

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

2 September 2015

**AUTHOR/S:** Planning and New Communities Director

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**Application Number:** S/1109/15/FL

**Parish:** Great Abington

**Proposal:** Full application for the erection of Research and Development building (Use Class B1b), service yard, landscaping, surface and double deck car parking (following the demolition of the day care nursery building), cycle parking and associated infrastructure.

**Site address:** Phase 2 Land (Zone 1), Granta Park, Great Abington, Cambridgeshire, CB21 6AL

**Applicant(s):** Granta Park Estates

**Recommendation:** Delegated Powers to Approve upon completion of S106 Agreement in respect of transport infrastructure contributions for the Phase 2 land

**Key material considerations:** Principle of development  
Layout, design and scale  
Transport impacts, highway safety, access and parking provision  
Flood risk, surface water drainage, contamination and sewerage  
Sustainability and renewable energy  
Historic environment and archaeology  
Trees and landscape  
Ecology  
Residential amenity  
Noise Disturbance, light pollution, waste and air quality.

**Committee Site Visit:** 1 September 2015

**Departure Application:** No

**Presenting Officer:** Dan Smith

**Application brought to Committee because:** The recommendation of the Parish Council is contrary to that of Planning Officers

**Date by which decision due:** 11 September 2015

## **Executive Summary**

1. The proposed development is a three storey building providing just over 21,000 m<sup>2</sup> of research and development accommodation with car parking, including a decked car park, access roads, a service yard and associated landscaping. This is known as the Zone 1 site. The site is the southern part of the larger Phase 2 site on Granta Park which has extant consents 30,660 m<sup>2</sup> of R&D accommodation.
2. A separate application for the northern portion of the site, known as the Zone 2 site, which would provide another 34,220 m<sup>2</sup> of R&D office space across several buildings as well as a landscaped park setting is also recommended for approval to this Committee.
3. Concern was initially expressed in respect of the Zone 1 application by the two local Parish Councils and neighbours to the site in respect of size and location of the buildings, impact on neighbouring dwellings, traffic generation, sewage flood risk, noise and light pollution and general visual impact on the village. Amendments have since been made to the application to reduce the height of the building, move it further from neighbours, relocate an access road to allow additional boundary planting, relocating the decked car park and sinking it fully into the ground.
4. On the basis of those amendments Great Abington Parish Council has maintained its objection while Little Abington Parish Council changed its recommendation to approval subject to conditions. The proposed development has been considered in respect of the principle of the development, the transport impacts, highway safety, access and parking provision, its impact on flood risk, surface water drainage, contamination and sewerage, the layout, design and scale of the building, sustainability considerations including renewable energy, the impact on historic environment and archaeology, the impact on trees and the landscape, ecological considerations, residential amenity and noise disturbance and light pollution.
5. Responses have been sought and received from statutory consultees and professionals with expertise on the above matters. The concerns of the Parish Councils and neighbours and the views of specialists and consultees have been considered and the recommendation in respect of the application for Zone 1 is that it would have an acceptable impact and should be approved subject to conditions and a S106 agreement to secure contributions to mitigate off site impacts of the development on the local highway network.

## **Site and Surroundings**

6. The application site is located on Granta Park, an Established Employment Area, within the parish of Great Abington although not within its Development Framework. Granta Park is a science and research park providing laboratory and office accommodation across a 50 hectare site. The Phase 2 land is on the South and Eastern portion of the park located East of the historic access road lined with protected trees which runs from the Grade II listed South Lodge close to Pampisford Road to the South up to the a Grade II\* listed Abington Hall located to the North of the site. The Abingtons Conservation Area boundary runs immediately adjacent to the Northern boundary although the sites are not within it. To the East of the site is the village of Gt Abington. The application sites are currently largely laid to grass with service roads associated with previous permissions having been installed.
7. The Zone 1 application is on the Southern portion of the Phase 2 land and has a planted shelter belt to the Southern boundary and the southern part of the Eastern

boundary. The remaining portion of the Eastern boundary is enclosed by narrower hedging and trees alongside the permissive path which runs along the eastern boundary of the site between the site and the housing on Pampisford Road. To the West of the site are the Grade II listed South Lodge and a modern nursery building; the latter would be demolished to make way for the proposed development.

