

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee 4 April 2018
AUTHOR/S: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

Application Number: S/4569/17/FL

Parish: Foxton CP

Proposal: Construction of (B1) technology centre (2,165sqm) with associated parking and external landscaping.

Site Address: Faraday House, 40 Barrington Road, FOXTON, CB22 6SL

Applicant(s): Zettlex UK Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated Approval subject to the expiry of the outstanding advertisement without receipt of any further comments that would materially alter the outcome and referral to the Secretary of State.

Key Material Considerations: Principle of Development in the Green Belt
Design and Character Impacts
Ecology and Biodiversity
Transport and Access
Trees and Landscape

Committee Site Visit: 03 April 2018

Departure Application: Yes – Advertised as a departure and major development on 21 March 2018 expiring on 11 April 2018

Presenting Officer: Aaron Sands, Senior Planning Officer

Application Brought to Committee Because: Departure from policy and at the request of the Parish Council, who object to the application

Date by Which Decision Due: 5 May 2018

Executive Summary

1. The application represents a major development and a departure from the development plan, located in the countryside and in the Green Belt. The departure from the adopted development plan occurs in relation to those policies relating to the Green Belt specifically, and a number of considerations amounting to very special circumstances have been proposed to clearly outweigh that harm, with no other harms being identified. Officers have considered those and concluded that the harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by those very special circumstances.

2. Other key considerations have been considered to be suitably mitigated in their own right such that they would not result in an adverse impact to the locality. In relation to matters of highway safety, officers consider that there would need to be a scheme of footway widening and other conditions will also promote alternative forms of travel to private car.
3. A significant level of planting is proposed to reinforce the existing soft landscaping within the site, and while there is the removal of protected trees, there is replacement planting proposed, and some of the trees have deteriorated to a state that they warrant removal. The landscaping will have a sizeable effect in maintaining the relationship of the site to the surroundings, as the site is already substantially screened from any public view.
4. On the whole, no harm other than that to the Green Belt has been identified. This is considered to be clearly outweighed by very special circumstances. The development is recommended for approval as set out below.

Site Planning History

5. S/0326/17/FL – Change of use from residential to business with ancillary residential use. Approved. 07/04/2017.

Site Details

6. The site comprises a former residential dwelling (Use Class C3) and outbuildings that have changed use to light industrial (Use Class B1), situated outside the development framework in the countryside. The site is located within, but on the edge of the Green Belt, and is entirely covered by Area 52 of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) C/11/17/30/3.
7. Barrington Road is a reasonably straight road that ‘doglegs’ to the north and connects Barrington to Foxton. The application site is linked to Foxton by a footpath, and the village is served by both a train station and by direct access to the M11 and Cambridge via the A10. That said, there is some separation between the application site and Foxton, with a small agricultural field between the site and the nearest neighbouring property.

Proposal

8. The proposal principally involves the demolition of three existing buildings and the removal of existing hardstanding and the erection of a new building to the rear of the site and the alteration of the hardstanding. The building is approximately 7.4 metres height at its highest point, and 4.2 metres at the eaves, with an overall width of 71.7 metres and a depth of 20.8 metres. A range of materials are proposed to face the building, including bricks, timber cladding and zinc roofing. The proposed building would include a floor space of approximately 2165m². The buildings to be demolished constitute a combined floor space of approximately 385m².
9. The proposal also involves the creation of an associated parking area for a total of 69 cars, as well as cycle storage for 20 cycles, as well as turning and delivery areas. While a further area has been retained that might enable an additional 20 cycles, this has not been included in this application, so does not formally form part of the proposal.

10. The application involves the alteration of the entrance layout, including a metal fence and timber gate, set back into the site. An area of brickwork would be provided to one side, and the proposed gate elevations indicate this would likely be the location of signage, though no formal details have been submitted at present, and that would be subject to the relevant advertisement regulations.

Environmental Impact Assessment

11. The application would not fall within Schedule 1, but would be considered a Schedule 2 Development under Section 10(b) as an urban development project, and the site is above the threshold of 1 hectare. Officers have screened the site in accordance with the regulations, and, factoring in mitigation measures, the development is not concluded to represent EIA development.

Planning policies

12. National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

13. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Policies, adopted January 2007

ST/1 Green Belt
ST/8 Employment Provision

14. South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies, adopted July 2007

DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments
DP/5 Cumulative Development
DP/6 Construction Methods
DP/7 Development Frameworks
GB/1 Development in the Green Belt
GB/2 Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt
ET/1 Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire
ET/5 Development for the Expansion of Firms
ET/8 Replacement Buildings in the Countryside
NE/1 Energy Efficiency
NE/2 Renewable Energy
NE/3 Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development
NE/4 Landscape Character Areas
NE/6 Biodiversity
NE/7 Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
NE/10 Foul Drainage - Alternative Drainage Systems
NE/11 Flood Risk
NE/12 Water Conservation
NE/14 Lighting Proposals
NE/15 Noise Pollution
TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel

TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards
TR/3 Mitigating Travel Impact
TR/4 Non-motorised Modes
M/1 Plan Monitor Manage

15. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Trees & Development Sites - adopted 15 January 2009
Biodiversity - adopted 2 July 2009
District Design Guide - adopted 2 March 2010
Landscape in New Developments - adopted 2 March 2010
Health Impact Assessment - adopted 8 March 2011
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water - adopted November 2016

