Application Number

P/2016/1372

Site Address

Devonshire Park (Formerly Nortel Site) Proposed Unit C Shown On Plan 14290 007B Land Off Brixham Road Long Road Former Nortel Site Paignton TQ4 7BE

Case Officer

Ward

Mr Scott Jones

Blatchcombe

Description

Variation of condition P1, 34 and 35 of P/2014/0947(Outline Application with all matters reserved except access, for demolition of the remaining buildings on the site and redevelopment for mixed use purposes comprising up to 255 Class C3 dwellings, up to 5,574sqm of B1 and /or B8 business and/or warehousing uses, up to 8,501sqm Class A1 (bulky goods) retail with up to 515sqm garden centre, and up to 139sqm of A3 cafe /restaurant uses, along with related site access, access roads and paths, parking, servicing ,open space and landscaping.) to vary Condition (P1) - Approved Plans to omit reference to the Masterplan, Condition (34) to vary the minimum unit size restriction for 1 unit and Condition (35) to clarify the restriction of concessions

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

This application is for changes to the wording of three conditions attached to a recently approved outline consent granted under reference P/2014/0947 for mixed use (Business/Bulky Goods Retail and Residential) development on the old Nortel/Bookhams site adjacent to Long Road and Brixham Road, Paignton.

Permission P/2014/0947 granted outline consent for the demolition of buildings and mix use development comprising up to 255 dwellings, up to 5,571sqm of business and/or warehouse uses, up to 8,501sqm of (bulky goods) retail with up to 515sqm garden centre and up to 139sqm of café/restaurant use, along with related infrastructure, detailed consent for the access and all other matters reserved.

The decision to grant outline consent was finely balanced as the provision of the retail floor space was considered to have an adverse impact on the Paignton and Torquay town centres, and approaching a significant adverse impact, due to the poor health of the centres and their vulnerability to relatively small levels of impact. This context is relevant to the application before Members.

The application seeks to vary Condition P1 (Plans), Condition 34 (Minimum gross ground floor of retail units) and Condition 35 (concessions), as outlined below.

The application seeks to delete the reference to the previously submitted masterplan within the approved plans condition, citing that the plan was not meant to be approved within a condition that states in "complete accordance with" as it was only indicative.

The application seeks to amend the wording of Condition 34 that set a minimum ground floor area for all retail units. The revised wording seeks to permit one unit to be below the current minimum size of 929sqm. The application cites this is to meet the needs of a potential operator who wishes to create a mezzanine floor of 279sqm and sell goods which accords with the bulky goods use types approved.

The application seeks to amend the wording of Condition 35 that restricted concessions within the retail units. The revised wording seeks to clarify that the restriction relates to retail concessions within retail stores and does not preclude non-retail concessions such as cafés or restaurants within retail stores.

There are representations from South Devon College and Paignton Neighbourhood Forum citing concern on the removal of the masterplan unless other suitable development parameters are achieved in its place, and concerns on detailed layout matters expressed within an indicative plan submitted, the conflict of the small unit on the essence of the bulky goods use and the impact on town centres, and the conflict with the outline consent of permitting café type uses. There is also representation that appears to refer to issues more related to the outline consent rather than the amendments sought.

In regard to Condition P1 (approved plans) following discussions with the applicant there is agreement that the reference to the masterplan is retained within Condition P1 provided the wording gave clarity on it being indicative.

In regard to Condition 34 (minimum size) it is considered that there is presently insufficient evidence to determine that there is not a sequentially preferable alternative site for a retail unit with a ground floor size of 557sqm and capacity for a mezzanine of 279sqm, and/or other such evidence that demonstrates that there will be no significant adverse impact on the Paignton and Torquay town centres. This has been raised with the applicant and Members will be updated. In the absence of such evidence, or where the evidence fails to demonstrate that there is unlikely to be a significant adverse impact upon the Paignton and Torquay town centres, the application would fail to accord with Policy TC3 of the Torbay Local Plan.