### **Proposals**

8. The Zone 1 application seeks full permission for the erection of a 3 storey building in the form of a three wing building off a central spine providing just over 21,000 m<sup>2</sup> of research and development accommodation, as well as an associated service yard and parking to the East and surface and double deck parking to the South. The site will be landscaped and additional screen planting implemented and the northern area of the site will be landscaped in keeping with the landscaping scheme proposed for the wider Phase 2 site. The building has been designed such that it could be built in two phases with the central and east wings built first and the western wing added later. Access to the site will be via the Southern loop road of Granta Park via the main roundabout entrance at the Western point of the park.
9. The application has been amended by the applicant in response to the concerns of the Parish Councils, neighbours and the Council's Officers about the initial scheme. The building has been moved 5 metres to the North West and has been lowered by reducing the actual height of the building and setting it down slightly meaning it is a total of 1.55 m lower than originally proposed. The western service road has been realigned slightly and the eastern service road has been moved approximately 10 metres to the west with parking and loading areas adjusted to allow the retention of the shelter belt and further landscape planting. The decked car park has been reduced in size and moved to the north and west and sunk fully into the ground so that the upper deck is at grade level. This change allows the existing shelter belts to be fully retained. Surface parking areas have also been rearranged to reduce the impact on the southern shelter belt, increase screening within the site and proposed species for tree planting have been amended to respond to the suggestions of the Council's Landscape Officer.
10. Additional information has also been submitted in respect of the building, clarifying the proposed location of flues for each wing of the building.
11. Prior to the submission of the current application, the applicant requested an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion in respect of the Phase 2 land from the Local Planning Authority. This was considered under planning reference S/0818/15/E1. The assessment Local Planning Authority was that the current proposals fall within paragraph 13(b) of Schedule 2 of the 2011 EIA Regulations as a change to or extension of development which is already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed, specifically the previous outline permissions for the site. The EIA undertaken in respect of the previous outline permission demonstrated that it would not have any significant adverse effects on the environment and it was considered both that the new proposed development would not have any additional significant adverse effects on the environment nor would the change or extension to the development exceed the threshold of 0.5 hectares listed in the relevant category (10a). On that basis, it was determined that a new EIA was not required.

### **Relevant Planning History**

12. **S/2495/04/O** – granted outline planning permission for a total of 30,660 m<sup>2</sup> of B1(b) accommodation.

13. **S/0248/09/RM** - granted reserved matters (detailed) approval for buildings making up 12,364 m<sup>2</sup> of the 30,660 m<sup>2</sup> granted by the above outline permission (S/2495/04/O).
14. **S/2287/10** - granted an extension of time for the implementation of the above reserved matters permission (S/0248/09/RM).
15. **S/1365/10** - granted outline permission for the balance of the site, comprising 18,296 m<sup>2</sup> of the the 30,660 m<sup>2</sup> granted by the above outline permission (S/2495/04/O). This had the effect of extending the time limit for implementation of the permission.

### **Planning Policies**

16. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012**
17. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007**  
ST/8 Employment Provision
18. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD 2007**  
 DP/1 Sustainable Development  
 DP/2 Design of New Development  
 DP/3 Development Criteria  
 DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments  
 DP/7 Development Frameworks  
 ET/1 Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire  
 ET/3 Development in Established Employment Areas in the Countryside  
 ET/5 Development for the Expansion of Firms  
 SF/6 Public Art and New Development  
 CH/4 Development Affecting the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building  
 CH/5 Conservation Areas  
 NE/1 Energy Efficiency  
 NE/3 Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development  
 NE/6 Biodiversity  
 NE/8 Groundwater  
 NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure  
 NE/11 Flood Risk  
 NE/12 Water Conservation  
 NE/14 Lighting Proposals  
 NE/15 Noise Pollution  
 NE/16 Emissions  
 TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel  
 TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards  
 TR/3 Mitigating Travel Impact  
 TR/4 Non-motorised Modes
19. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**  
 District Design Guide SPD – adopted March 2010  
 Open Space in New Developments SPD – adopted January 2009  
 Landscape in New Developments SPD – adopted March 2010