16. Submission Local Plan 2014

S/1 Vision
S/2 Objectives of the Local Plan
S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S/4 Cambridge Green Belt
S/5 Provision of New Jobs and Homes
S/6 The Development Strategy to 2031
S/7 Development Frameworks
CC/1 Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
CC/2 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation
CC/3 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
CC/4 Sustainable Design and Construction
CC/6 Construction Methods
CC/7 Water Quality
CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems
HQ/1 Design Principles
NH/1 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
NH/4 Biodiversity
NH/5 Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance
NH/6 Green Infrastructure
NH/8 Mitigating the Impact of Development in and Adjoining the Green Belt
NH/9 Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt
E/13 New Employment Development on the Edges of Villages
E/16 Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside
E/17 Conversion or Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment
SC/10 Lighting Proposals
SC/11 Noise Pollution
SC/12 Contaminated Land
TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel
TI/3 Parking Provision
TI/10 Broadband

Consultations

17. Foxton Parish Council – Objects. The Parish Council recommend refusal, as the new technology centre would amount to inappropriate development in the Green belt, and the reasons for the proposal do not represent exceptional circumstances. The traffic generated by up to 70 staff will be a significant increase on the existing traffic on this residential road, and could cause noise and inconvenience for the neighbouring properties.

The Parish Council note that permission was given in April 2017 for a change of use of this site from residential to business (S/0326/17/FL) and wonder if that permission would have been granted had these proposals for a technology centre been made known at the time.

The Parish Council recommends that decision be made by the planning committee, and that a site visit should be undertaken to see the effect of the development on the Green Belt. Should a decision be made to grant permission for this development, the Parish Council ask that use of the technology centre be limited to the current owners of the site (Zettlex UK Ltd), and that a S06 agreement be put in place with a condition that the company fully funds an appropriate speed reduction scheme on Barrington Road, to ameliorate the effect of the extra traffic.

18. **County Drainage Engineer** – No objection subject to conditions in respect of surface water works and foul water drainage.
19. **Ecology Officer** – Concerns raised regarding insufficient information, which were overcome following the submission of a further Bat Roost investigation. Conditions recommended regarding the undertaking of further dusk emergence/dawn re-entry surveys, the timing of works that might adversely impact protected species and a scheme of biodiversity enhancement to be agreed with the local planning authority.
20. **Contaminated Land** – The proposed use is not one which is particularly sensitive to the presence of contamination, and the submitted report has confirmed there are no environmental constraints. A condition relating to contaminated land is not considered necessary in this instance
21. **Landscape Officer** – No objection in principle, subject to conditions. The proposal does not include a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA), and is located within the green belt and covered entirely by Area 52 of TPO C/11/17/30/3. Subject to careful landscaping and mitigation, the development would not have an adverse impact on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt. The revised location of the entrance gates is considered acceptable, but the use of metal fencing would be detrimental to the character of the area, and alternatives would be required and could be conditioned.
22. **Transport Assessment Team** – No objections raised subject to conditions with respect to travel plans, a scheme of footway widening and the provision of two additional bus stops along the A10 bus route. A commuted sum of £14,000 is required for the maintenance of the bus stop.
23. **Local Highway Authority** – No objection subject to conditions in respect of the construction of the access and the requirement for a traffic management plan in respect of the building works. The Highway Authority request the applicant is made aware that the Highway Authority will seek a scheme of footway widening in the event of a grant of permission, via Section 278 Agreement.
24. **Urban Design Officer** – No objection subject to conditions. The site is well contained by existing planting so visual impact will be minimal beyond the site. The height, scale and siting of the building is acceptable. Conditions recommended with regards to material samples, details of eaves, verges,

windows, doors, canopies, ground surface finishes and levels and boundary treatments.

25. **Environmental Health Officer** – Following the receipt of further information, recommends conditions in respect of noise, hours of deliveries and construction works and the burning of waste materials.

Representations

26. Approximately 29 no. representations of support, have been received highlighting the following summarised points:

- The proposal will provide prospective employment for local people.
- It is located at the edge of the village and would not impact Foxton.
- The company produces important equipment and technology for key industries.
- The proposal could be beneficial to the local area.
- The proposal would not give rise to an adverse impact through noise.
- The location of the site would mean that employees would not contribute to congestion heading to Cambridge or Royston.
- The proximity of the station and bus service will improve employee transport options to this site.
- The business is supplied and supported by local sources, generating revenue for a number of small companies.
- The company's growth is evidence that it is a stable business than can provide long term employment.
- The development will be largely unseen due to the location of Faraday House.
- The company helps maintain and improve the balance of businesses within the UK economy.
- There is little industrial employment in Foxton and this proposal will provide wider employment opportunities in the village.
- The site is well screened from views as due to the boundary planting
- It is unlikely that there would be substantial HGV movements, given the type of small scale products manufactured.

27. 1 no. objection has been received raising the following summarised points:

- The proposal represents inappropriate development in the green belt and there are no convincing arguments to allow permission.
- Insufficient efforts to find an alternative site at a more suitable location.
- Substantial increase in traffic along Barrington Road, and it would improve safety if the company were to pay for traffic calming measures.
- Query regarding the controls in place to limit future occupants that might undertake more intrusive activities.
- Queries as to likelihood of smells or discharge problems from the proposed cess pit, noting the proximity to an Anglian Water sewage treatment plant.

The following comments have been received anonymously, meaning they were submitted without a full postal address, as required by the Statement of Community Involvement. They hold no weight in determining the proposal, but officers would advise regard may be had to them in considering the merits of the proposal.

