

Application Number

P/2012/0392

Site Address

Land At Junction Of Long Road And
Waddeton Road
Paignton

Case Officer

Mrs Helen Addison

Ward

Goodrington With Roselands

Description

Erection of education facility to provide a centre of excellence for carbon reduction, renewable energy and sustainable construction, including a demonstration residential building, parking, landscaping and access (Use Class D1). Closure of vehicular access

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The application is for the provision of an Energy centre and demonstration house for South Devon College, to deliver courses in sustainable construction and renewable energy. The proposed buildings would have a high quality design to provide a sustainable and inspirational space for students. The application is accompanied by a detailed landscape scheme and includes the provision of a green roof on the main energy centre which would make a positive contribution to biodiversity in the area.

Recommendation

Subject to the receipt of satisfactory further information in respect of highways and the payment of a S106 contribution towards sustainable transport; Conditional Approval (conditions listed at end of report).

Site Details

The application site is situated on land bound by Long Road and Waddeton Road, adjacent to the entrance to the White Rock Business Park. Access to the site is from the main Brixham (A3022) road. The site is adjacent to a large roundabout and on the opposite side of Waddeton Road from the new Premier Inn.

The site is prominent in the street scene and clearly visible from the highway. The ground level is approx. 1.5 metres above road level. It has been cleared and has been left as rough ground. There are two vehicular access points onto the site. The eastern boundary with Waddeton Road has recently been landscaped. Along the western boundary there is a mature landscape hedge with a number of trees. To the west of the site there is a linear development of dwelling houses. These properties are set at a slightly higher level than the application site and are characteristically set back from the road.

The surrounding area is in mixed use, with residential and commercial uses as referred to above. The former Bookham technology site lies to the north on the opposite side of Long Road. Land to the south is undeveloped and forms part of the White Rock Business Park. In the plan there is no specific designation relating to the application site. A proposed cycle route is shown along Waddeton Road and Long Road adjacent to the application site.

Detailed Proposals

The application is for the construction of a building to be used as an energy centre for educational purposes by South Devon College, with a demonstration house on the site that will also be used for educational purposes. The purpose of the building will be to establish South Devon College as a leading training provider at the cutting edge of Micro- generation Training within the South West. The proposal will accommodate and promote high quality accredited training in renewable energy and sustainable building techniques. The aim is to provide an exemplar learning area bringing together public and private partners. The facilities would also provide and encourage product research and development and business incubation facilities, supporting business start ups.

The proposed floorspace of the main building would be 1781m² with a floorspace of 168m² for the demonstration house. The energy centre would be located centrally within the site with the entrance facing Long Road. Car parking and a service yard are proposed at the rear of the building.

The main building would be composed of two elements: a linear two storey block allowing a wide flexibility of teaching layouts and a lightweight box which would accommodate the entrance space and main construction hall. The front block roof would be topped with a 'green' sedum roof and the rear block topped with solar and pv panels. Adjacent to this at the northern end of the site would be the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6/Passivhaus demonstration house to be used as part of the teaching curriculum. This property would be two storeys in height with a pitched roof over. The design of the roof would be asymmetric in order to accommodate solar panels on the southern elevation.

34 parking spaces and 21 cycle spaces would be provided at the rear of the main building. Pedestrian access to the site would be provided at both the northern and southern end and the vehicular access would be at the southern end of the site. The existing vehicular access adjacent to the roundabout would be stopped up. The College would employ approximately 16 full time members of staff in the building and would be able to cater for 400 trainees at maximum occupancy.

Within the building there would be a two floor construction hall where the main teaching programme would be carried out. Within this construction hall there would be two demonstration houses which would be of pre and post war design, the purpose of which would be to teach retro fitting of modern sustainable

technologies. There would be a large glazed entrance hall with a café adjacent to it. Characteristics of the design would be projecting pod features and also internal viewing galleries and walkways. There would be a number of general purpose rooms provided, incubation and innovation areas as well as IT facilities. There would be a small external construction space at the southern end of the building.

The proposed demonstration house would be finished in timber clad thermowood or charred cedar elevations with a tiled roof.

The proposed development was considered by the Design Review Panel and a copy of their report is reproduced at Page P.201.

The application was screened under the EIA Regulations 2011 and it was concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

SWW: No objection to foul and surface water drainage being dealt with as identified in the drainage strategy accompanying the application.

Drainage and Structures: No objection

Green Infrastructure Coordinator: Fully supports the proposal to include a green roof and this will be an important part of showcasing sustainable building techniques. The Council should agree the specification for the roof as it is important that it is designed to a specification that ensures it functions properly. The green roof also provides the opportunity to provide significant biodiversity enhancements. Maintenance and management will be a critical factor to ensure on going success and a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) is suggested. The proposal also provides an opportunity to showcase current products and techniques that provide nesting, roosting and hibernating etc opportunities within the fabric of the building. Recommendations are made for managing the hedge. There is an opportunity for native and/or fruit and nut bearing species to be planted in the landscape scheme.