### **Consultations Responses**

20. **Great Abington Parish Council** – initially recommended refusal on the grounds of size and location of the buildings, traffic generation, sewage, noise and general

impact on the village. It expressed concern about the scale of the building and requested the building and decked car park be moved further North and away from neighbours on Pampisford Road. It expressed concern regarding increased traffic to the area and the impact this would have on highway safety. It stated that the village has suffered from sewage flooding in recent years and that while the discharge from the development would be managed to be within permitted limits, this would put extra pressure on the sewage infrastructure. It requested that an alternative solution be found for the sewage discharge. It expressed concern regarding the noise impact for the village in respect of construction noise and ongoing noise from plant on the buildings, requesting that steps be taken to limit noise to an acceptable level. It expressed particular concern that the houses on Pampisford Road would be impacted by early morning and late night activity associated with the car parking and the service area. It expressed more general concerns in respect of the overall scale of Granta Park, the height of the earth bund and increased impact from light pollution and surface water runoff.

21. The application was then amended as stated in paragraph 9, in part to try to address the above concerns. The Parish Council has considered the amended scheme and returned comments stating that it is pleased that its comments and concerns about the initial application have been taken on board and some amendments have been made. It notes that the height has been reduced a little and the building has been moved to the North West a little. It states that it would like to see more movement of the building Northwards to reduce the impact on the nearest neighbours further, even considering swapping the Zone 1 building to Zone 2 and as much consideration given to the visual impact from outside the site as that which has been given to the views from within the site and has recommended refusal of the amended scheme.
22. **Little Abington Parish Council** - initially recommended refusal on the grounds of the height and location of buildings, impact on the dwellings on Pampisford Road, noise and light pollution, traffic generation and highway safety and drainage and sewerage. It expressed concern that the building is too high compared to the original approved outline plan and also too close to adjacent residential property on Pampisford Road. It stated that the proposal extends beyond the development envelope of the original permissions and the 19m height of the building exceeds the height limits of 11m and 15m from the original permission. It requested the development be moved to the North to reduce the impact on neighbours. It stated that the car park is too close to the Pampisford Road dwellings and includes a two level car park closest to the houses. It stated that the level of noise from the building plant in the roof and light pollution from the taller building and raised car park will be unacceptable for the nearby residential properties and wider village community and drew attention to the site plant building proposed on the edge of the business park closest to the village. It stated that there was insufficient planning for the increase in road traffic which would result from the increase in staff on the site. It also stated that there was insufficient provision for rainwater run-off from the site and the sewerage needs of the site which would feed into the existing ageing village infrastructure.
23. It was consulted on the amendments and returned a new recommendation of approval. It stated that a number of significant changes had been made to address some of the issues that had been raised including a height reduction of 1.5m, relocation of building west by 5m and making the car park all ground level. It stated that in assessing the acceptability of this application there were still some concerns over the proximity of the building to village residents and therefore requested that the following conditions be applied to the application:

