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| Chorlton Park Ward | Application Number 078469/FO/2006/S1 | Date of Appln 24th Mar 2006 | Committee Date 28th Sep 2006 |
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Proposal Erection of 7 x two storey business units class B1 (3268 square metres gross floor area) with associated car parking and landscaping

Location Christie Fields, Barlow Moor Road, West Didsbury

Applicant BNHW Christie Fields Ltd 4240 Park Approach, Thorpe Park, Leeds, LS15 8GB

Agent 3D Architects 45 West Nile Street, Glasgow, G1 2PT

Description

This application relates to an irregular shaped site of 0.81 hectares (2 acres) forming part of Christie Fields. It is situated at the junction of Princess Road and Barlow Moor Road with access from the new estate road off Derwent Avenue which serves the remainder of Christie Fields. The site is currently vacant, though there has been some removal of topsoil. There are currently 12 trees on the site. There is a security lodge on the access road which controls vehicular access to Christie Fields in general.

Immediately adjoining to the north of the site is a public house and hotel with associated car parking. To the west, across the access road is a 3 storey office building occupied by Astra Zeneca, again with its own car park. To the south is a new day nursery and a temporary car park for use by the staff of the offices occupying the site of the former Oaks Public House across Derwent Avenue. All of these uses form part of the 'Christie Fields' site. Facing the site across Princess Road is a modern 3 storey office and Christ Church, a grade II listed building. The northern boundary of Christie Fields is bounded by Barlow Moor Road, across which is Southern Cemetery. The western and southern boundaries of Christie Fields are bounded by Derwent Avenue and Darley Avenue, both of which are residential in nature. Planning permission was recently granted for the development of the Derwent Avenue and Darley Avenue frontages of Christie Fields with housing.

Permission is sought to erect 7 two storey speculative office buildings ranging in size from 386 square metres (4,157 square feet) to 573 square metres (6,168 square feet) gross floor area. Three of the blocks would front Princess Road, the remainder would front the service roads/car parking areas within the site. Pedestrian access would be provided from Princess Road. Two vehicular accesses would be provided from the existing service road which is taken from Derwent Avenue. In total 104 parking spaces, including 7 specifically designated for disabled drivers would be provided within the curtilage of the site. In addition, 30 bicycle parking spaces are proposed, together with refuse/recycling areas. Substantial areas of perimeter landscaping are proposed, together with areas of incidental landscaping within the site. It is proposed to remove all the existing trees, though 82 new trees will be provided.

In 1999 Taylor Woodrow obtained planning permissions ref. 055496 and 055497 for the erection of in all 6 office buildings comprising in total 21,368 square metres (230,000 square feet) of offices with 829 parking spaces. Of

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these only two blocks have been built comprising in total 6,595 square metres (70,998 square feet) with 233 car parking spaces.

Consultations

Local residents - 20 letters have been received from local residents. Some letters refer to both this application, and the application for a residential development on adjoining land considered by Committee at an earlier meeting. Where comments obviously refer to that earlier application they have been omitted from the report. The concerns raised include:-

1. This application, together with the housing application should have been considered together to allow the issues to be fully considered.
2. The Planning Department, not the developer should carry out a traffic audit, and take into account the 100 cars that will be displaced when the permission for the temporary car park runs out.
3. The proposed buildings should have one parking space per user or residents parking schemes should be introduced into the surrounding areas.
4. 15 parking spaces per office block is inadequate and will compound the parking problems caused by the existing offices. The parking problems are exacerbated as the overspill clogs the surrounding narrow streets and causes severe friction with local residents. There have been a number of accidents in the surrounding streets attributable to the inconsiderate parking by office workers. Also service and emergency vehicles have difficulty using the side streets. The earlier approval failed to make adequate allowance for parking and this has resulted in the need for the temporary car park.
5. The scheme will result in the loss of mature trees on the site and associated increased levels of airborne pollution.
6. The design and quality of the proposed buildings falls short of what was originally envisaged.
7. The area is already overdeveloped and the site should remain as open space.
8. The transport statement shows a lack of understanding of the area, particularly when it refers to the availability of roadside parking.
9. The submitted green travel plan is a gesture. It suggests each unit will have its own travel plan which will result in an uncoordinated approach. The green travel plan for Astra Zeneca who occupy one of the offices does not work.
10. The development of Christie Fields has taken place in an ad-hoc and uncoordinated fashion.
11. Concern is expressed about the lack of information regarding the end users of the development.
12. Why is there no request for an Environmental Impact Assessment.