Should the above be positively addressed officers recommend revised wording of condition 34 that permits one unit to have a total floor space of not less than 836sqm, which is 10% less than the established minimum ground floor space, and with a ground floor area no less than 550sqm, rather than the open wording suggested by the applicant. Under theses parameters the exception unit will

more closely reflect the outline consent and would retain a more effective and flexible unit for the various bulky goods uses approved.

In regard to Condition 35 (concessions) it is considered that the provision of an ancillary café/restaurant use within retail units is acceptable, subject to a reasonable size restriction in order to ensure that the use is an incidental one to the bulky goods retail use and does not conflict with the overriding principles of the outline consent. It is proposed to add a maximum floor area for the ancillary café/restaurant use to the open wording suggested by the applicant.

Recommendation

Approval; Subject to;

- i) The receipt of additional evidence which demonstrates that the are no sequentially preferable alternative sites for a retail unit of 557sqm ground floor area (which can also accommodate additional floorspace of 279sqm) and/or such other evidence that demonstrates that there will be no significant adverse impact upon Paignton and Torquay town centres, to the satisfaction of Officers, prior to the 23.03.2017 unless an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant. In the absence of satisfactory information, or where Officers conclude that such evidence fails to demonstrate that a significant adverse impact is unlikely then the application to amend condition 34 be refused, as the proposals are contrary to Policy TC3 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 and advice contained within the NPPF (Paras 24 and 27).
 - ii) Revised wording as suggested within this report to:
 - a) retain a reference to the masterplan within Condition P1;
 - b) permit the provision of one retail unit with a gross ground floor area of less than 929sqm but restrict this one unit to a total floor area no less than 836sqm and including gross ground floor area of no less than 550sqm, and;
 - c) permit a non-retail concession within retail units, solely for A3 café/restaurant use, where the floorspace of the concession does not exceed 10% of the gross ground floor area of the unit.
 - iii) All previously attached conditions, and
 - iv) Completion of a deed of variation to the original S106 legal agreement linking the amendment to the original agreement, to be completed by 23.03.2017, or within three months of the date of this meeting where an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant. In the absence of the signed deed the application to be refused.

Statutory Determination Period

The determination date for this application is the 23rd March 2017.

Site Details

The site comprises the former Nortel/Bookham site, now known as Devonshire Park, to the west of Brixham Road on the outskirts of Paignton. The site area is 9.76ha. The site is a former industrial site that primarily manufactured electronics and closed in 2006. Following demolition of most of the buildings in recent years, the site is largely derelict.

The site is bounded by housing, sports pitches and Western Business Park to the north, Brixham Road to the east, Long Road to the south and South Devon College to the west.

The site is located within the greater horseshoe bat sustenance zone associated with the South Hams SAC at Berry Head. The topography of the site rises by about 20 metres from south to north. It is within Flood Zone 1 and a Critical Drainage Area. Parts of the site particularly to the north have become overgrown. There are scattered lines of trees on and around the boundaries of the site. Parts of the site are likely to be contaminated from the historic uses. The parts with most risk are to the south and particularly to the west, with lower risk to the north.

Detailed Proposals

The application seeks to vary three conditions, as outlined below.

The application seeks to delete the reference to the previously submitted masterplan within the approved plans condition (Condition P1), citing that the plan was not meant to be approved within a condition that states in "complete accordance with", as it was only indicative.

The application seeks to amend the wording of Condition 34 that set a minimum ground floor area for all retail units. The revised wording seeks to permit one unit to be below the current minimum size of 929sqm. The application cites this is to meet the needs of a potential operator.

The application seeks to amend the wording of Condition 35 that restricted concessions within the retail units. The revised wording seeks to clarify that this relates to retail concessions within retail stores and does not preclude non-retail concessions such as cafés or restaurants.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

<u>Strategy and Project Officer</u>: Concern has been raised that there is presently insufficient evidence to determine that there is not a sequentially preferable alternative site for a retail unit with a ground floor size of 557sqm and/or other such evidence that demonstrates that there will be no significant adverse impact on the Paignton and Torquay town centres. In the absence of such evidence the

application to amend condition 34 fails to accord with Policy TC3 of the Torbay Local Plan and it is recommended that the applicant seeks to positively address this.