- The flues on the roof of the building should be installed on predefined zones in the northwest corner of each wing (i.e. furthest corner from residents)
  - Native evergreen hedging (e.g. hornbeam, yew, holly) is planted on the inside of the current buffer planting on the south east side of the development to provide a more permanent noise/light pollution barrier to local residents improving on the current barrier comprising deciduous planting.
  - As indicated by the Granta Park team, “state of the art” lighting be installed in both the building and surrounding car parks so that when not in active use the lights will automatically switch off to reduce light pollution. Also that car park and any other exterior lights are positioned and angled away from local village residents.
  - Strict rules are laid out to restrict work times during construction to 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 2pm Sat and that Granta Park provide a dedicated (24hr manned) contact/liaison point so that any issues local residents have during the construction process can be immediately addressed.
  - Clear requirements over speed limits, access routes to Granta Park along Newmarket Road and Pampisford Road are put in place not only during the construction phase but also to address the increased traffic which will arise once the building is occupied.
  - Granta Park should work with Anglian Water to resolve the current sewerage issues which have resulted in raw sewerage backing up and flooding to nearby residents.
24. **Council Highways Officers** – initially issued a holding objection in respect of the combined impact of the combined Phase 2 (Zone 1 in this application and Zone 2 in the parallel application) on the wider highway network. They have since been involved in detailed discussions with the Local Planning Authority and the applicant’s consultants in respect of reducing and mitigating the impact of the development on the network and its capacity.
25. In On the basis that active travel planning and the promotion of non-car modes of transport will be pursued and are successful, as well as significant financial contributions (£438,000) being made towards enhancing the cycle network in the area, the view of Highways Officers is that Granta Park could accommodate the additional development proposed for Phase 2 over and above that already consented without generating significant additional traffic movements. As a failsafe measure should the Travel Plan targets for reducing car use among those using the site not be achieved, the applicant has agreed to undertake additional transport mitigation of up to £700,000 in the form of either highways improvement works and/or additional sustainable transport measures.
26. On Subject to a condition requiring the submission and agreement of the site wide Travel Plan prior to occupation and the completion of a s106 agreement to secure the mitigation measures, Highways Officers are content that the impacts on the highway network have been sufficiently mitigated and has therefore removed its objection.
27. **Highways England** - states that the proposed development will result in additional traffic using the A11 but that it is confident this would not have a severe impact on the Strategic Road Network and therefore offers no objections.
28. **Historic England** - has returned comments stating that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of the Council’s specialist conservation advice.

29. **Environment Agency** - states that it considers planning permission could be granted, subject to conditions relating to contamination, pollution control and foul and surface water drainage.
30. **Anglian Water** - states that the foul drainage from the site is in the catchment of Linton Water recycling which has capacity for the development. It states that in respect of the foul sewerage network, the development would lead to a risk of flooding downstream and that a drainage strategy will need to be prepared in order to determine the necessary mitigation measures. It recommends a condition requiring the approval of such a drainage strategy.
31. **Cambridgeshire County Council's Flood and Water Management Team** - states that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that an acceptable surface water drainage scheme can be provided on site using a variety of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
32. **County Archaeologist** - has confirmed that the site has previously been subject to an archaeological evaluation, with subsequent excavation targeted on identified features considered to be of prehistoric date. In the event, the features proved to be primarily of medieval and post medieval date with little evidence of prehistoric activity. He has no objection to the proposed development and does not consider further archaeological investigation to be necessary.
33. **Police Liaison Officer** - has commented that Granta Park site has a professional security team on duty 24 hours a day and that the site is extensively monitored by CCTV and is well illuminated. There is also a gate house at the site entrance which controls vehicle access out of hours. He does not have any concerns in respect of the security of the site.
34. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** - does not object to the proposed development, but requests a condition be applied in respect of the provision of fire hydrants.
35. **Natural England** - does not object to the proposed development.
36. **Consultancy Conservation Officer** - states that the building is unlikely to be seen from Abington Hall and its immediate environs, due to intervening buildings and landscaping and it is therefore considered that the setting of the main listed building will not be materially affected. The reuse of the South Lodge should ensure its future maintenance, though the importance of its position at the start of the south drive has been devalued by the subsequent and continuing prominence of the northern entrance.
37. **Urban Design Officer** - states that the proposed building continues the design aspirations for high quality buildings within high quality landscaped setting and the alignment of the building appears logical and will relate positively to the development of zone 2, and the massing has been broken down into separate elements of a scale and storey height appropriate to their setting. The parking, though large in footprint, is relatively well laid out and incorporates a reasonable amount of landscaping to help break up the hard standing and screen the cars. Care should be taken to not reduce the existing belt of planting around the site boundaries to the east and south to ensure the car park is well screened from outside the site, especially the decked parking on the south east corner. In response to the comments regarding the screening, the application was amended as stated in paragraph 9.

