

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 8 November 2012 **Ward:** Heslington
Team: Major and **Parish:** Heslington Parish
Commercial Team Council

Reference: 12/02568/FUL
Application at: Helix House Innovation Way Heslington York YO10 5BR
For: Installation of roof mounted flues and associated external plant
and machinery
By: University of York
Application Type: Full Application
Target Date: 21 September 2012
Recommendation: Approve

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 Helix House Innovation Way Heslington comprises a substantial two storey brick and panel clad structure in Class B1 (Business) use dating from the early 1990s and located at the eastern edge of the York University Science Park. It lies directly adjacent to the landscaped boundary of the Science Park with residential property on Windmill Lane directly to the east. Planning permission is sought for the erection of a series of roof mounted flues and associated external plant and machinery, with a ground mounted fresh air handling unit to ventilate the Nanocentre, a facility within the building associated with research into the production of solar cells and precision silicon fibre optics.

1.2 Councillor Neil Barnes has called the application in for consideration by Members of the East Area Planning Sub-Committee in view of the potential impact upon the residential amenity of properties in Mill Lane.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

City Boundary GMS Constraints: York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams GMS Constraints: East Area (1) 0003

2.2 Policies:

CYGP1
Design

CYED7
University Science Park

CYE8
Non conforming uses

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

INTERNAL:-

3.1 The Environmental Protection Unit raise no objection to the proposal.

EXTERNAL:-

3.2 Heslington Parish Council were consulted with regard to the proposal on 3rd August 2012. Any response will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3.3 Seven letters of objection have been received in respect of the proposal. The following is a summary of their contents:-

- * Concern in respect of the impact of the proposed roof top plant on the visual amenity of the wider street scene;
- * Concern in respect of the impact of the proposed development upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties through noise from the plant along with the possibility of accidental chemical release.

4.0 APPRAISAL

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:-

4.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE:-

- * Impact upon the visual amenity of the wider street scene;
- * Impact upon the residential amenity of nearby properties.

IMPACT UPON THE VISUAL AMENITY OF THE WIDER STREET SCENE:-

4.2 Policy GP1 of the York Development Control Local Plan expects new development proposals to respect or enhance the local environment and be of a scale, mass and design that is compatible with neighbouring buildings, spaces and the character of the area. Helix House comprises a two storey brick and curtain wall clad structure of recent construction used for various Use Class B1(b) research related activities.

The current application seeks permission to erect a series of flues and associated plant on the roof of the building with a cold air handling unit at ground level to ventilate the Nanocentre, a research facility into the development of silicon fibre optics and solar cells. The process includes the use of a number of controlled chemicals including Sulphur Hexafluoride, Hydrochloric Acid and Hydrofluoric Acid in dilute quantities. The proposed plant would be located on the rear roof slope of the building and would not therefore be readily visible within long and short distance views from within the Science Park. Directly to the east of the building lies the mature landscape belt that forms the boundary of the Science Park with the housing lying further to the east in Windmill Lane. The planting comprises a mix of deciduous trees with extremely mature evergreen shrubs and is some 24 metres wide. The nearest residential properties in Windmill Lane are some 47 metres distant. Whilst there would be a degree of intervisibility between the application site and the nearby housing during the winter months the underlying shrub planting and the sheer mass of the crown spread would inhibit views from the east and thereby secure the visual amenity of the wider street scene. The requirements of Policy GP1 would, therefore, be satisfied.

IMPACT UPON THE RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES:-

4.3 Concern has been expressed in respect to the potential noise generated by the proposed plant together with the risks associated with the chemicals to be used and the associated impact upon the residential amenity of nearby properties. The proposed works include internal acoustic screening built into the first floor ceiling of the building. This would absorb much of the noise generated by the proposed works to the extent that any impact upon the residential amenity of nearby properties would be minimal. The proposed flues would be located some 2.5 metres above the ridge line of the building in accordance with British Standards relating to the safe discharge of fumes to the atmosphere. The proposed research process involves the etching of printed circuit boards and silicon chips with hydrofluoric acid. The applicant has confirmed that this will be used at the rate of 1 litre per month directed through a fume cupboard with a dilution rate of 500 litres per second. This would result in a discharge rate significantly below the safe levels identified by the HSE. The operation of the research process would furthermore be regulated by the means of a management plan prepared under the COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations. The impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties would, therefore, be adequately controlled under these (non planning) regulations.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Helix House comprises a two storey brick and curtain wall panel constructed building lying at the eastern edge of the York Science Park and used for a range of research and development uses.

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a series of roof top flues together with a ground level fresh air handling unit on the eastern elevation of the building. The site is separated from residential property by a substantial landscaped belt incorporating mature trees and shrub planting some 24 metres wide. The proposed flues and associated equipment are required in association with the development of the Nano Centre to research the development of printed circuit boards and optical applications using very small quantities of hydrofluoric acid and other chemicals for etching.

5.2 Concern has been expressed in respect of the impact of the proposal upon the visual amenity of the wider street scene, however the pitch of the existing roof will effectively shield the proposed equipment in views from the Science Park to the west and the proposed apparatus would be largely shielded in views from the east notwithstanding the impact of winter leaf fall by the substantial and very dense belt of landscaping along the eastern boundary of the site. Further concern has been expressed in respect of the potential risk of pollution arising from the range of chemicals being used at the site. However the applicant has been able to demonstrate that the proposed concentration of chemicals would be at a safe level and that there would be no impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposal is, therefore, considered to be acceptable in planning terms and approval is recommended.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

1 TIME2 Development start within three years -

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans:-

Drawing Ref:- M/SK002 P5

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

3 Details of all machinery, plant and equipment to be installed in or located on the premises hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the development hereby authorised commencing on site. These details shall include maximum (L_{Amax}(f)) and average sound levels (L_{Aeq}) at 1 metre distance from the source, octave band noise levels and any proposed noise mitigation measures. All such approved machinery, plant and equipment shall not be used on the site except in accordance with the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

The machinery, plant or equipment and any approved noise mitigation measures shall be fully implemented and operational before the proposed use first opens and shall be appropriately maintained thereafter.

Reason:- To protect the amenity of nearby premises and to secure compliance with Policy GP1 of the York Development Control Local Plan.

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

Notes to Applicant

1. REASON FOR APPROVAL

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposal, subject to the conditions listed above, would not cause undue harm to interests of acknowledged importance, with particular reference to impact upon the visual amenity of the wider street scene and impact upon the residential amenity of nearby properties. As such the proposal complies with Policies GP1, ED7 and E8 of the City of York Development Control Local Plan.

Contact details:

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