Condition 34 - Unit size - The condition was imposed to minimise the creation of small units that could replicate town centre shops. Although this change alone appears relatively minor previous retail advice did conclude that Paignton and Torquay town centres are susceptible to relatively small impacts. The proposal should be appropriately evidenced. If it is found to be acceptable a minimum floor area should be considered

Condition 35 - Concessions - No objections to relaxing condition 35 to allow for ancillary uses such as a coffee shop/cafe. An amended condition should be appropriately worded to ensure that such a use is subservient to the overall retail use, i.e. not internally subdivided. A maximum floorspace for cafes etc. is supported to ensure subservience and ensure that the bulk of uses remain retail as allowed by condition 32.

<u>Design Consultant</u>: In the absence of parameter plans the reference to the masterplan is the only indicative guiding principle. It should be retained or replaced with appropriate parameter plans that offer guiding principles.

<u>Legal Officer</u>: Condition P1: There is a relevant judgment (Moorland v West Wiltshire 2006) that indicates that an indicative masterplan, whether "approved" or not, is intended to illustrate or indicate something and informed the LPA's decision to grant outline consent. Recommends refusal of the removal of the reference to the masterplan unless an acceptable replacement is submitted.

Condition 34: The condition was imposed to protect the vitality and viability of Paignton and Torquay Town Centres (where there are sufficient numbers of small units). The wording suggested could result in a very small unit (no lower cap). It is a planning judgment whether this is acceptable.

Condition 35: Consideration to controlling parameters such as size, access, opening hours, and possibly expressly permit an A3 café concession. It is a planning judgment whether this is acceptable.

Summary Of Representations:

There are representations from South Devon College and Paignton Neighbourhood Forum with fundamental concerns on the removal of the masterplan, unless other suitable development parameters are achieved in its place, and concerns on detailed layout matters expressed within an indicative plan, the conflict of the small unit on the essence of the bulky goods use and the impact of a small unit on town centres, and the conflict with the outline permission of permitting café type uses. There is also representation that appears to refer to issues more related to the outline consent rather than the amendments sought.

Relevant Planning History:

The key relevant planning history is the parent outline consent P/2014/0947:

Outline Application with all matters reserved except access, for demolition of the remaining buildings on the site and redevelopment for mixed use purposes comprising up to 255 Class C3 dwellings, up to 5,574sqm of B1 and/or B8 business and/or warehousing uses, up to 8,501sqm Class A1 (bulky goods) retail with up to 515sqm garden centre, and up to 139sqm of A3 cafe /restaurant uses, along with related site access, access roads and paths, parking, servicing, open space and landscaping.

Approved 22.03.2016 (Subject to a legal agreement and conditions).

Key issues/material considerations:

The key issues are the whether the proposed changes are acceptable in terms of delivering the outline consent having due regard to all relevant material considerations and planning policy.

The removal of the masterplan from Condition P1

The application seeks to delete the reference to the previously submitted masterplan within the approved plans condition (Condition P1).

The submitted information cites that the plan was not meant to be approved within a condition that states in "complete accordance with", as it was only indicative, and that Reserved Matters will set the detailed layout.

The masterplan acts as the only formal reference on the Decision Notice to a guiding principle for development. It presents two clear character zones in terms of residential to the north and the business and retail uses to the south, along with general principles for the form of development within these zones. Its presents a plausible layout for the provision of the quantum of development approved and it importantly informed the decision of the Authority at outline stage.

There are representations from South Devon College and Paignton Neighbourhood Forum with concern over the removal of the masterplan, unless other suitable development parameters are achieved in its place,

The masterplan informed the decision of the Authority at outline stage. In terms of planning merit it is not considered appropriate to simply discard reference to this document unless a suitable replacement is proposed in its place.

Having discussed the matter with the applicant's agent there is agreement

towards the retention of a reference to the masterplan within the condition, provided that some clarity could be provided that detaches the illustrative plan from the wording "carried out in complete accordance with", which is the point of concern.

Revised wording is proposed within this report that principally creates a sub-list below the detailed access plans that states that the development shall accord with the guiding principles of the indicative masterplan hereby approved.