38. **Landscapes Officer** - welcomes the landscape proposals for providing a high quality landscape setting for the building with a range of landscape treatments. Has raised the issues of spoil from construction, integration of views and connectivity between the zones, water levels and the continuation of swales. It is also noted that screen planting on the boundaries of the site have been reduced and suggestions made in respect of the tree planting strategy and proposed species. The amendments detailed in paragraph 9 have allowed for the retention of screen planting and will allow further planting to take place. The applicant has indicated that they will amend the planting species to take account of the Landscape Officer's suggestions.
39. **Ecology Officer** - states that there will be no impact on badgers or reptiles and requests conditions in respect of works during bird breeding season, the re-inspection of bird boxes prior to development and the provision of an ecological management plan. He initially raised a holding objection in respect of the impact on bats which the submitted Bat report identified may be roosting in trees to be removed and the nursery building which provides potential roosts. The applicant commissioned a further assessment as per the Ecology Officer's request and this has demonstrated that while there is bat activity on site, there are no identified roosts. On that basis, the Ecology Officer is content to remove his holding objection and requests that the recommendations of the report including in relation to construction practices, sensitive lighting of the site and bat box provision be followed.
40. **Environmental Health Officer** - does not object to the principle of the development. However, the submitted noise assessment lacked detail in terms of the impact on neighbouring residential premises in terms of noise and light pollution. The applicant commissioned further assessment of lighting impacts from the scheme and additional information in respect of the noise impacts. The Environmental Health Officer has considered that information and has stated that the lighting levels resulting from the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of the impact on neighbouring dwellings and that the noise impacts from plant associated with the proposed building will not significantly impact on neighbouring dwellings when compared to existing background noise levels.
41. On that basis, he is content that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of noise and light pollution subject to conditions relating to further details of plant, maintenance of such plant and the submission of a noise minimisation management plan and lighting scheme. He also requests conditions in respect of the minimisation of airborne dust, construction hours and piled foundations.
42. **Development Officer** - confirms that potential health impacts for the proposal have been identified and addressed through the Health Impact Assessment.

### **Representations**

31. Representations were received from 8 local residents, including 4 dwellings to the South East of the site on Pampisford Road and 2 dwellings to the South of the site on Cutting Road in respect of the initial application objecting and raising concerns regarding a variety of the following issues:
- Increased traffic and vehicle movements and their impact on highway safety and the capacity of road network to accommodate the development.
  - Increased scale and location of buildings (compared to previous approvals) including the height of plant and flues and the impact on the village and specific



properties on Pampisford Road and Cutting Road through being overbearing and overlooking from windows.

- Light pollution (buildings and car parking areas)
- Noise pollution (plant on buildings and service yard)
- Insufficient screen planting
- Impact of overlooking from double deck car park on dwellings on Pampisford Road (including a suggestion that the decked car park be located further West).
- Location of car parks
- Flooding from surface water run off into the village
- Impact on the currently problematic sewerage infrastructure in the village

32. Following consultation on the amendments to the application, further representations have been received from 3 of the dwellings on Pampisford Road, largely reiterating the concerns raised in respect of the initial scheme.

### **Planning Comments**

33. The main planning considerations in respect of the proposed development for the Zone 1 application is the principle of the development; transport impacts, highway safety, access and parking provision; flood risk, surface water drainage, contamination and sewerage; layout, design and scale; sustainability; impact on historic environment and archaeology; trees and landscape; ecology; residential amenity; noise disturbance and light pollution.

