highways England: Recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted in respect of the boundary of the proposed development and associated works so that they do not encroach onto designated Highways England property nor compromise or conflict with the Highways England M1 J46 project [the encroachment is minor in respect of the verge and amended plans are awaited to address this concern].

LCC Transport Development Services: No objections subject to conditions and the red line boundary being amended, so as to ensure any margin required by Highways England is not prejudiced by the proposal.

7.2 **Non-statutory:**

LCC Landscape and Design: No objections subject to agreement of materials and amendments to the parapet of the rooftop terrace detail and plant room/office form, in order that this detail does not detract from the simplicity of the overall design and to ensure that building is well balanced in terms of its proportions.

LCC Flood Risk Management: An overall drainage strategy for the Thorp Park development has been undertaken for the entire Thorp Park site so that balancing facilities have been included within the curtilage of the wider site area for the control and management of the surface water discharges from the catchment. Connections have been put in place to connect the surface water runoff from this section of the site to the drainage infrastructure in place. The site includes an extensive car parking area and petrol interceptors are required. Condition recommended to require prior approval of such details and to cover attenuation measures and surface water discharges from the site.

LCC Contaminated Land: No objections subject to standard conditions to cover contaminated land issues.

8.0 **PLANNING POLICIES:**

- 8.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the Core Strategy (2014), saved policies within the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) and the Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document (2013).

Local Planning Policy

- 8.2 The Core Strategy is the development plan for the whole of the Leeds District. Some saved policies of the UDP Review also apply. The following policies within them are relevant:

Spatial Policy 1	Location of Development
Spatial Policy 2	Hierarchy of centres and spatial approach to retailing, offices, intensive leisure and culture
Spatial Policy 8	Economic development priorities
Spatial Policy 9	Provision for offices, industry and warehouse employment land and premises

Policy EC1	General employment land
Policy EC2	Office development
Policy EN1	Climate change
Policy EN2	Sustainable design and construction
Policy EN4	District heating
Policy EN5	Managing flood risk
Policy T1	Transport management
Policy T2	Accessibility requirements and new development
Policy P8	Sequential and impact assessments for town centre uses
Policy P10	Design
Policy P12	Landscape
Policy ID2	Planning obligations and developer contributions

8.3 Saved Policies of Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review (UDPR):

GP1	Land use and the proposals map
GP5	General planning considerations
BD5	Design considerations for new build
E4(6)	Austhorpe business park allocation
N23/N25	Landscape design and boundary treatment
T7A	Cycle parking guidelines
T24	Parking guidelines
LD1	Landscape schemes

8.4 Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance:

SPG10 Sustainable Development Design Guide (adopted)
 SPG22 Sustainable Urban Drainage (adopted)
 SPD Street Design Guide (adopted)
 SPD Travel Plans (draft)
 SPD Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions (adopted).
 SPD Designing for Community Safety (adopted)

Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan (adopted).

8.5 **National planning policy guidance:**

8.6 The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27th March 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, alongside other national planning policies. In this case the following sections are relevant:

Achieving sustainable development
 Section 1 Building a strong, competitive economy
 Section 2 Ensuring the vitality of town centres
 Section 4 Promoting sustainable transport
 Section 7 Requiring good design
 Section 8 Promoting healthy communities
 Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 Decision-taking

Annex 1 Implementation

9.0 MAIN ISSUES:

- Principle of the development
- Layout and design
- Highways and accessibility considerations
- Flood risk management
- Landscaping

10.0 APPRAISAL:

10.1 Principle of the development:

Core Strategy policy P9 identifies that a minimum of 706,250 sqm of office floor space will be provided over the Plan period. This provision comprises of new and existing locations. Policy P9 notes that a third of the existing supply is located outside the City Centre and includes permissions at Thorpe Park Business Park. Saved UDP Review policy E4(6) allocates the application site for employment use as a business park and outline and reserved matters planning permissions have previously been granted for an office development of the site. The application is therefore acceptable and policy compliant in principle.

10.2 Layout and design

The main issue raised under the proposed development is the acceptability of the revised design when compared with the office blocks approved on the site in 2005 and 2009 in light of current planning policy requirements. Whilst there are some detailed design aspects to resolve, focussing on the parapet and rooftop structure, overall the proposed design is of high quality with a simple palette of glass and masonry facing. It represents a step forward in quality over the earlier buildings adjacent which are in many respects of their time. Overall the proposal subject to minor these minor amendments is acceptable and policy compliant in design terms.

10.3 Highways and accessibility considerations

The application site would be accessed directly from Century Way where bus stops are in close proximity, even if services are quite limited. Highways advise that because of this the site doesn't fully meet Core Strategy accessibility standards, but note that recent wider approvals at Thorpe Park have a public transport strategy, travel plan, and that these considerations and likely improvements due to the delivery of the Manston Lane Link Road will in time address accessibility issues. Core Strategy Policy T2 sets out the Council's accessibility requirements and saved policy guidelines under UDPR Review policies T7A (Cycle parking guidelines) and T24 (Parking guidelines) set out parking standards. There are no highway safety objections to the proposed access, and the level of car parking provision proposed is in accordance with policy. Conditions are however recommended in relation to construction management and measures to prevent mud on the highway, and to require adequate cycle/motorcycle parking facilities and showers/lockers within the building. Subject to such conditions and confirmation that there is no encroachment onto Highway England land there are no highway objections to the proposed building.