28. Approximately 14 no. anonymous support letters raising the following summarised points:

- The proposal will provide economic growth and support the local economy
- The proposal will provide job creation in an accessible area and for local people
- The applicant is a supplier of critical technology for important applications
- The site is well screened and will not be seen from the wider area or disturb neighbours
- The site is located close to the train station, which will mean reduced traffic and pollution
- The company needs to expand due to the type of products being manufactured
- There will be a negligible impact on the environment
- Additional traffic generated would be minimal, and less than when the cement works were in operation

29. The following matters have been raised that are not material considerations:

- The applicant has recently expanded their manufacturing operation and this proposal might represent an intention to relocate to Faraday House

Planning Assessment

30. The key considerations in this application are;

- Principle of Development in the Green Belt
- Design and Character
- Landscape and Tree Impacts
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Transport and Parking
- Drainage matters
- Contamination
- Impacts on Residential Amenity
- Other Matters
- Need for Very special Circumstances

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

31. The site is located within the designated Green Belt, and paragraph 80 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes of such an area;

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

32. Adopted policy ST/1 and emerging policy S/4 both state that the Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge to define the extent of the urban area. The Green Belt has been revised in the emerging local plan, but this site has not been altered and remains within both adopted and emerging Green Belt boundaries.

33. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings in that location is inappropriate, unless it would fall into one of the listed exceptions, of which the following two are of relevance to this application;
- The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
 - Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.
34. While the proposal is for a replacement of buildings on the site, it does not accord with the first of the above two bullet points, as it represents a significant material increase on the overall size and footprint of the current buildings on site to be demolished represent a total floor space of approximately 366m², in comparison to the 2165m², close to six times larger than the existing. In relation to this point also the development is considered to be inappropriate by definition, and consideration must be given to whether there are any very special circumstances (VSC) that would clearly outweigh the harm of developing in the Green Belt.
35. In regards to the second bullet point the site is a brownfield site, and sits in designated countryside, outside of a built up area, and much of the site forms the curtilage of the buildings in situ. The proposal would therefore represent the redevelopment of brownfield land in continuing use. The development would result in a substantial additional building, and while there would be screening that might mitigate that, in terms of the openness of the Green Belt that would be notably impacted because of the additional built form. In that respect, the proposal also represents inappropriate development by definition.
36. Adopted policy GB/1 reflects the presumption against inappropriate development in the defined Green Belt, with policy GB/2 further requiring that development that is appropriate in the Green Belt being located and designed so that it does not result in an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt, and stating that landscaping conditions will be imposed to ensure any impact on the Green Belt is mitigated. These policies are reflected in policy NH/8 of the emerging local plan, that also requires appropriate landscaping provisions.
37. Emerging Policy NH/9 sets out specific considerations for the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the Green Belt, supporting the redevelopment of such sites in principle, subject to specific considerations. That policy has been subject to a significant revision under the main modifications, and comments have been made, which is considered to provide some limit to the weight that might be allocated to it, but officers still consider it carries reasonably substantial weight overall. In relation to this application, the modified policy states that proposals for the replacement of a building are supported, provided that the building is not materially larger than existing, and supports, more generally, the redevelopment of brownfield land that would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
38. The following sections consider all other matters, and whether they might constitute harmful development, either in themselves or in relation to the

Green Belt. Whether the provided VSC would then clearly outweigh any harm identified is concluded in the Planning Balance at the end.

Design and Character

39. The site is somewhat separated from the main area of Foxton, with an agricultural field between the site and the nearest neighbouring property. There is a connecting footpath that runs into the Village, but the character of this particular road is more rural. The trees in situ along the boundaries of the application site further reinforce that character, providing a significant screen of any potential views within the site. The urban design officer has raised no objection to the proposal, and recommends a number of conditions with respect to the details of the proposal.
40. The bulk of the development is proposed to the rear of the site, with the main building presented side on to the roadside, with the front elevation facing southwards into the site. Towards the front of the site, the former dwelling would remain in situ, and would be the most visual element of the proposal from the access. Given the scale of the proposed building, it is reasonable to consider that there would be glimpse views, particularly in the winter months, where tree cover is sparser. While this site is located in a more rural area, the use of the site is light industrial, and the proposed site layout is reflective of the use, with the large building being of a clearly more utilitarian design, reflective of industrial uses, and would be notable legible in that instance.
41. With the site, given that the existing layout is reflective of the former use, which was residential, there would be a substantial alteration to character, which would be more reflective of the industrial use, indicated particularly by the scale and design of the building and the altered access and parking layout. That said, the alteration of that character would be limited to being substantially within the site, such that it is considered to preserve the character of the wider rural area, maintaining and enhancing the existing planting and landscaping within the site. While a substantial area of the site is given over to parking, hedging is proposed that would alleviate the dominance of that feature in the site. The proposed building itself is attractive, utilising materials that reflect both its function and the rural character of the area, with a roof form that will ensure a lower profile within the site and limit visual intrusion.
42. On the whole, the proposal would accord with the principles of good design expressed in section 7 of the NPPF, policy DP/2 of the adopted local plan and policy HQ/1 of the emerging local plan.
43. Both landscape and urban design comments note the proposed boundary treatment to the front of the site includes the use of metal fencing, and have raised concerns with respect to those elements and the impact on the countryside through the urbanising appearance. However, and noted within the submitted comments, final details of boundary treatments may be agreed through condition that would ensure there would not be an adverse impact through urbanisation of the countryside.