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13. Concern is expressed that if this application is successful it is only a matter of time before an application is received to develop the temporary car park.

14. The site should be declared fully developed.

Ward Members - John Leech M.P. has written in support of local residents. He is concerned that there will be insufficient parking and the scheme needs to be redesigned to provide more. He has no concerns about the principle of the development as long as the above point is addressed.

Green Spaces Manager - A number of the trees to be removed are in fair to good condition but would not survive the proposed development works. The proposed replacement trees will compensate for the renewal of the trees from the site.

Landscape Group Practice - Is concerned that more effort has not been made to retained existing trees. The replacement trees should be larger specimens than those proposed. Suggests the use of more evergreen shrubs. The scheme has been modified and now addresses these comments.

Greater Manchester Police - Is concerned that there is free access to all sides of the buildings which will make them vulnerable to attack, particularly as there are pedestrian access points to Princess Road. If the scheme is to achieve Secured by Design accreditation the buildings will have to be built to the highest Secured by Design standards and there will need to be some forms of access control.

Economic Initiatives -There is no strategic regeneration framework or local plan covering this area yet. However, the Christie Fields Site has attracted business development in recent years and further employment generating activity would be welcome. In view of the prominence of this site on one of the major gateway routes into the city particular attention should be paid to the scale and quality of the development to ensure it is appropriate for this key location.

Transport Policy Unit -The Green Travel Plan submitted is satisfactory and will form a good basis for the individual occupiers to draw up their own green travel plans.

Head of Engineering Services - Has made the following comments -

The level of cycle parking facilities to be agreed.

The proposed parking provision of 1 space per 30 square metres has met the maximum parking standard set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13.

Derwent Avenue/Barlow Moor Road junction has been designed to cater for the development of the whole site and therefore should be able to accommodate the traffic generation of this latest proposed development.

Highways Agency - No objections.

Major Development - The development has been advertised as a major development.

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Issues

Unitary Development Plan - The relevant policies are CB4(a) which allocates the site for B1 business development, H2.2 which looks to prevent new developments adversely affecting the amenity of adjoining residential properties. I1.1 which requires the Council to ensure a range of sites being available for commercial and industrial development that meet certain criteria, including ease of access to the airport. Policy I1.3 talks of the need to provide suitable premises for small firms, I3.1 requires new developments to be of a high quality. Policy T3.1 states that the council will ensure that the particular needs of both pedestrians and cyclists are catered for in new developments. Policy E3.3 requires new developments to contribute to improving the appearance of major radial routes. Policy DC9 requires new development to be accessible and DC16 looks to retain trees unless a satisfactory replanting scheme is more desirable. Finally Policy DC19 looks to prevent developments that will have and adverse affect on Listed Buildings or their settings.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG13)(2003) - Policy DP1 advises that economy in the use of land and buildings is required. New development should be located so as to make the most efficient use of land, promote appropriate mixes of uses within a site and its wider neighbourhood, make efficient use of transport facilities and assist people to meet their needs locally. The proposal makes use of previously developed land at the junction of a major radial and orbital routes, giving good access into the City centre with its associated facilities and transport interchanges, the airport and the surrounding conurbation. It is therefore considered that the proposal generally complies with this policy.

Policy DP3 states that new development must demonstrate good design quality and respect for its setting, including the integration of new development with surrounding land use taking into account the setting, quality, distinctiveness and heritage of the environment and the use of sympathetic materials, more eco-friendly and adaptable buildings and community safety and "designing out crime".