Arboricultural Officer: Requests a detailed tree survey relating to the hedge on the site and a landscape scheme.

Natural England: Based upon the information submitted in support of the application it is unlikely that the site includes habitat features suitable for greater horseshoe bats. The proposals should consider light spillage disturbance impacts upon suitable adjacent habitat features that support bat activity. Lighting can be designed to reduce or eliminate this potential impact. Welcomes the applicants desire to provide biodiversity.

RSPB: Should the application be granted, it should not result in a net loss

of habitat suitable for cirl buntings and does not involve removal of potential breeding habitat during the nesting season. Recommends a number of measures to ensure the habitat for cirl buntings and other species on the site is safeguarded.

Transport Planner: A site specific Travel Plan must be produced. Given the green credentials of the proposal suggests that the amount of car parking on the site should be reduced and additional cycle parking provided. Requests further information in respect of cyclists and bus users accessing the site. A S106 contribution to mitigate the impact of the development is requested that would be spent on rerouting the bus service, traffic restrictions outside the site and on approaches.

Environmental Health Officer: Consultation response awaited.

Summary Of Representations

None received.

Relevant Planning History

- 2004/1621 Outline Application For The Erection Of Buildings Comprising A Business Park Totalling Not More Than 55,740 Sq. M Of Accommodation (Including Ancillary Accommodation) Comprising A Hotel/Conference Facility (Use Class C1), Crèche (Use Class D1), Restaurant And/Or Public House (Use Class A3/A4), Health And Fitness Centre (Use Class D2) And Small Scale Retail Units (Falling Within Use Classes A1, A2 And/Or A3) With Associated Infrastructure And Engineering Works To Facilitate Access, Parking, Landscape And Drainage Requirements (In Outline). Approved 4.8.05
- 2011/0197 Mixed Use Development of 39 Hectares of land at White Rock, Paignton to construct 350 dwellings , 36,800m² gross employment floorspace, a local centre including food retail (approx 1652m² gross) with additional 392m² A1/A3 use and student accommodation, 15 hectares of open space, sports pavillion and associated infrastructure and engineering works to provide access, drainage and landscaping (Outline Application). Approved at committee in February 2012; subject to the signing of a s106 agreement.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The main issues to be considered are the principle of the proposed use in this location, the design of the proposed buildings, highways, ecology and biodiversity and impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

Principle and Planning Policy -

The principle of providing high quality sustainable buildings on the site for educational use that would focus on teaching sustainable building techniques would constitute an appropriate form of development on this site. It would be consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and policies in the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011.

The recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the need to prioritise development on previously developed land. It also expresses significant support to economic growth in order to create jobs and meet the challenge of global competition twinned with a low carbon future. It is considered that the proposal would meet all of these objectives.

One of the core principles of the NPPF is to “support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate”. In addition importance is attached to ensuring that a sufficient choice of education is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. With regard to high quality design the NPPF states that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

In the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011 Policy CF1 is relevant and this supports the provision of new and improved community facilities. The application site is close to South Devon College and the proposed educational use would “place learning at the heart of the community”, which is a priority in the Torbay Community Plan. Policy E6 relates to the retention of employment land.

Although the site is not allocated for employment use in the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011 there is a history of employment uses being permitted on the site. Policy E6 does permit and actively support the redevelopment or change of use of a site or premises allocated and retained for employment where it can be demonstrated the proposals meet a series of criteria the first being “there would be no significant adverse effect on employment opportunities within the Local Plan area”. The nature of the proposed use is relevant here. It is proposed to actively train and develop skills for future employees within the Torbay Area and meet the skills gaps currently identified by existing employers within the Torbay Area. The proposed development will enhance opportunities by training local people to meet identified and recognised skills gaps in the local economy. It will also deliver bespoke training programmes/requirements to employers in the area in the form of apprenticeships, training days, courses and vocational qualifications. Furthermore, the site will employ up to 16 members of education staff. For these reasons the proposal would be consistent with Policy E6.

Design -

The principle of the design of the building is to provide a dynamic and bold architectural statement as it will be the first South Devon College building people will see when visiting the main campus. It has also been designed to

complement the activities that it houses. In the design and access statement it is advised “this high expression of sustainable credentials is key to the buildings design in how it functions, as well as the bold language of its public face”.