Members are recommended to support the revised wording that retains a reference to the illustrative masterplan as a guiding principles document, as this would not demonstrably alter the outline consent, in accordance with Policies DE1, DE3 and DE4 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.

The exception of one retail unit to the minimum ground floor area restriction (amendment to Condition 34)

The primary consideration is whether the proposal would have a significant adverse impact upon Paignton and Torquay town centres.

The NPPF provides clear advice that proposals with the potential to generate a significant adverse impact upon town centres should be refused planning permission (Para 27). It also provides clear advice that that planning applications for town centre uses that are not in an existing centre should be sequentially tested (Para 24).

Where the impact is adverse but not significant other benefits of the development, such as regenerating a derelict brownfield site, can be weighed against the harm to town centres when determining the application.

Only where it is demonstrated that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on the town centres, then secondary considerations are relevant, such as whether the proposal provides an adequate unit for the uses approved in the outline permission, and whether it is likely that such a unit could sit comfortably within a forthcoming detailed Reserved Matters application.

Primary consideration: Is there likely to be a significant adverse impact upon Paignton and Torquay town centres?

The decision to grant outline consent under planning reference P/2014/0947 was finely balanced, as the provision of the retail floor space was considered to have an adverse impact on the Paignton and Torquay town centres, and near to a significant adverse impact, due to the poor health of the centres and their vulnerability to relatively small levels of impact.

During consideration of the outline consent the Council's retail consultant raised concern on the potential for a significant adverse impact on Paignton and Torquay town centres. The parameters for the retail element were subsequently evolved and ultimately measures were identified to try and reduce the likely trading overlap between the comparison goods sectors to prevent a significant adverse impact.

Subsequently the Council's retail advice concluded that the revisions including terms of the range of goods that could be sold would reduce the trading overlap and in turn reduce the financial impact on these centres. It was however concluded that although the restriction in goods may reduce the scale of risk regarding the significant adverse nature of any impact, the scale could remain significantly adverse as both centres are susceptible to relatively small levels of impact.

Outline permission was ultimately granted which was likely to have an adverse impact, but not a significant adverse impact, on the Paignton and Torquay town centres. The outline consent was subject to a number of conditions, suggested by the Council's retail advisor, to limit the risk of a significant adverse impact on the two town centres, pertaining to the range of goods to be sold, concessions, maximum floorspace, and a minimum unit size at ground floor level.

The current application seeks to introduce an "exception" unit that is not bound by the by the minimum gross ground floor area restriction of 929sqm. The suggested wording does not propose a minimum gross ground floor area however the supporting information indicate the "exception" unit to have a ground floor area of 557sqm and a mezzanine area of 279sqm. This would present a ground floor area of the unit being 60% of the prescribed minimum, notwithstanding that the gross floor area would be 836sqm, which would be only 10% below the size minimum floor area of unit that should be provided under the outline condition (albeit over the ground floor only).

Policy TC3 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 provides policy guidance in regard to new out-of-centre retail development, citing that proposals must meet 3 criteria, these being:

- 1. Proposals should not cause any unacceptable impacts either individually or cumulatively on the vitality and viability of existing or planned centres;
- 2. No other town centre or edge of centre site is suitable, available or viable; and
- 3. Development would improve the spatial distribution of accessible facilities.

It is clear that the outline consent was granted on balance with restrictive conditions to reduce the risk of a significant adverse impact on Paignton and Torquay town centres, which included a minimum gross ground floor area for all retail units as part of the package of conditions relating to the retail element of the scheme. As there was clearly considerable concern over the level of the likely adverse impact any relaxation of the restrictive conditions should be duly considered due to the previously cited susceptibility of Torquay and Paignton town centres to relatively small levels of impact.

On the information provided the impact of permitting the exception unit is unknown and in the absence of due assessment, including the availability of suitable and viable town centre or edge of centre sites, the proposal does not satisfy the tests outlined within Policy TC3 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.

It is Officer's recommendation that additional information is sought in terms of a proportionate retail impact assessment and sequential test to consider the retail impact and identify whether there are town centre or edge of centre sites where a unit with a gross floor area of 557sqm and capacity to increase the floor area by a further 279sqm is available, suitable and viable. Officers have requested that the applicant seeks to positively address the absence of this information and Members will be updated.