Policy UR4 establishes targets for the recycling of land and buildings. It sets a target of achieving 90% within Manchester between 1996 and 2016. This proposal is in accordance with the aims of Policy UR4.

Principle - The site is allocated for Class B1 development in the Unitary Development Plan, Policy CB4a. Planning Permission has already been granted for such a use previously. The principle of further offices on the site is therefore considered acceptable.

Environmental Impact Assessment - A screening opinion has been carried out and concluded that an EIA is not required in this instance.

Site Layout - This aspect of the scheme has been amended so that the scheme now provides a built frontage, rather than a car park, to Princess Road in line with the Guide to Development in Manchester 2. The use of parking directly off the service road, reduces the need for large areas of car park and enables a more economic use of the site, and the creation of larger areas of soft landscaping. Overall the layout makes good use of the site and will result in a positive impact on the appearance of the Princess Road Corridor and is therefore very welcome.

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Design - The proposed buildings are contemporary in their styling and employ a similar palette of materials to the existing buildings on Christie Fields, namely brick, glass and rainscreen cladding. The buildings have been redesigned to provide an attractive frontage to Princess Road (discussions over some modest changes are ongoing). Overall the design of the proposed buildings is considered entirely appropriate.

Disabled Access - The scheme is fully accessible with the buildings incorporating platform lifts.

Secured by Design - The concerns of the Architectural Liaison Officer are fully understood and discussions have taken place with the applicant regarding this matter. It has been confirmed that there are existing security arrangements for the site including controlled vehicular access. In addition an appropriate condition is proposed relating to achieving Secured by Design accreditation.

Vehicular Access - The Traffic Impact Assessment submitted with the original planning applications for the development of Christie Fields demonstrated how the site access needed to be redesigned to accommodate an office development on the whole of the site. Whilst the office development was never completed the junction improvement works were carried out in full. Though the nature of the development has changed the Head of Engineering Services is satisfied that the additional traffic can be accommodated by the improved junction.

Car Parking - There are well documented problems in the surrounding residential streets arising from the demand for parking space from the occupiers of the existing units. This has led to confrontations in the street between residents and workers culminating in residents taking direct action to prevent parking taking place in the surrounding residential streets. In an effort to resolve the problem planning permission was granted for a temporary car park for 105 cars and the Transport Policy Unit has been in discussion with the occupiers of the offices regarding the introduction of Travel Plans.

The current scheme provides 104 parking spaces for 3,208 square metres (34,531 square feet) of floor space which is marginally under one space per 31 square metres, national guidance being a maximum of one space per 30 sq. metres. To achieve this level an additional 4 to 5 spaces would be required, though this is not considered to be significant. The Head of Engineering Services believes that the level of parking provided is acceptable in respect of the proposed scheme.

The original permissions for the development of the site proposed 829 spaces or 1 space per 25.7 square metres (277 square feet) gross floor area. Whilst this is a higher provision than that proposed now, 1 space per 31 square metres (333 sq. feet) current guidance aims to discourage the use of the private car and to seek to increase the level of parking would be therefore contrary to this guidance and unsustainable in environmental terms. It would also require a greater part of the site to be given over to parking which would be visually unacceptable. To reduce the amount of floorspace on the site would adversely affect the appearance of the development.

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Whilst recognising the problems associated with by the existing offices this application has to be considered on its merits. This proposal does not affect the temporary car park nor the Councils efforts to achieve a longer term solution to the problems caused by the occupiers of the existing office buildings. The development is in its own right adequately provided for in terms of car parking.

Travel Plans - The applicant has producing a framework for a Green Travel Plan within which each future occupier can prepare their own plan, tailored to the particular needs of their company. The Transport Policy Unit have confirmed that the framework is acceptable and it is proposed, should permission be granted, to impose an appropriate condition.

