

Application Number

P/2012/0706

Site AddressWhite Rock Business Park
Waddeton Close
Paignton
TQ4 7RZ**Case Officer**

Matt Diamond

Ward

Blatchcombe

Description

Development Of Innovation Centre Phase 3 for Torbay (IC3) (Use Class B1)

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The application is to develop an innovation centre known as Innovation Centre Phase 3 for Torbay (IC3) (Use Class B1) and associated car parking at White Rock Business Park, adjacent to Brixham Road and the Premier Inn hotel. The proposal will necessitate the demolition of the existing Roundhouse building on the site.

The scheme has been prepared in a relatively short timescale and is being brought to Committee early in order to qualify for European funding, which is the financial mechanism required to make the project viable. The proposed development is acceptable in land use terms and would be a welcome addition to the business park.

The scheme will provide floorspace for approximately 200 jobs, supporting small to medium sized businesses and start-up businesses. The proposals will include both office and laboratory space to enable businesses to germinate and grow with relevant and tailored business support. The project will be one of three innovation centres in Torbay and will be a positive addition to the White Rock Business Park, forming part of the wider local commercial centre that will underpin the new mixed use development of the area as it rolls forward.

Whilst statutory consultee responses are still awaited, it is not anticipated that there will be any objections to the principle of the development and any necessary technical issues should be able to be dealt with via conditions.

Following constructive Design Review Panel comments, some revisions are being carried out to the design, mainly relating to the entrance-atrium feature. These will be presented at Committee unless they are not completed in time in which case delegated approval is sought for these to be agreed by officers.

Recommendation

Conditional Approval; subject to the receipt of revised plans with conditions to be

delegated to the Executive Head of Spatial Planning (including the schedule at the end of the report).

Site Details

The site is located at White Rock Business Park, adjacent to Brixham Road and the Premier Inn hotel. The size of the site is 0.4 ha. It is L shaped, with one part stretching along Brixham Road and the other along the boundary of the Premier Inn car park.

The site has been tidied up to the north following demolition of the previous office/industrial building to construct the hotel and mainly consists of low quality soft landscape. It also covers part of The Roundhouse building, which is vacant.

The outline planning permission for the site was approved by Committee in February, subject to the signing of a S106 agreement. The outline scheme included an office building with retail units on the ground floor on the application site as part of a masterplan to develop the wider area for mixed use development (Planning Ref: P/2011/0197). The masterplan envisages the building sited along the Brixham Road frontage with car parking behind.

On the opposite side of Brixham Road is a residential terrace of 18 no. 2-storey properties. These properties front onto Kingsway Drive to the east with their back gardens facing Brixham Road. They are separated from Brixham Road by a wide grass verge and screened by a number of coniferous trees.

Detailed Proposals

The proposal is to develop an innovation centre known as Innovation Centre Phase 3 for Torbay (IC3) (Use Class B1) and associated car parking following demolition of The Roundhouse building. The building would be sited broadly in line with the masterplan facing onto Brixham Road with car parking behind. The building would have three main elements: a 4-storey block comprising B1(b) high-tech laboratories, a 3-storey block comprising B1(a) offices and a central entrance-atrium that includes meeting rooms and spaces encouraging business interaction. The building has been specifically designed to attract high-tech manufacturing companies. The atrium has been designed as a central feature to 'advertise' the building and the business park as a whole. The total floorspace of the building is 4,500 sq m (3,000 sq m B1(a) and 1,500 sq m B1(b)).

The main feature of the atrium is a large structural screen constructed from a mixture of clear and sand blasted Reglit. Reglit is a glass product in this case comprising long straight vertical U profile sections interlinked to form a screen and supported by a steel frame. The remaining elements of the building would be made from simpler, more cost effective and widely available materials: dark grey brick for the 4-storey laboratory block and white render for the 3-storey office block. The number of different materials is deliberately kept to a minimum to aid clarity and simplicity. The atrium would be able to be lit, so it advertises the

building and business park at night as well as during the day. However, the light spill can be controlled, to ensure that this does not cause a nuisance to local residents.

Access to the car park would be from Waddeton Close to the rear. The main entrance to the building is from the car park, although a secondary pedestrian/cyclist entrance is also provided on Brixham Road to provide an active frontage. The area around the building would be landscaped and designed to fit in with the existing landscaping around the edge of the site. 44 car parking spaces would be provided and 21 covered cycle spaces.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Drainage & Structures: Awaiting response.

South West Water: No objection in terms of capacity. A public water main runs beneath the site, which would need to be diverted/relocated at full cost to the applicant/developer. Their comments are shown in the representations pack at Page P.201.

Strategic Transportation/Highways: No objection provided a shared pedestrian/cycleway (SUP) is provided along Brixham Road in front of the site linking the Long Road and new Kingsway signalised junctions, and a contribution towards the Western Corridor in accordance with the Planning Contributions SPD if applicable. A Full Travel Plan should be conditioned as part of any planning approval.