Should the primary matter above be positively resolved and only where it is concluded, informed by a retail impact assessment and sequential test, that there are no sequentially preferable sites and that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact upon Paignton and Torquay town centres there are secondary considerations, which are considered below.

Secondary considerations: Is a unit with a ground floor area of 557sqm more widely compliant with the outline consent?

The outline permission granted consent for the sale of a number of quasi bulky goods items. There is no upper limit for any one unit but, as previously stated, there is a minimum ground floor area of 929sqm for all retail units.

In terms of broad character this could present a varying size of units sitting side by side. The provision of one unit with a ground floor area of around 60% of neighbouring units is unlikely to present conflict with design aspirations outlined within Policy DE1, as the proposals could indeed present a number of different sized units side by side.

In terms of use the outline consent permits the sale of a number of quasi bulky goods items. These range from DIY and furniture to somewhat less bulky uses, such as pets and pet products and camping equipment. The revised wording proposed by the applicant does not establish a minimum floor area for the exception unit. This could result in a small or very small unit and one that may preclude flexibility in terms of being adequate and adaptable for the broad spectrum of "bulky goods" uses. The applicants' indicative plans indicate the "exception" unit to have a ground floor area of 557sqm and a mezzanine area of 279sqm. This would present a total floor area of 836sqm, which would be 10% below the size minimum floor area of unit that could be provided under the outline condition (albeit over the ground floor only). Within these parameters the retail unit would remain large and would be adequate in terms of providing flexibility to provide suitable capacity for a variety of bulky goods retailers to

operate from.

Considering the context in order to preclude the provision of a small unit that would be out of character with the bulky goods retail consent and also potentially provide a unit that is less flexible and potentially inadequate for certain bulky goods, it recommended that the proposed wording is revised with a minimum floor area introduced.

To conclude Members are recommended to support the Officer recommendation to require additional information in regard to retail impact and the availability, suitability and viability of sequentially preferable sites, in order to duly consider whether the proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the Paignton and Torquay towns centres.

Where it is concluded that that proposal may have a significant adverse impact Officers recommend that the proposed amendment Condition 34 is refused in accordance with Policy TC3 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.

Where it is concluded that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact Officers recommended approval of the revised wording that allows one unit to have a gross ground floor area of not less than 550sqm and with a total internal floor area no less than 836sqm, so as to retain the exception unit at an appropriate scale for bulky goods in terms of total floor space, not demonstrably reduced from the outline consent, in accordance with policy DE1 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.

The permitting of café/restaurant concessions within retail units (amendment to Condition 35)

In regard to Condition 35 (concessions) it is considered that the provision of ancillary café/restaurant concessions within retail units is reasonable as part of a dominant retail offer.

It is necessary to ensure that the condition accords with the outline consent and measures are considered to ensure that non-retail concessions do not demonstrably impact the retail capacity or retail character of the bulky goods operations.

It is considered necessary to amend the applicant's suggested wording to ensure that there is no demonstrable loss of bulky goods retail space and that non-retail concessions are truly ancillary elements that are secondary to the primary retail use.

It is considered reasonable to allow a café/restaurant concession within retail units as such a use can be supportive of the retail offer in terms of providing food and refreshment for shoppers. Other non-retail concession may be at odds with the outline consent and hence it is recommended that a revised wording expressively permits A3 café/restaurant concessions and no other.

It is also considered that in order to retain the primacy of the retail use that there is a maximum floor area for a non-retail concession. It is considered reasonable to permit Café/Restaurant concessions within units where the floor area of such use is no greater than 10% of the gross floor area of the unit at ground level.

Members are recommended to support the revised wording that for the avoidance of doubt permits only café/restaurant concessions and at a size that is no greater than 10% of the gross ground floor area of the host unit. In the context the amendment as worded would not demonstrably alter the outline consent or impact Town Centres, in accordance with Policies TC1, TC2 and DE1 of the Torbay Local plan 2012-2030.

S106/CIL

The amendments to the wording of the conditions do not alter the outcome of the previous viability assessment and secured obligations package within the s106 legal agreement.

