

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: East Area

Ward: Clifton

Date: 22 February 2007

Parish: Clifton Planning Panel

Reference: 06/02605/FULM

Application at: York District Hospital Wigginton Road York YO31 8HE

For: Erection of two storey (3 Level) Car park, and alterations to existing car park and entrance roads, (Re-submission).

By: Peter Strickland

Application Type: Major Full Application (13 weeks)

Target Date: 19 March 2007

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application relates to the existing surface car park at the front of the District Hospital, facing Wigginton Road. The car park currently provides 184 visitor and 124 staff spaces. The proposal is to create a decked multistorey car park for patients and visitors on the site of the existing car park.

1.2 The application follows a previously approved application (ref: 03/00811/FUL) that was approved in early 2005 for a smaller multistorey car park. The resubmission moves and slightly enlarges the car park from the centre of this site further north so as to free up land for further future hospital expansion. A previous application was withdrawn by the applicants in November 2006 after officers objected to the design and siting of the structure.

1.3 The new structure would take the form of a ground floor deck with spaces for 37 visitor cars, the first and second floors for with a total of 162 visitor cars on each level. This creates a total of 361 visitor spaces. There will also be 122 staff car parking spaces to the ground floor and 28 additional staff spaces on external block paved surface areas. This creates a total of 483 spaces within the car park building. Vehicular access to the building will be from the north of the site and the present main access will be blocked off and built over by the car park. There will be a new modified access to be used by blue light traffic and staff only further down Wigginton Road near the existing bus stop. Pedestrians will have main access at the north of the building within a staff block where there will be a stair well and elevator. This will give access to a pedestrianised area and the rest of the hospital.

1.4 The building would comprise of 'Corus Kalzip' perforated aluminium with galvanised steel frame structure with burgundy coloured blockwork and teak stained sawn louvre cladding to the lower level. The attendants block will be of galvanised steel frame and teak stained sawn timber cladding with a glass and burgundy rendered stair well element. There are proposed cable planting rails at intervals of 7 metres onto which are proposed to be grown climbers.

1.5 The application includes landscaping measures along the Wigginton Road frontage involving the retention of existing trees as far as possible and the retention of the existing grass bund.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Areas of Archaeological Interest City Centre Area 0006

City Boundary York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams East Area (2) 0005

2.2 Policies:

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

Internal

Highway Network Management - Highway regulation are at time of writing formulating their formal response to the application. It is believed that there are no fundamental Highway concerns.

Environmental Protection - A noise impact assessment has been requested although no formal response has as yet been received. Officers intend to update members in due course.

Environment and Conservation - No response at time of writing. There were serious concerns within the previous application regarding the proximity of the proposed car park to the landscaped area adjacent to Wigginton Road and the previous scheme was amended to be moved further away from this area.

Archaeology - The site is located near to a Roman Cemetery that appears to have never been built upon in the past. As such an archaeological watching brief condition is recommended.

Landscape - (comments from previous application 06/01674/FULM) Several early-mature Limes are contained within the car park footprint and would thus be removed. From the outside they look to be of good form with healthy foliage. As such they could have a very long-term amenity value and are worthy of retention. Nonetheless their visibility is limited to relatively close proximity along Wigginton Road because of screening by the other avenue trees.

The loss of a very attractive, singular Lime adjacent to the existing entrance road would be unfortunate and should be avoided if at all possible.

(comments received 17th January 2007)

The revised building has been pulled back slightly from the existing Lime tree avenue; the open-air, at-level car park has been reduced; the emergency access has

been moved and reduced in width; and the admin/circulation block has been pulled back from Wigginton Road. The proposals include climbing plants grown up cables/wires set off the building, and new specimen tree planting is proposed where space or gaps allow along the Wigginton Road elevation. The scheme also results in the creation of an additional length of grassed highway verge leading up to the bus stop, presenting an opportunity for another Lime tree to be added to the avenue. Ideally the Lime avenue would have a greater width of space around it to retain some of its original 'parkland' association, nonetheless the development adequately enables physical protection of the trees.

The proposed climbing plants will be a key feature of the Wigginton Road facade, therefore it is important to get the detail right. Subsequently, a single wire/cable will not be sufficient to support significant plant growth. The plant support needs to be several vertically fanned wires with finer horizontal elements. Even tendrilled or suckering plants will struggle to climb up a singular wire to any height. Therefore this detail needs revising to suit.

3.2 External

Clifton Planning Panel - No objections but request an alternative pedestrian crossing.

Nearby Residents and Interested Parties - Two letters have been submitted from consulted neighbours who strongly object to the proposal.