Trees - There are 12 trees on the site we all of which are proposed to be removed. Most of the trees are mature and in fair to good condition. However, whilst most of the trees are along the Princess Road frontage their position on the site would necessitate placing any development behind an extremely deep forecourt if they were to be retained. In response to the loss of the trees, 82 new trees are proposed, resulting in a net gain of 70 trees on the site, significantly better than the 10% increase suggested in the Council's tree strategy . The applicants have also agreed to increasing the girth of the trees in line with the comments of the Landscape Group Practice. The new trees will include Maple, Lime, Birch and Rowan which are indigenous species. The applicant has investigated the reuse of trees displaced by the recently approved residential development elsewhere on Christie Fields. however, there is a long preparation time for transplanting and the success rate is not particularly high. This is further complicated by the schemes involving different developers and the land being in different ownerships. Overall the proposed development will result in a substantial increase in the number of trees in the area and make a positive contribution to the greening of the city.

Landscaping - The scheme has been revised to incorporate more and larger areas of soft landscaping. The emphasis being on providing a high quality landscaped frontage to Princess Road, with views into the site between the frontage buildings along landscaped avenues. The landscaping scheme is of high quality and will make a positive contribution to the surrounding area.

Listed Buildings - Christ Church which faces the site across Princess Road is listed as being of architectural or historic importance. The proposed development is separated from Christ Church by the substantial width of the Princess Road/Barlow Moor Road junction. It is believed that the development does not affect the setting, appearance or views of the listed building and therefore does not conflict with local policy or national guidance contained in PPG15.

Sustainability - the site is located at the junction of Princess Road and Barlow Moor Road, both major transport routes, well served by public transport. The proposed scheme would achieve a BREEAM rating of at least very good and there would be substantial tree planting well in excess of the number of trees lost associated with the development. Overall this is considered to be a sustainable form of development.

Residential Amenity - The proposed development will not have any direct impact on the amenity of nearby residential accommodation other than through traffic issues discussed elsewhere in this report.

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Conclusion - this is a speculative office development, though details have been provided of a future occupier for one of the units, which will bring new employment opportunities to the City. Based on similar schemes elsewhere it is anticipated that the development could provide up to 350 jobs. The submitted scheme accords with the Unitary Development Plan objective of the site being developed as a employment generator. The Head of Planning believes that the current scheme is both sustainable and attractive and that it will make a positive contribution to the south Manchester office market.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations - This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have the right to a fair hearing and to this end the Committee must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Unitary Development Plan, the Head of Planning has concluded that some rights conferred by these Articles on the applicant(s)/objectors/residents and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. He believes that any restriction on these rights posed by approval of the application is proportionate to the wider benefits of approval and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation APPROVE

Approve on the basis that the proposal is in accord with the City Council's Unitary Development Plan in particular policies CB4(a), H2.2, I1.1, I1.3, I3.1, H2.2, E3.3, T3.1, DC9, DC16 and DC19 in that it will provide a sustainable and attractive development, which will not have a significant impact on residential or the general amenity of the area and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate otherwise.

Conditions and/or Reasons

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason -

Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings numbered , stamped as received by the Local Planning Authority on , unless otherwise agreed in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

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Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans pursuant to policies E3.3, H2.2 and I3.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of MAnchester.

3) Construction of the works hereby approved by this permission shall not take place until samples and specifications of the materials to be used on all external elevations of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority. The development shall be constructed only using the approved materials unless otherwise agreed in writing by the City Council as local planning authority.

Reason

To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located pursuant to policies E3.3, H2.2 and I3.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of MAnchester

4) Details of a Travel Plan Strategy, its implementation and monitoring of effectiveness shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority by the occupants prior to their first occupation of any of the office accommodation. The strategy shall outline procedures and policies that the developer and occupants of the site will adopt to secure the objectives of the overall site's Travel Plan Strategy. Additionally, the strategy shall outline the monitoring procedures and review mechanisms that are to be put in place to ensure that the strategy and its implementation remains effective. The results of the monitoring and review processes shall be submitted in writing to the local planning authority and any measures that are identified that can improve the effectiveness of the Travel Plan Strategy shall be adopted and implemented.

Reason - In order to promote sustainable modes of transportation, in accordance with the provisions contained within PPG 13.

5) Details of the proposed boundary treatment, including colour, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council, as local planning authority, before the use commences. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, pursuant to policies H2.2, E3.3 and I3.1 of the adopted UDP.