The level of car parking is acceptable, subject to monitoring – the Travel Plan should include provision for a regular car parking survey to ensure the level of provision is appropriate to demand. Appropriate lockers and shower facilities for cyclists should be provided within the development. Comments are shown in the representations pack at Page P.201.

Natural England: Awaiting response.

Refuse Collection & Disposal: Awaiting response.

Torbay Local Access Forum: Awaiting response.

South Devon AONB Unit: Awaiting response.

South Hams District Council: Awaiting response.

Arboricultural Officer: Awaiting response.

Design Review Panel: The proposal has many good qualities and the Panel wishes to support the scheme. The design of the atrium is weaker than the main

blocks. The screen is a rather imposed feature that does little to improve the way the building operates. A rapid re-appraisal of the layout of the atrium and how it relates to the elements either side would be beneficial. A simpler and more effective building might emerge.

There are opportunities to strengthen the architecture of the laboratory block, particularly in the northeast corner; care should be taken over material specification. More work is needed on the landscape design, including re-appraisal of the location of the external seating area and ease of movement to the main entrance.

A more ambitious energy strategy is recommended potentially utilising a local energy network. Ideas to reduce the environmental impacts of the building are good, but need more rigorous testing and refinement. Their comments are shown in the representations pack at Page P.201.

Summary Of Representations

At the time of writing no public representations have been received. 3 days remain of the 21 day consultation period and any representations received during this time will be reported at Committee.

Relevant Planning History

- P/1998/1975/OA: Redevelopment Of Site For B1/B2 Use (In Outline): Approved 14/4/2001
- P/2000/0713: The Roundhouse, Waddeton Close: Change Of Use To Offices, Assembly And Storage: Approved 23/6/2000.
- ZP/2004/0553: The Roundhouse, Waddeton Close: Hotel And Restaurant (pre-application enquiry): Application withdrawn 6/6/2004.
- P/2004/0892: The Roundhouse, Waddeton Close: Change Of Use From Light Industrial To Office And Health Club (In accordance with plans received 2/6/04): Refused 6/8/2004. Appeal dismissed 17/6/2005.
- P/2004/2060: The Roundhouse, Waddeton Close: Change Of Use To Health Club/Fitness Centre And Office (Revised Scheme): Refused 24/5/2005.
- P/2004/2061: The Roundhouse, Waddeton Close: Change Of Use To Gym/Fitness Centre/Training/Conference Facility With Internet Cafe & Crèche: Refused 24/5/2005.
- P/2004/1621/MOA: 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). The Application Is In Part A Departure From The Local Plan And Is The Subject Of An Environmental Statement: Approved 6/1/2005. This permission has lapsed because not all of the reserved matters were applied for within 3 years.

P/2011/0197/OA: Mixed Use Development of 39 Hectares of land at White Rock, Paignton to construct 350 dwellings, 36,800 sq m gross employment floorspace, a local centre including food retail (approx. 1,652 sq m gross) with additional 392 sq m A1/A3 use and student accommodation, 15 hectares of open space, sports pavilion and associated infrastructure and engineering works to provide access, drainage and landscaping (Outline Application): Approved subject to the signing of a s106 legal agreement 13/2/2012.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The key issues are:

1. The principle of the development
2. Design
3. Impact on highways
4. Impact on biodiversity
5. Sustainability

1. The principle of the development

The principle of the development in land use terms is acceptable. The previous use of the site was B1/B2 (Business/General Industry) and the proposal reintroduces business use to the site after a period of vacancy. Whilst the masterplan proposed under reference P/2011/0197/OA, shows an office building on the site with retail units on the ground floor, this was indicative and the loss of the retail units to additional business floorspace is not considered to be material. At any rate retail space remains within the wider masterplan area to compliment the Local Centre and serve the wider development.

The proposed development is in accordance with the Adopted Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011, as it retains an existing employment site for employment use. It is also supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which

promotes sustainable economic growth.

2. Design

The proposed development has been designed over a relatively short period of time, due to the project hinging on the availability of European funding that requires planning permission to be granted in August 2012. However, the design is considered to be of a high quality that would enhance the character of the business park if approved. The approach that has been taken will raise the bar in design terms and emphasise the high-tech nature of the proposed use.

Having stated this, the proposed development has been taken to the Design Review Panel and the Panel has identified some opportunities for further improvement. These mainly relate to the entrance-atrium and the architect is in the process of revising certain aspects of the design to take these comments into account. At the time of writing these revisions have not been completed, but they will be presented at Committee. If they are not completed in time for the Committee then delegated approval is sought for officers to agree these post Committee.

