

Application Number	Date of Appln	Committee Date	Ward
094126/FO/2010/S1	9th Sep 2010	25th Nov 2010	Hulme Ward

Proposal Installation of 1 x United Utilities HV substation, 1 x transformer, 6 x 500kVA standby generators, 24 x air conditioning condenser units and 1 diesel store within existing compound

Location Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester Science Park, Hulme, Manchester, M15 6SY

Applicant Mr Robin Garbutt , The UK Grid Network Ltd, 1 Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester, M15 6SY,

Agent

Description

This application concerns a site, approximately 350m² (3,780 ft²) in area, which is currently used as an equipment compound for Synergy House. Synergy House is a part two and part three storey office building located on Guildhall Close within the Manchester Science Park in Hulme. The property is divided into six units, all of which are occupied by *high-tech* companies.

To the north of the application site, on the opposite side of Guildhall Close there are further office buildings and associated car parking areas, while to the south there is car parking area used by the inhabitants of Synergy House and beyond that there is a school playing field. Standing approximately 37m (121ft) to the west of the application site is a building on Greenheys Lane used by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, beyond that and on the opposite side of Greenheys Lane stands residential accommodation.

The applicants are proposing to install one United Utilities high-voltage substation, one transformers, six 500kVA standby generators and twenty-four air-conditioning condenser units within existing compound. In addition, a diesel store, for use in connection with the standby generators, will also be erected,

The sub-station and transformer would be used to power units 4 and 5 Synergy House, while the twenty-four air conditioning units would be used to provide cooling to units 4, 5 and 6 Synergy House. While it is understood that the standby generators would only be used in emergencies there would be a need to test run them for 5 minutes every month. While the compound's existing 2.4m (7.9ft) high paladin fencing and the single storey brick store will remain in-situ, the existing equipment and portable buildings would be removed to facilitate the development.

Originally the applicants were proposing to install two substations and two transformers, along with the air conditioning units and generators, however, they have since amended the scheme to that now placed before the committee.

Consultations and Notifications

Local Residents – Letters of objections have been received from two local residents, the main points of which are outlined below:

- There has been 9 months of noise from Synergy House which has only just been resolved by Environmental Health officers. This proposal should not be allowed with residential accommodation being located only 80 to 125 metres (262½ to 410 feet) away.
- Six standby generators will make a considerable amount of noise when in operation, what protection will be afforded to local residents and what time will the generators run?

South Manchester Regeneration – No objection to the proposal as long as the equipment is adequately housed/muffled as residents who live on the Aquarius Estate on Greenheys Lane have suffered considerable nuisance from equipment located on the Science Park.

Head of Environmental Health – Recommends that two conditions be attached to any approval granted, one to control the discharging of fumes from the premises and the other requiring the acoustic insulation of the proposed equipment.

Issues

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) – Policy HU10 in Part 2 of the UDP states that sites within Manchester Science Park are allocated for science and research based businesses.

In addition to the above policy, consideration is also given to Policies H2.2 and I1.12 in Part 1 of the UDP and Policy DC26 in Part 2 of the UDP.

Policy H2.2 states that the City Council will not allow development which will have an unacceptable impact on residential areas. The matters which the City Council will consider in coming to such decisions will include the scale and appearance of the development and its impact in terms of noise, vibration, traffic generation, road safety and air pollution.

Policy I1.12 states that the City Council will support proposals from businesses which seek to expand or adapt their premises to meet changing economic and technological circumstances and to improve energy efficiency, in order to retain existing jobs and maximise the opportunities for the generation of new employment, while also taking into account the need to protect residential and environmental amenity.

Development Control Policy DC26, “Development and Noise”, states that the City Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City. In giving effect to this intention, the City Council will consider both:

- a) the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise; and
- b) the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control.

The policy states further that where a new proposal might generate potentially unacceptable levels of noise, it will require the applicant to provide an assessment of the likely impact and of the measures he proposes to deal satisfactorily with it. Such measures might include the following:

- a) engineering solutions, including reduction of noise at source, improving sound insulation of sensitive buildings or screening by purpose-built barriers;
- b) layout solutions, including consideration of the distance between the source of the noise and the buildings or land affected by it; and screening by natural barriers or other buildings or non-critical rooms within a building; and
- c) administrative steps, including limiting the operating times of the noise source, restricting activities allowed on the site or specifying an acceptable noise limit.

The policy states that any or all of these factors will be considered appropriate for inclusion in conditions on any planning permission.

North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) to 2021 (adopted September 2008) – The following policies are considered to be of relevance in this instance:

Policy DP1, *Spatial Principles* – The following principles underpin the RSS

- promote sustainable communities;
- promote sustainable economic development;
- make the best use of existing resources and infrastructure;
- manage travel demand, reduce the need to travel, and increase accessibility;
- marry opportunity and need;
- promote environmental quality;
- mainstreaming rural issues;
- reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

Policy W1, *Strengthening the Regional Economy* – Plans and strategies should promote opportunities for economic development (including the provision of appropriate infrastructure) which will strengthen the economy of the North West by building on the region's strengths, particularly the three City Regions, of which Manchester is one. The policy continues stating that plans and strategies should reflect the following growth opportunities for the Manchester City Region:

- advanced manufacturing and engineering (includes chemicals, aerospace, automotive and flexible materials),
- financial and professional services,
- media, creative and cultural industries,
- biomedical (biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and medical devices),
- ICT / digital,
- communications;

Principle of the Proposal – The installation of the additional plant and equipment for

use by a number of existing companies operating out of Synergy House is considered acceptable in principle and complies with the aspirations of Policy I1.12 outlined above. Despite this, consideration must be given to the proposal's impact upon the existing levels of residential amenity enjoyed by local residents and visual amenity enjoyed within the vicinity of the site.