6) The car parking indicated on the approved plans shall be surfaced, demarcated and made available for use prior to the building hereby approved being occupied. The car park shall then be available at all times whilst the site is occupied.

Reason

To ensure that there is adequate car parking for the development proposed when the building is occupied pursuant to policy I3.1 and H2.2 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

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7) The landscaping scheme approved by the City Council as local planning authority shown on drawing ref ***** , shall be implemented not later than 12 months from the date of commencement of works. Any trees or shrubs removed, dying or becoming severely damaged or becoming severely diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of a similar size or species to those originally required to be planted unless otherwise agreed in writing by the City Council as local planning authority.

Reason

To ensure that a satisfactory landscaping scheme for the development is carried out pursuant to policies H2.2 I3.1 DC9 and E3.3 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of MAnchester

8) Before the development hereby approved commences a scheme for the storage and disposal of refuse shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority. The details of the approved scheme shall be implemented as part of the development and shall remain in situ whilst the use or development is in operation.

Reason - In the interests of amenity and public health, pursuant to policies I3.1 and H2.2 of the adopted UDP.

9) The development hereby approved shall incorporate measures to minimise the risk of crime and to meet the specific security needs of the application site and the development. Any security measures to be implemented in compliance with this condition shall seek to achieve the 'Secure by Design' accreditation awarded by the Greater Manchester Police. Written confirmation of those measures are to be provided to the City Council, as the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - In pursuance of the Council's duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider crime and disorder implications in exercising its planning functions; to promote the well-being of the area in pursuance of the Council's powers under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, and to reflect the guidance contained in PPS1 "Delivering Sustainable Development".

10) All vehicles entering and leaving the site during the construction period are to pass through a wheel wash. Details of the wheel wash shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority prior to the development commencing.

Reason

To ensure that the proposed development does not cause unacceptable amounts of dust in the vicinity and to ensure that local roads are kept clear of mud pursuant to policy H2.2 of the Unitary development Plan.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

The documents referred to in the course of this report are either contained in the file(s) relating to application ref: 078469/FO/2006/S1 held by Planning or are City Council planning policies, the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, national planning guidance documents, or relevant decisions on

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other applications or appeals, copies of which are all held by the Planning Division.

The following residents, businesses and other third parties in the area were consulted on the application:

28 – 32, 78 – 98, 59 - 83 Darley Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester M21
1-51, 2-30 Manor Drive Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7GQ
1 – 25, 2-20 Macefin Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7QQ
St. Ambrose Rc Primary School Princess Road Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7QA
Astra Zeneca Site Office Derwent Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7QS
1-4 Callington Road Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7GN
2-40, 1-47 Aldermay Road Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7QN
2-16 Derwent Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7QP
235-245 Barlow Moor Road Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7QL
1-10 Haddon Road Barlow Moor Manchester M21 7QU
1-14 Ambrose Gardens Barlow Moor Manchester M20 2YF
1, 2-34 Ashwood Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester M20 2ZB
Christ Church West Didsbury Parish Church Darley Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester M20 2ZD
Siemens Sir William Siemens House Princess Road Barlow Moor Manchester M20 2UR
Kids Unlimited Princess Road Didsbury Manchester
Travel Lodge Barlow Moor Road Didsbury Manchester
Brewerys Farye Barlow Moor Road Disbury Manchester

Representations were received from the following third parties:

63 Darley Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
79 Darley Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
18 Manor Drive Barlow Moor Manchester
26 Manor Drive Barlow Moor Manchester
Flat A 47 Manor Drive Barlow Moor
12 Macefin Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
13 Macefin Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
2 Macefin Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
21 Macefin Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
6 Macefin Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
Flat 19 51 Manor Drive Barlow Moor
32 Aldermay Road Barlow Moor Manchester
14 Derwent Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
18 Derwent Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
2 Derwent Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
4 Derwent Avenue Barlow Moor Manchester
1 Haddon Road Barlow Moor Manchester
3 Haddon Road Barlow Moor Manchester

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