The elements of concern are:

- 1) Scale and Position: The objectors feel that the proposed car park is too large, obtrusive and out of character and the cladding will do little to enhance the locality. There is concern over the relationship of the proposed car park and the locality.
- 2) The open space that the car park is to be constructed upon will be lost and will be contrary to Policy GP1.
- 3) Traffic information is dated based upon a TIA from 2002.

4.0 APPRAISAL

Key issues:

Impact of proximity to Wigginton Road
Design

Suitability of a building adjacent a major approach into the City.

Impact upon trees and existing Landscaping

Impact upon Highway network.

Policy Context

5.1 Planning Policy Statement 1 (delivering sustainable communities) clearly states that "Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted."

It also states that developments should provide "high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development."

5.2 City of York Deposit Draft Local Plan Policy GP1 states that development proposals will be expected to (i) respect or enhance the local environment, (ii) be of a density, layout, scale, mass and design that is compatible with neighbouring buildings, spaces and the character of the area using appropriate building materials; (iii) avoid the loss of open spaces, important gaps within development, vegetation, water features and other features that contribute to the quality of the local environment; (iv) retain, enhance and/or create urban spaces, public views, skyline, landmarks and other townscape features which make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

5.3 Local Plan Policy C4 also states that any such expansion should not reduce the amenity of local residents; result in the loss of key areas of landscaping, or cause traffic problems.

Site Context and Planning History

5.4 The historic maps of the site indicate that there has been no substantial development within the last two hundred years. The earliest maps show the area to be common ground which was later fenced and used as playing fields. Many of these fences remain and it was around this time that the avenue of Lime Trees were planted. This use remained until the hospital used this area as surface car park in the 1970's. Subsequent to this an adjacent Roman Cemetery is believed to extend under the southern part of this site.

5.5 The previous Planning application for the erection of a multi storey car park (03/00811/FUL) was approved in 2005 and was extensively negotiated and modified to bring the building further from Wigginton Road. The final distance achieved was a 13 metre separation from Wigginton Road to the proposed car park. This left adequate space for suitable planting and the protection of existing trees that contributed to softening the building.

5.6 The principle for the car park therefore has already been set and the Hospital already has valid approval for the construction of the car park upon this site. The main difference is the re siting of the structure that will bring it substantially closer to Wigginton Road.

5.7 A subsequent application was submitted in August 2006 for the erection of a similar car park structure. This was recommended for refusal by officers and subsequently withdrawn.

5.8 The reason behind the re siting of the car park is explained within the submitted Design and Access Statement that was submitted as a requirement of all Planning Applications as from August 2006. This explains that the car park is essential to this site due to the desire and need of the hospital to extend in this location. This expansion is currently being planned and it is believed that some provisional master planning work has been undertaken by the Hospital. This does not form part of the

current planning application however and merely provides a justification for the alteration from the approved scheme. It is felt however that such potential development can be used to justify the design of this application. It is anticipated that subject to the outcome of this current application, subsequent applications shall be submitted for further modification of the site.

Pre Application Advice

5.9 Pre application discussions were undertaken by the applicant after the most recent, very similar application, was withdrawn in November 2006. This application was recommended for refusal due to its dominant design and impact upon this main approach into the City. Another major issue was the impact upon the lines of Lime trees that mark the boundary to the hospital.

5.10 The main aims and elements of the proposal include the following:

- 1) Increased accommodation for staff and visitors to Hospital including surface and multistorey car park.
- 2) Improved main entrance to hospital from proposed car park with block paved pathway and glazed entrance block.
- 3) Protection of existing trees
- 4) replanting and reinstatement of landscaped bund to Wigginton Road

Although the overall design of the proposed car park has changed marginally from the withdrawn application there have been modifications in terms of the proximity to the main road and the trees. The main alterations include:

- 1) The alteration of corner elements closest to Wigginton Road to relieve the impact upon trees.
- 2) The increase of the admin/entrance block to two storeys' so as to relieve the visual impact of the car park from the North.
- 3) The reimplementing of landscaped bund to Wigginton Road where the existing vehicular access currently is located with new access created.
- 4) The justification has been provided as to the future development of the hospital site to the south that would potentially disguise the car park building.
- 5) The applicants are also seeking 'wash lighting' to the car park elevations.

Analysis

5.11 The impact of this structure upon Wigginton Road will still be very dominant. The changes proposed alleviate the impact from the North by the change in structure from aluminium clad car park to rendered/timber clad 'habitated' building, and the increased tree planting and landscaped bund reinstatement do offer further relief to some extent, (subject to satisfaction of conditions). The justification and elements of the potential future development to the south of the site are also being considered in the schemes' favour as the redevelopment of this area will, subject to its own consent, further relieve the visual impact of this car park. The car park will therefore introduce a modern, functional building that will create a new pedestrian route into the hospital through improved public realm works and entrance to the car park.