Landscape and Tree Impacts

44. The site is covered by an area TPO, and it stands distinct from the wider settlement of Foxton due to the physical separation by the agricultural field.

The site is within the East Anglia Chalk landscape character area, characterised by largescale arable fields, lower hedgerows and small copses and shelter belts along the edges of settlements. Adopted policy NE/4 and emerging policy NH/2 requires that development is only permitted where it respects and retains or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the landscape character are it is located within.

45. The proposal includes a substantial level of replacement planting along the boundaries, principally along the northwest and northeast boundaries. Further planting is proposed within the site, including both hedging and trees. A number of the trees proposed to be removed are subject to the TPO that covers the entirety of the site. The submitted tree planting plan indicates that there are a number of trees that are appropriate for removal and replacement, though some of those included for removal here appear to be healthy. The replaced trees predominantly comprise a number of overly mature poplar trees that are beginning to outgrow their situation.
46. The submitted planting is intended to last for a 13 year period, with systematic removals and replacements in 3 year intervals over that timescale. The retained poplar trees would also be subject to a cyclical management cycle to manage the risk of branch failure. The landscape officer has considered the management and planting plans, and considers the principles that have applied to the development are suitable to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts. A number of conditions have been recommended that would detail the species and numbers, and ensure that works are carried out in an appropriate timescale and manner.
47. The proposal would retain the prevailing character of the countryside in this area, maintaining the substantial tree belt within the site, and providing a number of improvements by way of removing trees that are beginning to decline, and replacing them with trees with a medium to long safe useful life expectancy. While the development is substantial, the screening in place is such that it is considered the development would not adversely impact the countryside, and would therefore accord with policies NE/4 and NH/2.

Ecology and Biodiversity

48. The application has been accompanied by an ecological report, and a further bat roost inspection report has been provided that particularly focuses on the existing buildings to be demolished and whether they might be utilised or capable of being utilised by bats. No evidence of any protected species using the site has been found, but there are a number of potential opportunities for the site to be utilised, notably in the existing planting within the site and in the roof spaces of the buildings to be demolished.
49. The application has been reviewed by the Ecology officer, who notes that the submitted report and subsequent bat survey is sufficient to consider the proposal unlikely to result in an adverse impact to protected species, but that a further survey should be carried out prior to the works commencing to ensure that there are no bats that might have either occupied the site since the grant of permission and ensure that the risk to protected species is wholly minimal. Subject to conditions requiring such surveys, it is considered that the risk to protected species is satisfactorily low, and unlikely to affect protected species or associated habitats.

50. The biodiversity survey also details a number of enhancements to the site following the works. The details provided principally comprise the provision of bat and bird boxes, and there would be additional enhancement provided by the proposed planting along the boundaries and within the site. Subject to the details of that being fully determined, which could readily be dealt with by condition, it is considered that the proposal has been undertaken with suitable regard to the existing features of biodiversity interest, and will maintain the biodiversity and ecological value of the site, with suitable enhancements to mitigate for those elements lost. The proposal would therefore accord with adopted policy NE/6 and emerging policy NH/4.

Transport and Parking

51. The proposal involves a substantial increase in operational floor space within the site and the creation of a sizeable parking area for up to 73 cars, including 4 disability spaces. The intended increase of staff from 12 to 58 is likely to lead to a significant increase in additional vehicle movements for the site. As this site is a destination, as opposed to a point of origin such as a residential dwelling, it is likely staff would arrive within a reasonably short timescale of each other.
52. The existing site has direct access on to the Barrington Road, a reasonably straight road that 'doglegs' to the north of the site approximately 145m from the access, and being largely flat. Visibility in either direction is good, with minimal development or planting outside the control of the applicant that would otherwise interfere with visibility splays. The speed limit outside the access is 30mph, with the speed limit change being some 30m to the north of the access. Within a 30mph limit, Manual for Streets recommends visibility splays of 43mph, and within national speed limit zones (60mph) splays of approximately 150m are recommended. The road is straight, and this could result in a tendency for people to speed, but to the north vehicles would need to slow to navigate the 90 degree bend, and would then have good visibility of vehicles entering or exiting the site such that they would have forewarning while traveling at a lesser speed.
53. The site is served by a public footpath that terminates at the entrance to the site, with the proposal also including an altered entrance to make provision for additional pedestrian access into the site. The Foxton train station is within an approximate 5 minute walk of the site. The no. 26 Bus, running between Cambridge and Royston, is within 10 minutes of the site, depending on which stopping point in Foxton is chosen. The Cambridge-Royston run first stops at Foxton at 9:09am and the Royston-Cambridge run first stops at 6:53am. It is considered, however, that the timetable does not lend itself well to a traditional 9am start, which lessens the weight that might be attributed to its current provision, but it does provide capacity for earlier or later starts. It is worth noting that, particularly in Royston and Cambridge, there would be further bus connections that would provide links to other areas over and above those provided by the no. 26 Bus. On the whole, it is concluded that the existing situation on the site in terms of accessibility is reasonably good, with readily accessible alternatives to private car.
54. The highway authority and transport assessment team have raised no objections to the application, and have recommended a number of conditions to promote alternative modes of travel through both a travel plan and a scheme of footway widening and to ensure the access is constructed to a

good standard. The current footpath into Foxton from the site is not substantially wide. The travel survey and a small number of representations, identify staff that already walk, or intend to walk, to the site. A footway widening scheme has been requested by the Highway Authority, but have indicated this may not need to extend fully to the train station, as the footway already widens once it reaches the closest residential dwelling to a suitable width. Noting that the footway and areas of widening all sit within the highway, this could be controlled by condition, and the relevant provisions of Section 278 of the Highway Act would provide the means by which that footway widening could be delivered.