### **Principle of Development**

34. Policy ET/2 of the Local Development Framework and policy E/9 of the draft Local Plan also promote clusters of companies in certain fields including biotechnology and biomedical, healthcare, teaching and research and research and development. The proposals for the site would be consistent with the aspirations of these policies.
35. Granta Park, including the Phase 2 land, is designated as an Establish Employment Zone by policy ET/3 of the Local Development Framework and policy E/15 of the draft Local Plan. Under those policies, appropriate development for employment use will be permitted at Granta Park, unless the development would result in a negative impact on the surrounding countryside or landscape character. Subject to the assessment on the wider impacts of the proposed development in the sections below, the proposed development is therefore acceptable in principle.

### **Transport Impacts, Highway Safety, Access and Parking Provision**

36. As part of previous extant permissions for the Phase 2 land, mitigation measures were agreed and financial contributions of £350,000 were made towards off site transport measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the highway network. While that development was not built out, the mitigation measures have been implemented. The total development proposed in this application combined with the application for the other Phase 2 land would provide up to 55,220 m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation, whereas the extant outline permissions would provide 30,660 m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation and the proposed development therefore has additional implications for the highways network not previously considered or mitigated.
37. The County Council Highways Officers initially raised concerns in respect of the proposed development on the basis that it would result in an additional 310 and 374 vehicular trips travelling to and from during the AM and PM peak times respectively over and above the 'baseline' trips which include the existing consented development

on the park, both built and unbuilt. The additional development would result in vehicular trips totalling 1791 and 2120 during the AM and PM peak respectively across the Granta Park site. The impact of this additional traffic was modelled and was shown to have an adverse impact on the highway network.

38. To address this impact, the applicants, their transport consultant and Highways Officers have engaged in extensive discussions regarding mitigation measures to ensure the development does not exceed the 'baseline' impact identified for the extant permissions. The primary raft of measures agreed is a combination of active travel planning for the site to reduce car dependency among staff at the park, comprising the monitoring of traffic flows together with contributions towards enhancing cycle network provision in the area at a cost of £438,000. This active and challenging travel plan seeks to reduce the current car mode share for Granta Park as a whole from 71% to 53%. Such a reduction would ensure that no significant impact on the highway network would result from the additional development on Phase 2.
39. While the travel plan targets are considered to be achievable, the County Council required reassurances that the Travel Plan targets would be met, particularly as the car parking levels proposed on site would not, in isolation, act as a sufficient incentive to sustainable travel. It was agreed that this would be achieved by monitoring vehicular flows through the main entrance of the site during the AM and PM peaks. Should vehicular trips exceed the baseline threshold levels agreed and set out above then an additional transport mitigation package, totalling up to an additional £700,000 would be triggered which would include additional highway works or sustainable transport measures to be undertaken by the applicant or the County Council. This provides further incentive for the applicant to manage traffic generation levels through the travel plan to ensure the impact on the highway network is mitigated, but also provides the Local Authorities with reassurance that, in the event that traffic thresholds are not met that further measures can be implemented to mitigate any impact.
40. These measures have been agreed by both parties and would be secured by a s106 agreement which would be completed prior to the issue of any planning permission. The development proposed in this application and in the parallel application for the other part of the Phase 2 land is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the highway network and on highway safety in the area.
41. The access to the site would be via the main Granta Park entrance at the Western tip of the park which is just off the roundabout with the Pampisford Road. The site would be integrated into the main access loop road within the park with the new roundabout on the Southern portion of the loop road amended slightly to provide access both for The Welding Institute to the North and the Zone 1 and Zone 2 elements of the Phase 2 site. This means of access is considered to be acceptable.
42. Parking for Zone 1 is proposed at a ratio of 1 space per 34 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace which equates to 630 spaces. This is slightly under the maximum standards set out the Council's adopted standards for car parking provision of 1 space per 30 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace. Disabled parking spaces would be provided at a ratio of 5% as required by the adopted standards. The car parking arrangements for the building are the surface car parking areas to the South and East of the building including a fully sunken two deck car park to the South East of the building. In assessing the appropriate level of parking provision for the site, there is clearly a balance to be struck between on the one hand ensuring that provision is adequate in order that the site functions properly and overspill parking does not take place in the village and on

the other applying a reasonable constraint on parking such that, in combination with other travel planning measures, an incentive is given to employees to travel to the site by other, more sustainable means.