Internal Elevation

5.12 Officers have limited authority to intervene in modifications within privately owned property, however it is believed that the internal hospital road will still create a relatively poor environment for pedestrians using this area. Increased planting and the main entrance to the car park being to the north of the site in the proposed two storey element of the application will relieve pedestrian movements, but it is felt that such a canyonisation may still be problematic. Climbers to this elevation have not been included in the application although proposed lighting may relieve the dominance in the evening along with proposed banner signs.

Impact Upon Wigginton Road

5.13 The proposed car park is considered to be of superior design to the existing approval, and the main issue is considered to be the impact that the new siting will have upon Wigginton Road and the Central Core Conservation area to the south of the site. The proposed building will still introduce a dominant element of functional design to this main approach. However the increased planting, alteration in footprint and the proposed measures to enhance climbers to the side of the building are hoped to effectively disguise the structure enough to justify an approval of Planning Permission. It has also been suggested by the case officer that a public art competition be considered to relieve the elevational facades of the car park along with mood lighting until the proposed climbers are high enough to offer suitable camouflage. At time of writing confirmation of the applicant's willingness to support such works is being awaited.

5.14 The increased public realm interventions will create a more 'readable' area and hopefully give the hospital some orientation. The new entrance block to the car park could create a more active frontage but on the whole will create a better, more logical environment than the existing surface car park.

5.15 Officers are satisfied that the proposed car park attempts to relieve its impact as much as possible while attempting to offer such large scale accommodation on a tight site. The issues of design have been negotiated and the modest improvements in footprint, together with replanting, climbers, wash lighting and the potential for public art will further alleviate the impact of the car park. It is therefore considered that the design must be weighed against the proven need for the hospital to extend and retain its site within the City Centre. On this proviso Officers must recommend approval.

Landscape

5.16 The impact upon the trees along Wigginton Road is considered a serious issue and the loss of some trees within the site is regrettable. However based upon suitable protection of existing trees, replanting and the adequate details of climbing plants Officers have no further fundamental objections.

Impact Upon Highways

5.17 Highway Officers have yet to formally respond at time of writing although no fundamental objections have as yet been raised. An issue of an agreed cycle route within the hospital grounds, although unconnected to the application location, is expected to be agreed by condition. Officers are currently awaiting a formal response and intend to update at Committee.

5.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 In summary this decision has to be based weighing up the balance between the future needs of the hospital and the need to protect this important approach into the city centre and the physical environment of the City as a whole. The proposal is required for an identified need and as a multi storey car park the design is thought out better than most. However in light of the lack of adequate design strategy for this site there is little guidance to illustrate the council's desires for such large scale development and in light of this Officers have assessed the proposal based upon its individual merits.

6.3 The proposal will introduce a large, functional building on a major approach into the city centre. However the design and materials are felt to be more appropriate than the previously approved scheme and the modern structure will have its advocates. The decision must be weighted therefore against the desire of the Hospital to expand and provide a service to the people of York. It will address a very pressing need and on this basis Officers recommendation is for approval subject to the conditions listed below.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve

- 1 VISQ8
- 2 PLANS1
- 3 TIME2
- 4 LAND1
- 5 Trees shown to be retained and/or subject to a tree preservation order (TPO) shall be protected during the development of the site by the following measures: -
Prior to commencement on site of demolition, site preparation, building or other development operations, including the importing of materials and any excavations, protective fencing to BS5837 'Trees in relation to construction' 2005, shall be erected around all existing trees shown to be retained, including those within the existing/proposed car park. Before commencement on site the protective fencing line shall be shown on a plan and agreed with the local authority and subsequently adhered to at all times during development to create exclusion zones. None of the following activities shall

take place within the protective fencing or within the canopy spread of existing trees: excavation (other than grading in of existing levels within the exclusion zones with the proposed levels outside of the exclusion zones), raising of levels, storage of any materials or top soil, parking or manoeuvring of vehicles, mechanical cultivation; there shall be no site huts, no mixing of cement (or within 10m of any tree), no disposing of washings, no stored fuel, no new service runs. The fencing shall remain secured in position throughout the construction process. A notice stating 'tree protection zone - do not remove' shall be attached to each section of fencing. Trees should not be used as anchors for winching, or have any signs or fence supports et al attached to them.

Reason: To ensure protection of existing trees before, during and after development which are covered by a Tree Preservation Order and/or make a significant contribution to the amenity of the area.

- 6 Before the commencement of demolition, site preparation, or building operations, including the importing of materials and any excavations, a method statement regarding protection measures for the existing trees shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This statement shall include construction details of protective fencing, and phasing of external works particularly in relation to making good the earth mounds including the type of equipment to be used.

Reason: To protect existing trees which are covered by a Tree Preservation Order and are considered to make a significant contribution to the amenity of this area.

7 ARCH1

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

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