55. The site has achieved a good standard of accessibility, with alternative transport options than only the car, and while parking on the site is substantive, suitable promotion of alternative transport modes, such as through a travel plan, would have a positive impact on the provision of the site, without risk of parking on the road in the event there was a low uptake. The layout of the site is sufficient to limit the potential for vehicles and pedestrians to interfere with each other's movements, and there is provision for covered cycle storage, included potential expansion areas in the event that was required.
56. Appropriate provision for HGV movements has been made, notably around the bin store and cesspool where regular access would be required. A transport survey has accompanied the application, including a further addendum that concludes no adverse impact to highway safety. The proposal would therefore accord with adopted policies TR/1, TR/2, TR3 and TR/4 and emerging policies TI/2 and TI/3 and would not result in adverse impact to highway safety the wider network.
57. The Parish Council have requested a speed reduction scheme be implemented. No indication of the average speeds have been provided by either the developer or any other party, and it is difficult to be sure what might be appropriate. The speeds limits have been noted above, and the visibility splays to the site have been found to be acceptable. No objections have been raised by the County Council as Highway Authority and it could not be directly concluded that an increase in vehicle movements would lead to such an increase in movement speed that there would be an adverse impact to safety. It is more likely that regular users of the road would be able to prepare to slow, as any vehicles waiting to enter or exit the site would be clearly visible to other motorists on the road.
58. In respect of the comments that have been made, it appears that underlying concerns relate to possible alterations in the type of vehicle movements, namely to HGV or from an increase in traffic, that might accompany other occupiers of the site. It is unlikely that any other occupier would be readily capable of utilising the site for significantly more staff, but the parking on the site has been judged satisfactory for its proposed use and there are provisions for alternative modes of transport in the area. The proposed block plan indicates that the layout of the site already plans to take account of potential HGV movements, and officers consider it would be likely that there would be some form of HGV movement at the site in any event. It could not reasonably be prevented, such as through condition, and this has formed part of officer's assessments.

59. The transport assessment team have recommended the developer provide two bus shelters on the A10 bus stops, with details to be agreed, with commuted sums for maintenance to be provided to Foxton Parish Council for a total of £14,000, and to be secured through a planning obligation under Section 106. It is likely that the intention would be to provide these at the bus stops adjacent to the train station. A planning obligation may only be required where it is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, is directly related to the development and is fairly related in scale and kind to the development. The provision of bus shelters is likely to only benefit early or later starts, and would not be particularly positive in terms of passengers departing the bus at that stop. Given that the morning bus timetable does not lend provide such a level of service that it could cover all start times, it is likely that evening usage would be limited through that. Officers therefore consider that the provision of the bus shelters would not meet the tests of necessity, and could not be insisted upon.

Drainage Impacts

60. The site is located within designated countryside, and comments have been received querying the necessity for a cesspool, as opposed to a connection to the sewage network. Notwithstanding whether there is sufficient provision for a sewage network connection, the application must be assessed on its own merits, and it may be that the proposal is found to be acceptable and there is no need for alternatives.

61. The site is within a flood zone 1, where there is the lowest risk of flooding, does not sit within any particular area of special drainage issues and the development is a 'less vulnerable' development as defined by the Environment Agency's guidance. The application proposes the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), indicated within the submitted flood risk assessment (FRA), and though limited details are available at this time, the submitted assessment as a whole indicates that there is a likely possibility that SuDs can be achieved to a satisfactory level, principally through the use of permeable paving, and that the Drainage Consultants have recommended conditions indicates they consider this to be likely. That form of mitigation is noted as being able to accommodate both a 1 in 100 year flood event and 40% climate change event. It is therefore considered that the proposal would accord with adopted policies NE/8 and NE/9 and emerging policy CC/1 and CC/8 in so far as they relate to drainage matters.

62. With regards to the condition recommended by the County Drainage Engineer in relation to the details and implementation of SuDs it is noted that part of that condition has already been met, in relation to the carrying out of an assessment as to the potential for disposing of surface water by such means. It is therefore considered that that recommended condition be remove such a requirement and only incorporate those elements that have not yet been determined.

Contamination and Pollution

63. The application has been accompanied by a phase 1 land contamination assessment that has indicated the site is at low risk of contamination. The proposed use of the site is not a sensitive end use, such as for residential purposes, and is therefore less susceptible to contaminated land in any event. Based on the submitted information, the Contaminated Land officer has

raised no objection, and does not consider it necessary to impose conditions with respect to any further investigation. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with adopted policy DP/1 and emerging policy SC/12.