Residential Amenity – The nearest residential accommodation on Greenheys Lane is located over 100m (328 ft) away from the proposed development. Notwithstanding this, it is acknowledged that the proposed equipment will need to be acoustically insulated given the previous intervention on the site of the Head of Environmental Health. With the imposition of a suitably worded acoustic insulation it is considered that the development will not have a detrimental impact upon the levels of residential amenity enjoyed by the residents of Greenheys Lane.

In addition to the acoustic insulation condition, a condition limiting the testing of the standby generators to that stated in the description is suggested.

Given the above it is considered that the proposal complies with policy H2.2 and DC26.

Visual Amenity – While the sub-station will be constructed from glass reinforced plastic, the standby generators and air conditioning units will be housed in metal casings. Given that the site is currently home to a number of steel shipping containers and existing equipment it is not considered that the proposed development will have a detrimental impact upon existing levels of visual amenity.

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)/objector(s)/resident(s) 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 the 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** on the basis that the proposal is in accordance with the City Council's Unitary Development Plan, in particular the following policies and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate otherwise:

Policy H2.2 states that the City Council will not allow development which will have an

unacceptable impact on residential areas. It is not believed that the proposed development will have a detrimental impact in terms of noise, vibration, traffic generation, road safety and air pollution or through its scale and appearance.

Policy 11.12 states that the City Council will support proposals from businesses which seek to expand or adapt their premises to meet changing economic and technological circumstances and to improve energy efficiency, in order to retain existing jobs and maximise the opportunities for the generation of new employment, while also taking into account the need to protect residential and environmental amenity. This proposal will allow a number of existing businesses to adapt their premises and retain their presence on Manchester Science Park.

The imposition of an acoustic insulation condition and one governing when the standby generators can run will ensure that the proposal complies with Policy DC26.

Conditions

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 following drawings and documents unless otherwise agreed in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority: - plans and supporting information stamped as received on 25th August 2010

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policy H2.2 and policy DC26 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan.

3) The externally mounted ancillary equipment hereby approved shall be acoustically insulated in accordance with a scheme submitted to and approved by the City Council as local planning authority in order to secure a reduction in the level of noise emanating from the site.

Externally mounted ancillary plant, equipment and servicing shall be acoustically treated in accordance with a scheme designed so as to achieve a noise level of 5dB below the existing background (LA90) in each octave band at the nearest noise sensitive location.

Reason - To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential accommodation, pursuant to Policies H2.2 and Dc26 in the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

4) Before development commences a scheme for the extraction of any fumes, vapours and odours from the premises hereby approved shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the City Council as local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to occupancy and shall remain operational

thereafter.

Reason - In the interests of the amenities of the occupiers nearby properties in order to comply with Policy H2.2 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

5) No development that is hereby approved shall commence unless and until samples and specifications of all 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, as specified in policy H2.2 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

6) The standby generators hereby approved shall only be tested once a month for a period no longer than five minutes between the hours of 0830 - 1800hrs Monday to Friday only, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential accommodation, pursuant to Policies H2.2 and DC26 in the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

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: 094126/FO/2010/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 other applications or appeals, copies of which are held by the Planning Division.

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

Manchester Science Park Ltd
Medinet Corporation Ltd, Rutherford House, 40 Pencroft Way, Manchester, M15 6SZ
Kro At The Old Abbey, 20 Pencroft Way, Manchester, M15 6AY
Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, 15 Greenheys Lane, Manchester, M15 6NQ
Hillel House, Greenheys Lane, Manchester, M15 6LR
C A C I, Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester, M15 6SY
Business Integrated Operating Systems, Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester, M15 6SY
B-plan Information Systems Ltd, Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester, M15 6SY

S A F C, Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester, M15 6SY
Associated Network Solutions, Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester, M15 6SY
Godel Technologies Europe Ltd, Synergy House, Guildhall Close, Manchester, M15 6SY
Holy Name RC Primary School, Denmark Road, Manchester, M15 6JS
Colgate Palmolive Uk Ltd, Skelton House, Lloyd Street North, Manchester, M15 6SH
Icon Development Solutions Ltd, Skelton House, Lloyd Street North, Manchester, M15 6SH
Neuraxis, Skelton House, Lloyd Street North, Manchester, M15 6SH
Morning Star Hostel, Ingham House, 104 Denmark Road, Manchester, M15 6JS
Cornerstone, Ingham House, 104 Denmark Road, Manchester, M15 6JS

Representations were received from the following third parties:

28c Greenheys Lane, Hulme
28f Greenheys Lane, Hulme

Relevant Contact Officer : David Lawless
Telephone number : 0161 234 4543
Email : d.lawless@manchester.gov.uk