10.4 Flood risk management

Flood risk management note that drainage measures including attenuation have been agreed for the whole site, but request a scheme for surface water drainage with

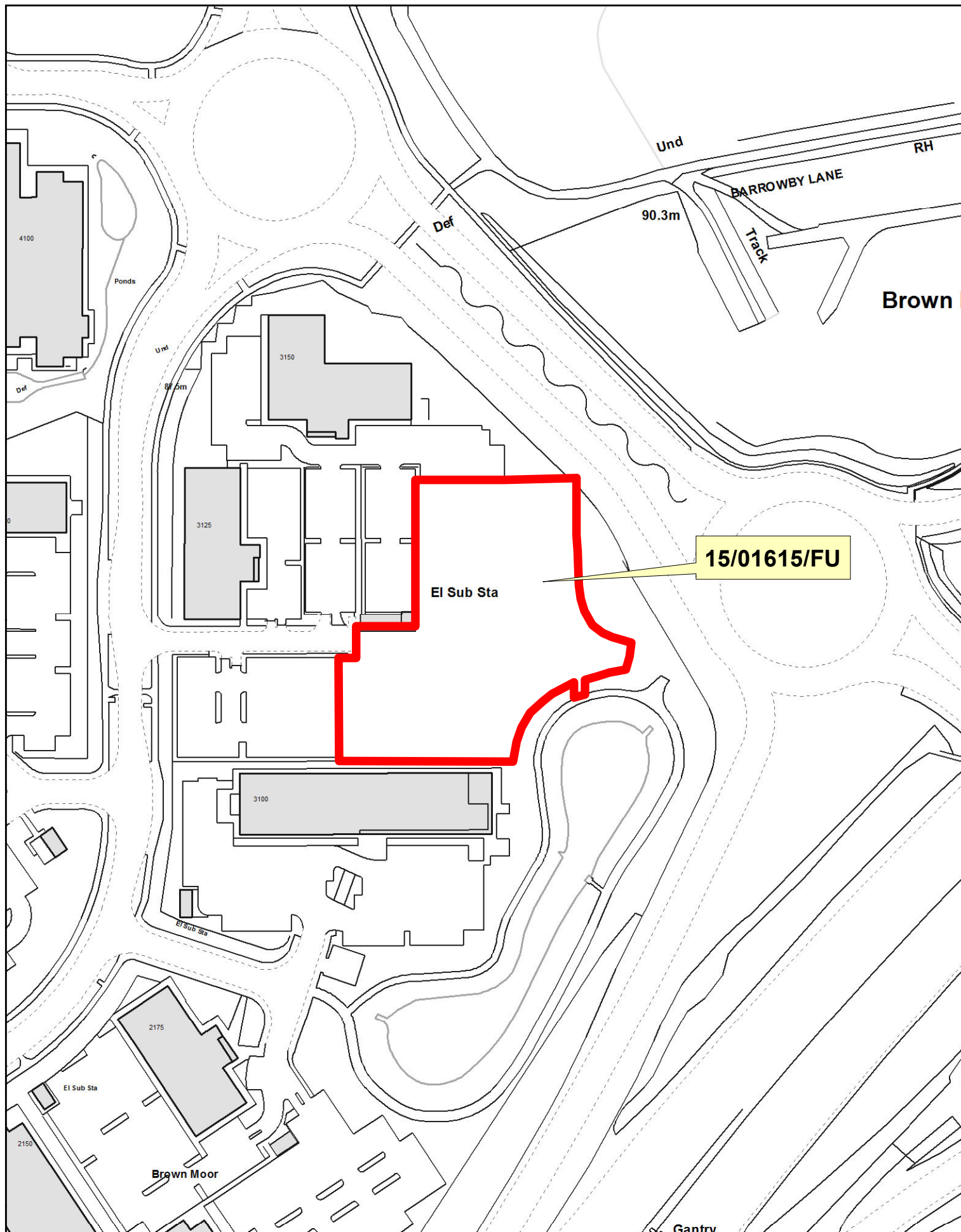
pollution prevention measures by condition. Subject to such a condition the application would not be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and is therefore policy compliant in these regards.

10.5 Landscaping

The site is landlocked between the parking areas of existing office developments to the west which currently form the frontage with Century way and which is already tree lined and landscaped, and the verges of the Motorway junction slip road and roundabout to the east. To the southeast of the building the existing SUDS balancing pond is already landscaped on its margins. Whilst more detail of soft planting around the building and within parking areas to break it up would be desirable, this detail is capable of being addressed by condition. Subject to such a condition the proposal would be policy compliant in this regard.

11.0 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The proposal completes the last remaining plot on the southern part of Thorpe Park. The site is allocated for employment use under Saved UDP Review policy E4 (6) and the development of offices at Thorpe Park is well established in principle. Various detailed designs of building have previously been supported on this site and the revised design proposed for Plot 3175, subject to minor amendment, represents an improvement on the quality and detail of building previously approved.
- 11.2 Together with allied proposals for the development of Plot A2 it will 'set the tone' for future development and act as a key landmark building on approach to Thorpe Park from the M1. The application is in accordance with adopted local and national planning policy and the remaining issues in relation to highways, landscaping and mining legacy are matters which are relatively easily addressed and the applicant is progressing the necessary amended plans and further information.
- 11.3 It is therefore recommended that members defer and delegate approval of the application to the Chief Planning Officer, subject to the resolution of the outstanding design issues and the conditions identified above under recommendation.



CITY PLANS PANEL

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