64. Comments have been received with respect to potential odours that might arise from the site, particularly from the cess pit to the southern boundary. The site is some distance from the closest residential property, which would have some mitigation impacts, and is currently served by a cesspit, though at a notably smaller scale. The proposed pit is located some distance from the built development and is adjacent to the access such that it is easily accessible for maintenance and emptying. There is no indication that the cess pit would result in adverse impacts in terms of odour or other pollutions that would harm the amenity of the area and officers did not note any impacts from the existing cess pit during their site visit. Subject to appropriate maintenance, as would be required by building regulations, officers are satisfied that there would be no odour or other pollution from the cess pit.
65. The application proposes a reasonably high level of lighting in an area that is not so substantially subject to illumination, with none sited along the roadsides. The proposal includes lighting details to which environmental health have raised no objections. Given the majority of the site would be sufficiently screened and the illumination provided within the site is hooded such that light would be directed downwards, it is not considered that there would be a substantial impact in terms of light pollution that would adversely impact the wider countryside.
66. It is noted that there would be some upward facing illuminance to the entrance of the site, directed towards the proposed walling, of which the final details of the entrance treatments are recommended to be dealt with by condition. The lighting would be more noticeable here, but there is a substantial existing tree screen above the entrance that is proposed to be retained, and which would limit impacts of lighting above the horizon. The lighting is faced away from the highway, such that it is unlikely to result in impacts from glare, and while it would be noticeable in the context of the surroundings, it is considered that it would be sufficiently small scale to not result in an adverse impact to the amenity of the area through light pollution. The proposal would therefore accord with adopted policy NE/14 and emerging policy SC/10.

Impacts on Residential Amenity

67. The site is sufficiently physically distance from any surrounding residential properties that it would not result in an adverse impact to their residential amenity. The level of boundary treatment both in situ and proposed would satisfactorily mitigate for any material adverse impacts on any event. The proposal would therefore comply with adopted policies DP/3 and DP/6 and emerging policies CC/6 and HQ/1.
68. The Environmental Health Officer has recommended a number of conditions to limit the impacts of the development on the wider area during the construction process. Noting that the works are of a scale that might result in an adverse impact on residential amenity, even at some distance, it is considered these are necessary to ensure the works would not result a materially harmful impact to surrounding residences. The exception is in relation to the recommended condition in respect of burning of waste

materials. That is readily covered by other legislation such that it is not necessary to impose such a condition.

Other Matters

69. Adopted policy NE/1 and emerging policy CC/3 require that proposal for non-residential buildings above 1000m² reduce carbon emissions by a minimum of 10% over the requirements set by Building Regulations. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF is explicit that LPAs should have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources, and these policies reflect that approach by ensuring that larger developments, where there is more likely to be the capacity, incorporate renewable sources.
70. The application includes details of the estimated level of delivered energy by the proposal, indicated against the usage of the building, at 10.3% of the overall usage. The proposal includes the provision of photovoltaic panels to the roof, the use of an airtight construction and solar screen, cooling provided via natural ventilation and the use of LED lighting amongst other factors, to minimise the energy consumption of the building as a whole. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policy for the promotion of renewable energy.
71. For major developments, there is a requirement in policy DP/1 to submit a Health Impact Assessment, demonstrating the principles of sustainable development have been applied. This has been included in the application, assessing the proposal in accordance with the adopted SPD. There appear to be no material adverse impacts to health that would arise from the proposal, as those matters that do arise would be during the course of building works, which are temporary. The proposal would therefore accord with policy DP/1 with respect to health impacts.
72. The Parish council have requested a personal consent and representations have been made with respect to potential future uses of the site. Adopted and emerging policy would require such consents nominally in respect of newly developed sites, to ensure they are not left unoccupied following development, and only in relation to the first occupier of the site, with subsequent occupiers being unbound. In this instance, the site is occupied by Zettlex who have been operational within the district for some 14 years, such that the business is considered to be sufficiently stable and viable. The site would be bound by its B1 Use Class, and any proposed change could be assessed at the time of an application. It is considered that, on the whole, the control that might otherwise be exercised by the imposition of a condition limiting the use of this site to Zettlex is in situ, and it would not serve any purpose to prevent other occupants who would wish to utilise the site in its B1 Use Class.
73. Representations have made regarding alternative sites with regards to the insufficiency of the applicants in attempting to find more appropriate sites outside of the Green Belt. Officers would advise that alternative sites are material considerations, but it may only be given consideration where there is a likely alternative that could come forward. In addition, this site is in operation by Zettlex, and as such it is not a 'new' use that is being incorporated into the site, it is an expansion of the business in place. Each case must be determined on its own merits, and if this development is otherwise found to be acceptable, it would be unreasonable to refuse

permission on the basis that there may be some alternative site. It is noted that no alternative sites have been put forward by any third party that could then be considered in the context of this application. The applicants have provided three alternative sites, and briefly set out why they have been discounted. Officers consider that, there is unlikely to be readily identifiable alternative sites that could readily accommodate the business without alteration to some extent, and very little, if any, weight could be attributed to a theoretical alternative.