The proposed building has a high standard of design with a modern and innovative external appearance. The sustainable credentials of the building would be readily apparent from the green roof, the overhanging eaves, brise soleil and projecting pods. Extensive glazed areas on the north elevation would allow views from the street into the building. The use of white rendered flat roof elements in the rear spine part of the building would visually link the design to the main Vantage Point campus. It is noted that there is no common theme of development in the area, as the area has evolved in a piecemeal fashion through a series of industrial and business estates.

The scale and size of the proposed demonstration house would be comparable with a conventional house. The use of projecting pods and timber clad thermowood or charred cedar elevations would reflect the sustainable credentials of the building.

At pre application stage the proposal was considered by the Design Review Panel (report reproduced at Page P.201). A number of the points raised by the Panel have been addressed in the submission such as relocation of cycle parking, retention of green roof, substitution of east facing glazed panel to the construction hall with insulated panels, replacement of coloured GRP elements on principle elevations and relocation of office and reception within the entrance hall. The demonstration house would not be suitable for use as a main dwelling owing to the extent that it would need to be used for teaching purposes.

The modern and innovative external appearance of the design of the proposed buildings would meet the objectives of Policies BES and BE1 in the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011 in that it would provide a high standard of design that would make a positive contribution to the appearance and character of the area. Para 64 of the NPPF is relevant and states that “in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area”.

Highways -

In principle there is no objection to the proposed development on highway grounds. The site is located close to the A3022 and is accessed via the main entrance road to the White Rock Business Park. It is noted that under application reference 2011/0197 the site was identified for the delivery of a 1,769 m² B1 (office). A comparative assessment of forecast traffic generations associated with both land uses (office and education) has been carried out by the applicant. It was found that the proposed Energy Centre would generate fewer total traffic movements and therefore there would be no adverse effect on the operational performance of the local highway network. The site is accessible by

public transport as there is a frequent bus service to the main college campus.

The Strategic Transportation officer has recommended that in accordance with the sustainable credentials of the proposed development the level of on site parking provision be reduced and has requested that bike lockers and pool bikes be provided. He has also requested further information in respect of accessibility to the site for pedestrians and cyclists.

A S106 contribution of £27,377 is required to off set the impact of the proposal on the highway network. This sum will be used to provide;

- Rerouting of the bus service
- Improvements to the bus service
- Well signed external links to the main campus
- Improved access for sustainable users over the Brixham Road
- Traffic restrictions outside the site and on approaches.

The College have agreed to pay this contribution by means of a Unilateral Undertaking.

Ecology and Bio-diversity -

The main arboricultural constraint on the site is the mature hedge along the western boundary. At the request of the arboricultural officer further information in respect of tree protection zones and management of the hedge has been submitted. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment recommends removal of a number of dead and dying elm, ash and sycamore trees and replacement with hazel trees and a minor component of hawthorn. Both a hard and soft landscaping scheme has been submitted. It is proposed that four Norway Maples along the eastern boundary are removed and replanted elsewhere.

At the request of the Green Infrastructure Coordinator specifications for the green roof and grasscrete on site have been submitted. A draft Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) has also been received that provides a framework for the long term management and maintenance of the landscape on the site including the green roof.

An ecological survey of the site was carried out as part of the White Rock development. This found that there are no protected species present on the application site. Natural England has requested that light spillage be considered as part of the proposal and this can be addressed by means of a condition. There is an opportunity for bird/bat boxes to be provided on site and again this can be addressed by condition. The principal concern of the RSPB is to prevent loss of habitat for birds.

Overall through the provision of the green roof and the proposed maintenance and replanting of the hedge on the western boundary the proposal would

increase biodiversity on the site.

Impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers -

The proposed building would be sited approximately 46 metres from the nearest dwelling house. The hedge along the western boundary would provide screening of the building. It is considered that this location would be sufficient distance away from nearby properties to prevent a loss of residential amenity.

Although the building would be used for teaching of construction techniques it is unlikely that it would generate a noise nuisance to nearby residents as the thermal properties incorporated into the design would provide an effective acoustic screen. The outside construction area is relatively small and would be largely screened by the existing building.

S106/CIL -

As stated above a sustainable transport contribution is required to off-set the impact of the proposed development. The College has proposed paying this by means of a Unilateral Undertaking which attracts a 5% discount resulting in a sum of £26,008.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the proposal would constitute provision of two high quality buildings to be used for education purposes for sustainable construction and renewable energy courses. The design and scale of the buildings would be appropriate in this location and would enhance the appearance and character of the area.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. Parking provided
02. Material samples
03. Details of LEMP submitted
04. Bird boxes
05. Landscaping scheme implemented
06. In accordance with green roof specification and grasscrete specification
07. S106
08. Tree protection
09. Use for education purposes only
10. Details of lighting and light spillage
11. Works to stop up highway completed

Relevant Policies

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