43. In this case, given the travel planning measures identified above, the proposed level of parking, which is under the maximum set by policy but still represents a significant provision, is considered to strike that balance. The proposed parking provision is therefore acceptable. A more detailed assessment of the impact of the proposed parking areas in terms of their visual impact and impact on neighbouring properties is provided in the sections below.

### **Flood Risk, Surface Water Drainage, Contamination and Sewerage**

44. The application site is located in flood zone 1 and the Lead Local Flood Authority was consulted on the proposed development. It has returned comments stating that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that an acceptable surface water drainage scheme can be provided on site using a variety of Sustainable Drainage Systems to attenuate surface water run-off to greenfield run-off rates. It requests a condition to ensure the Sustainable Drainage System is implemented. Given that greenfield run-off rates can be achieved, it is not considered that the proposed development would have any significant impact on flood risk from surface water run-off.
45. The preliminary risk assessment submitted with the applications confirms that the site has no history of industrial use and was undeveloped agricultural land until the access roads and grassland were laid out in accordance with the previous outline approvals. The report recommends that clean topsoil is used for landscaping, any imported soil is validated to ensure its suitability for use, further assessment of excess spoil from elsewhere on the Park to confirm its suitability for use and that a watching brief is maintained on site for any contamination. The Environment Agency has considered the submitted risk assessment and is satisfied that its recommendations are adequate and requests a condition in respect of the remediation of any yet unidentified contamination and another relating to the foundation design of the buildings to ensure no contamination of the water environment during or after construction. On that basis, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of contamination concerns.
46. Concern has been raised by the Parish Councils and owners of houses in the Abingtons regarding the impact of the development on the sewerage infrastructure in the village. Those concerns state that foul sewerage infrastructure does not cope with existing flows; that sewage regularly blocks up; and the associated odour can be smelt in private properties and public areas within the villages. In its consultation response, Anglian Water has stated that the foul drainage from the site is in the catchment of Linton Water Recycling Centre which has capacity sufficient to accept the proposed flows, but that in respect of the foul sewerage network, the proposal would lead to a risk of flooding downstream if not mitigated. It states that a drainage strategy including mitigation measures for the impact on the network would therefore need to be required by condition and, on that basis, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of the impact on sewerage.
47. In response to the concerns of the Parish Councils and neighbours in respect of foul drainage in the villages, the applicant's engineers agreed to investigate the part of the system where there had been problems reported. They carried out site inspections of the Granta Park gravity foul water pipe and found the pipe to be working well. The private and public drainage serving the properties around Hall Farm which have

previously flooded was also investigated and found to be flowing well. It was reported that recent flooding occurred at a time of rainfall and that lack of maintenance of the non-return valves was a factor identified by Anglian Water's site staff.

48. Sewer records were examined for the public sewer under the High Street and it was identified that a number of pipes have a very flat gradient. This makes these sewers susceptible to blockage at times of low flow volume, when there will be insufficient velocity of flow for self-cleansing. The high velocity, high volume flows from Granta Park would assist with flushing and clearing initial blockages within the village sewer as flows from the park are at their greatest at weekday lunchtimes at which times the village flows are relatively low. The view of the applicant's engineer is therefore that Granta Park flows would assist with the existing problems experienced by residents in the villages.
49. Given that Anglian Water is content for the development to be approved subject to a drainage strategy being agreed and as the proposed Granta Park flows would likely assist in the prevention of blockages in the village sewers, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the foul sewer network.