Very Special Circumstances

74. As stated above, the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and is therefore harmful to the Green Belt by definition and does not apply with adopted or emerging policies in terms of development that is acceptable in the Green Belt. It should not be approved except where there are very special circumstances (VSC) that would clearly outweigh both that harm, and any other harm that has been identified.
75. It is necessary to identify the harm to the Green Belt in the context of the scheme as a whole. The proposed building and the associated operational works would result in a substantially different site to that currently in effect, and this would adversely impact the openness of the Green Belt to its detriment. Such development, by reasons of its scale and the increased penetration into the Green Belt, would also result in some modest additional level of urban sprawl into the countryside. There is a significant level of screening in place on the site at present, and a planting scheme is proposed that would ensure long term screening of the site. This does not prevent the harm, but it does provide some mitigating impact to the harm that would otherwise be affected to the Green Belt. That it would not comply with the adopted and emerging local development framework would further compound the harm, and noting that the NPPF is clear that significant weight should be afforded to protecting the Green Belt, these policies should also be afforded a substantial weight.
76. The planning, design and access statement provides a number of factors that are put forward to represent VSC that would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The full details are provided on pages 29 to 33 of that statement, but to summarise them, the reasons put forward are;
 1. The importance of this specific business to the research and development sector on both local and national scale.
 2. The benefits to the local economy that this site brings about.
 3. The importance of the Cambridge location for the business.
 4. The importance of this specific site.
 5. The lack of suitable alternatives.
 6. The implications of a refusal, as the company may need to relocate abroad.
 7. General benefits brought about by the produces made by the company and their use in a number of industries, including medical treatment, space exploration, safety and communications equipment.
 8. Precedent set by other planning permissions in the Green Belt.
77. Point 8 is considered to carry a wholly minimal, if any weight. By their nature, VSC will only be relevant to the application itself, and while there may be very similar, or even the same, VSC across individual cases, the fact that one VSC supports one site, it should not therefore follow to support all other cases.

78. It is noted that a number of businesses have written letters of support, both who provided services to the applicant and who rely on its outputs. Noting that the application indicates some 90% of the business is in exported goods, this indicates that there are sizeable economic benefits brought about by this applicant. In addition, the increased capacity on the site for staff carries its own economic benefits, by providing jobs within the district for a business that has shown itself to be financially sustainable for a number of years and allowing the existing employee based to continue their occupation of the site.
79. The applicant states that they produce high-tech sensors used in a number of advanced systems in a variety of businesses, including defence and health sectors, which represent nationally key infrastructure, and there is no reason for officers to disagree with that. Any disruption to the applicant's operational capacity may be harmful to the ability of these areas to provide their services. It is unlikely, however, that these services are so reliant on the applicant that they would notably harmed as they identify other suppliers, and so the importance of this business to such sectors is considered to attract only a minimal weight.
80. The planning statement indicates that the refusal of permission may result in the business relocating, potentially abroad. There are clear benefits to the business remaining in the district, some of which are noted in the paragraphs above. However, there is no definitive indication that the business would be required to relocate to another country and any refusal should not preclude that an alternative site might come forward or a suitable unit might become available. The relocation of the business would be detrimental to the area, but on the whole it is considered that it should attract only a limited weight, as there are no clear indications that the business would have to relocate either outside the district or country.
81. Details of alternative sites have been provided, as well as details of the specific requirements of the business in any site it operates. Those sites indicated were either insufficient in terms of size or location, or raised financial issues, either in their development or in the purchase of the site. Officers are content that there has been a reasonable level of search for available sites. Having regard to the fact that the application site is currently in operation by the applicant, which would prevent the need for sale and subsequent purchase elsewhere that would prevent growth of the business and result in uncertainty. Officers therefore consider the lack of alternative sites does attract a significant weight.
82. Overall, it is considered that the harm to the Green Belt identified would be clearly outweighed by the VSC put forward by the applicant on a collective level. There is a somewhat reduced, though still significant, level of harm to the Green Belt, but the benefits to the scheme, particularly in terms of the economic provisions and the lack of alternative sites, is considered to attract a level of weight that would clear outweigh that harm.

Conclusion

83. In conclusion, the development is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the adopted and emerging development plans, and with the policies contained in the NPPF, with the exception of those relating to development in the Green Belt. In that circumstance, it is considered that the

applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that Very Special Circumstances apply to this application such that it is considered the application should be approved.

Recommendation

84. Delegated approval subject to the expiry of the public advertisement and referral to the Secretary of State and

Conditions and Informatives

85. Planning conditions and Informatives as set out below, with the final wording of any amendments to these to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the issuing of planning permission; and

Time Limit

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
(Reason – To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

Approved Plans

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Document	Reference	Date on Plan
Proposed Site Plan	17-038-A-001	20 Dec 2017
Proposed Gate Layout Plan	17-038-A-002	20 Dec 2017
Proposed Ground Floor Plan	17-038-010	20 Dec 2017
Proposed First Floor Plan	17-038-011	20 Dec 2017
Proposed Roof Plan	17-038-012	20 Dec 2017
Proposed Elevations	17-038-020	20 Dec 2017
Proposed Sections	17-038-030	20 Dec 2017

(Reason – In order to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

Surface Water Drainage

3. No development shall commence until a scheme for surface water drainage works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. That scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of the building hereby approved. The surface water drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with an agreed management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development.
(Reason – To ensure the development of the site would not result in levels of drainage that might otherwise result in adverse impacts to the surroundings through pollution or flooding, in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, notably paragraphs 17, 94 and 99, policies DP/1, DP/4 and NE/9 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007. This condition is required to be pre-commencement because the start of

building works and the alteration of the ground may compromise the ability to implement an acceptable drainage strategy.)