The existing Section 106 agreement will need to be tied to the new application through a deed of variation though and this should be completed prior to the application formal determination.

Conclusions

The recommendation is to retain the reference to the masterplan within Condition P1 with wording that clarifies that it is an illustrative guiding document. There will be no demonstrable impact resulting from this amended wording.

The recommendation is to support the Officer recommendation for additional information in regard to retail impact and the availability, suitability and viability of sequentially preferable sites, in order to duly consider whether the proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the Paignton and Torquay town centres. Where it is concluded that that proposal may have a significant adverse impact Officers recommend that the application be refused in accordance with Policy TC3 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030. Where it is concluded that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact Officers recommended to approve the revised wording that allows one unit to have a gross ground floor area of not less than 550sqm and with a total floor area no less than 836sqm, so as to retain the exception unit at an appropriate scale for bulky goods in terms of total floor space, not demonstrably reduced from the outline consent, in accordance with policy DE1 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.

The recommendation is to amend condition 35 to allow a single A3 café/restaurant concession in each unit rather than permit all concessions. That a maximum size restriction is included in condition 35 in order to limit the scale of A3 café/restaurant operations relative to any unit, and protect the primacy of the

retail use in accordance with the outline consent. It is recommended that the only concessions which shall be permitted are A3 Café/Restaurant use and that such uses shall not exceed 10% of the sales area at gross ground floor area of the unit in question.

Revised wording proposed:

P1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans listed below: B14153 003 - (Version - Rev A) -Date on plan: 26/01/2015 - Proposed Layout received 26.01.2015 B14153 003 T - (Version - swept Path Analysis) -Date on plan: 24/01/2014 - Proposed Layout received 26.01.2015 1449-PL-006A -Date on plan: 01/07/2014 - OS Map/Site Location received 22.09.2014 B14153-001 - (Version - Retail Access) -Date on plan: 09/07/2014 - Proposed Layout received 22.09.2014 1449-PL-001 - (Version - REV A -Masterplan) -Date on plan: 18/09/2014 - Proposed Layout received 22.09.2014 1449-PL-011 - (Version - A (Pedestrian Link)) -Date on plan: 29/09/2014 - Proposed Layout received 08.10.2014 B14153-002 - (Version - Rev A) -Date on plan: 06/02/2015 - Proposed Layout received 24.02.2015 B14153 004 - (Version - P) -Date on plan: 30/01/2015 - Proposed Layout received 03.02.2015 B14153 005 T -Date on plan: 30/01/2015 - Proposed Layout received 03.02.2015

The development shall accord with the guiding principles of the indicative masterplan listed below:

1449-PL-001 - (Version - REV A -Masterplan) -Date on plan: 18/09/2014 - Proposed Layout received 22.09.2014

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory completion of development.

34. With the exception of no more than one retail unit which shall have a minimum gross floor area of not less than 836sqm of which no less than 550sqm shall be at ground floor level, the minimum gross floor area at ground floor level of any retail unit formed from the retail floorspace (Use Class A1) hereby permitted shall be 929sqm and the retail units shall not be sub-divided into smaller retail units.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to protect the vitality and viability of Paignton and Torquay Town Centres and other nearby centres in

accordance with Policies TC1 and TC3 of the Adopted Torbay Local Plan - A landscape for success 2012-2030, and paragraphs 24 and 27 of the NPPF.

35. Any retail unit formed from the retail floorspace (Use Classes A1) hereby permitted and the garden centre shall be used by a single retail operator and shall not include any independently operated retail concessions, unless they are reasonably related to the goods sold by the unit as permitted by condition 32. For the avoidance of doubt this does not preclude the provision of an A3 Cofé (Destaurant expression within each retail unit provided that the error

Café/Restaurant concession within each retail unit provided that the area occupied by the concession is no greater than 10% of the sales floor area of the unit at ground floor.

Reason: The condition is required to protect the vitality and viability of Paignton and Torquay Town Centres and other nearby centres in accordance with Policies TC1 and TC3 of the Adopted Torbay Local Plan - A landscape for success 2012-2030, and paragraphs 24 and 27 of the NPPF.

Relevant Policies