3. Impact on highways

The proposal has been assessed by Strategic Transportation and Highways. No objections have been raised. The impacts on local junctions and highways are considered acceptable subject to a full Travel Plan being implemented, which should be a condition of planning permission if granted. A shared pedestrian/cycleway has been requested by Highways in front of the site along Brixham Road, connecting the Long Road and new Kingsway signalised junctions.

However, this and other sustainable transport contributions are offset by mitigation for employment generation, as set out in the Council's Planning Contributions SPD Update 3 (see 'S106/CIL' below for further details). The S106 agreement being drawn up in relation to the outline proposal for the whole White Rock area includes highways improvements to Brixham Road and a commuted sum that can be used for Western Corridor improvements.

The level of car parking is acceptable, subject to monitoring.

4. Impact on Biodiversity

The site is located within the 5km buffer greater horseshoe bat sustenance zone associated with the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) at Berry Head. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was carried out for the masterplan (P/2011/0197/OA). The most valuable parts of the masterplan area to greater horseshoe bats are the undeveloped areas of grassland to the west. The proposal site has significantly less value because it is previously developed. Mitigation for the more sensitive areas in the masterplan has been established as part of planning permission reference P/2011/0197/OA.

In addition, Phase 1 and 2 habitat and protected species surveys were undertaken for the masterplan. Whilst these identified various sensitivities within the masterplan area, very few affect the proposal site. The only issues come from the Breeding Bird survey, although Cirl Bunting is distant from the site and Herring Gulls identified in the immediate area were not found to be breeding.

The Planning and Ecology Statement submitted with the application states there are no important hedgerows or trees identified in the vicinity of the proposal site.

At the time of writing, consultation responses are awaited from Natural England and the Arboricultural Officer. These will be reported at Committee.

5. Sustainability

The Design and Access Statement commits to achieving BREEAM 'excellent'. However, whilst some solutions are discussed very little information is provided. A number of ideas were presented to the Design Review Panel and whilst these were considered by the Panel to be good, a more ambitious energy strategy is recommended. Therefore, if the planning application is approved, a condition should be attached requiring a BREEAM excellent rating and details of how this will be achieved to be agreed with officers prior to the commencement of the development.

S106/CIL -

In accordance with the Council's Planning Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD Update 3, a sustainable transport contribution of £220,725.00 would ordinarily be required. However, this is mitigated by the number of jobs generated by the proposed development, which equates to £867,300.00 (210 full time jobs) following the methodology in the SPD Update 3.

Conclusions

This scheme has been prepared quickly and is being brought to Committee sooner than usual in order to qualify for European funding, which makes the scheme viable. Without this funding the development could not be delivered. In order to receive this funding, planning permission is required in August 2012.

Fortunately, much of the technical work required for an application of this type has been undertaken as part of the outline application (P/2011/0197/OA). At the time of writing, many of the statutory consultation responses have yet to be received, however, these will be reported at Committee. It is not anticipated that there will be any objections to the scheme in principle and any necessary technical requirements should be able to be dealt with via planning conditions.

The proposed development is acceptable in land use terms and would be a welcome addition to the White Rock Business Park. It would attract/retain high-tech companies to the area providing approximately 200 full-time jobs. The

design of the building is high quality and would 'advertise' the building as well as the business park as a whole from the public highway. The Design Review Panel has identified some opportunities for improvements to the design and these are currently being carried out by the architect, which will be presented at Committee. If they are not completed in time then delegated approval would be sought for officers to agree these post Committee.

Schedule of Conditions - Headings:

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Approved drawings
3. Materials
4. Construction Method Statement
5. Large scale construction drawings
6. BREEAM
7. Full Travel Plan
8. Cycle Parking/Facilities
9. Landscaping/Planting Scheme
10. Landscaping/Planting (Implementation/Maintenance)
11. Tree Protection
12. Lighting
13. Drainage
14. Waste
15. Biodiversity Measures

Relevant Policies

- ES Employment and local economy strategy
- E9 Layout, design and sustainability
- IN1 Water, drainage and sewerage infrastructure
- W6 New development and the minimisation of
- W7 Development and waste recycling facilities
- L2 Areas of Great Landscape Value
- L9 Planting and retention of trees
- L10 Major development and landscaping
- NCS Nature conservation strategy
- NC1 Protected sites - internationally import
- NC5 Protected species
- EPS Environmental protection strategy
- EP1 Energy efficient design
- EP5 Light pollution
- EP6 Derelict and under-used land
- EP7 Contaminated land
- EP10 Water supply
- BES Built environment strategy
- BE1 Design of new development

- BE2 Landscaping and design
- BE9 Archaeological assessment of development
- T1 Development accessibility
- T2 Transport hierarchy
- T7 Access for people with disabilities
- T25 Car parking in new development
- T26 Access from development on to the highway
- T27 Servicing