Foul Water Drainage

4. No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until foul water drainage works have been implemented in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
(Reason – To ensure that adequate provision is made for foul water drainage in order to minimise the risk of pollution from inadequate or inappropriate systems in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 17, 94, 99, 109 and 110 and policies DP/1, DP/4 and NE/10 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Plant/Equipment Noise

5. The external noise level emitted from any plant/equipment used in the building(s) hereby approved shall be lower than the lowest existing background noise level by at least 5dBA and by 10dBA where the source is tonal, as assessed according to BS4142:2014 at the nearest and/or most affected noise sensitive premises, with all plant/equipment operating together at maximum capacity.
(Reason – To ensure the amenity of the nearby residential occupiers is not adversely affected in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraph 17, and policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Delivery Hours

6. No deliveries or despatches shall be made to or from the site, and no delivery or despatch vehicles shall enter or leave the site (whether laden or unladen), except between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 14:00 Saturday, and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays.
(Reason – To protect the amenity of nearby residents in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraph 17, and policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Construction Works

7. No construction site machinery or plant shall be operated and no construction related deliveries taken at or despatched from the site except between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 13:00 Saturday and not at any time on Sundays or Bank or Public holidays.
(Reason – To protect the amenity of the locality and nearby residences, especially for people living and/or working nearby, in accordance the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraph 17, and policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Dusk Emergence/ Dawn Re-entry survey

8. Prior to the commencement of the development, follow-up dusk emergence / dawn re-entry surveys should be undertaken during May - September (inclusive) to determine whether bats are roosting and, should this be the case, the outline mitigation strategy should be modified as appropriate based on the results and then be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with these approved details.
(Reason – To safeguard roosting bats as protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This condition is

required to be pre-commencement as any works within the site have the potential to disturb roosting bats.)

Hedgerow Removal

9. No removal of hedgerows, trees or shrubs, brambles, ivy and other climbing plants if appropriate, or works to or demolition of buildings or structures that may be used by breeding birds shall take place between 1st March and the 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation shall be submitted to the local planning authority.
(Reason – To safeguard breeding birds as protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).)

Biodiversity Enhancements

10. Prior to any development above existing ground level a scheme of biodiversity enhancement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented within an agreed timescale unless the local planning authority gives written consent for any variation of that element, and shall thereafter be retained as approved.
(Reason: To mitigate for the loss of existing habitat and enhance the overall ecological value of the site in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 109 and 118 and policies DP/1, DP/3 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Access Surfacing and Surface Water Drainage

11. The surface of the driveway to serve the building hereby permitted shall be constructed on a level that prevents surface water run-off onto the highway and shall be constructed from a bound material so as to prevent displacement of material onto the highway. The development shall be retained as such thereafter.
(Reason – In the interest of highway safety in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraph 28 and policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Footway Widening

12. Prior to the occupation of the building, hereby permitted, a scheme for the widening of the footway shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. That scheme shall be completed prior to the first occupation of the building hereby permitted.
(Reason – To provide suitable and sustainable alternative modes of transport to the site, and ensure the development does not unduly rely on the private car, in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 29, 30 and 31 and policies TR/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Travel Plan

13. No building shall be occupied until a Travel Plan for both staff and visitors has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details within 12 months of the date of occupation of the building hereby approved.

(Reason – To reduce car dependency and promote alternative modes of travel in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 29, 30 and 31 and policies TR/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Construction Works

14. No demolition or construction works shall commence on site until a traffic management plan has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The principle areas of concern that should be addressed are:
- i. Movements and control of muck away lorries (all loading and unloading shall be undertaken off the adopted highway)
 - ii. Contractor parking, for both phases all such parking shall be within the curtilage of the site and not on the street.
 - iii. Movements and control of all deliveries (all loading and unloading shall be undertaken off the adopted public highway.
 - iv. Control of dust, mud and debris, in relationship to the functioning of the adopted public highway.

(Reason – In the interests of highway safety. This condition is required to be pre-commencement as it directs the manner in which the development shall proceed in order to minimise harm from construction traffic on to the highway)

External Material Samples

15. No development shall take place above existing ground level until details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

(Reason – To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Eaves & Verges

16. Prior to any development above ground level precise details of the eaves and verges of the proposed building shall be submitted to the local planning authority and approved in writing. Those details shall include plans and elevations at scale of not less than 1:20.

(Reason – To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Windows & Doors

17. Prior to their insertion, details of windows, doors and canopies at a scale of not less than 1:20 shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the local planning authority.

(Reason – To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Ground Surfacing & Levels

18. Prior to the commencement of development, details of existing and finished grounds levels, and details of all proposed surface finishes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

(Reason - To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Boundary Treatments

19. Notwithstanding the details submitted, details of the boundary treatments shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the building hereby permitted first coming into use. Those details shall include details of the materials and elevations of the entrance gates and fencing at a scale of not less than 1:20.

(Reason – To ensure appropriate boundary treatments are implemented in a sensitive location in accordance with policies

Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that the granting of a planning permission does not constitute a permission or license to a developer to carry out any works within, or disturbance of, or interference with, the Public Highway, and that a separate permission must be sought from the Highway Authority for such works.
2. There shall be no burning of any waste or other materials on the site without prior consent from the environmental health department.
3. The applicant should take all relevant precautions to minimise the potential for disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties in terms of noise and dust during the demolition and construction phases of the development. This should include not working outside specified hours, the use of water suppression for any stone or brick cutting and advising neighbours in advance of any particularly noisy works. The applicant is specifically advised to seek approval for any proposed piling operations.
4. The granting of this planning permission does not in any way indemnify against statutory nuisance action being taken should substantiated complaints within the remit of part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 be received.

Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

[South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy \(adopted January 2007\)](#)

[South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD \(adopted July 2007\)](#)

[Submission Local Plan 2014](#)

[Planning File Ref: S/4569/17/FL](#)

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