### **Layout, Design and Scale**

50. The proposed building is located and oriented in a logical way, with an entrance to the South side with car parking opposite and with the wings of the building opening up to the north to exploit views out over the northern portion of the Phase 2 land towards Abington Hall. The building would also fit well into the layout and landscaping scheme proposed by the application for the Zone 2 site to the north. The parking layout is well thought out and incorporates a level of landscape planting which means the parking areas will be visually broken up and by trees and this will continue an element of the Southern portion of the Phase 1 site at Granta Park which has worked well. The applicant has responded to concerns raised by the Council's Landscape Officer and its Urban Design Officer, who felt the previous layout impinged too greatly on the screen planting around the southern and western boundaries, and the relocation of the building, access road and car parking has resulted in a better layout in that respect with a greater level of boundary planting possible.
51. The building continues the design aspirations for Granta Park which is of high quality buildings within a high quality landscaped setting and this approach is welcomed. While the building is significant in terms of its scale and the level of accommodation it provides, the massing has been broken down into separate elements of a scale and storey height appropriate to their setting with the wings of the building providing relief and rhythm to its North and South elevations and the facades themselves providing visual interest with lightweight ground floors and upper floors set back within a stone surround.
52. The scale of the building is significant and the height is greater than would have been allowed under the restrictions on the previous outline permission. It is located almost entirely within the zones where heights were restricted to 15 and 13 metres although a small portion of a corner of the frontage would be within the zone where the height were restricted to 11 metres. Having been lowered as part of the amendment of the scheme, the building is approximately 14.65 metres above the external ground level to parapet level with an additional 4 metres of enclosed roof plant set back from the ridge. Additionally flues may be required which extend a further 5.5 metres above the height of the plant level.

53. The submitted Visual Impact Assessment identifies that the building would be partially seen in long distance views from the East along Pampisford Road, from part of the Icknield Way approximately 3 km away, from the public highway to the South and South East and from the Land Settlement Association land to the South. The impact of the building upon distance views is not considered to cause any significant harm in terms of the character of the area or visual amenity as the site is reasonably well screened and will become more so in the coming years and the building will in any case be seen in the context of others on the wider site which has the character of a modern research park.
54. When the site is viewed from ground level to the South and South West the proposed building will be largely screened by existing boundary planting which is approaching 10 metres in height and given the angle of view the building will be only appreciated in glimpses. This impact would be further mitigated by additional screen planting and the ongoing maturing of the existing and new planting.
55. On the basis of the above, it is concluded that the layout, design and scale of the proposed development is acceptable and would not result in any significant harm to the established character and visual amenity of the area.
56. The building would also be partially visible from dwellings on Pampisford Road and Cutting Road and these specific impacts are addressed in the Residential Amenity section below.

### **Sustainability**

57. The proposed development is of a sufficient scale that it would be subject to the requirements of policy NE/3 of the current Local Development Framework which requires that the development include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements. The application has been accompanied by a Sustainability Statement which details how development will meet the requirement.
58. The Statement shows that the solar panels, ground source heat pumps and air source heat pumps are technically feasible and viable. The favoured technology for the building is ground source heat pumps which the submission demonstrates will provide at least 10% of the energy requirements of the building. The roof layout of the building nonetheless leaves space for solar panels and the incoming occupier is encouraged to include panels in order to further increase the proportion of the building's energy which is generated through renewable means. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in terms of policy NE/3.
59. Policy NE/12 requires that development incorporate all practicable water conservation measures. Development of the scale proposed for the site will be required to submit a Water Conservation Strategy to demonstrate how water conservation will be achieved.
60. The Sustainability Statement submitted in support of the application identifies water conservation as an issue and states the aim of reducing water demand. This would be achieved through the use of water efficient fittings including low flow taps and showers and through smart water meters. Rainwater harvesting would also be considered. Based on the submitted strategies the application is considered to meet the requirements of policy NE/12 in respect of water conservation.

## **Impact on Historic Environment and Archaeology**

61. The site is situated on the Eastern side of the historic access road from the South, West of which is South Lodge, a Grade II listed building. The impact of the proposed scheme on the setting of South Lodge is no greater than the previously permitted outline scheme for the Phase 2 land. In addition, the proposed scheme would require the demolition of the more modern building just to the East of the lodge, and the implementation of additional soft landscaping of that area to separate it from the proposed car park, which would marginally enhance its existing setting. The impact of the development on the South Lodge building is therefore neither substantial, nor significant.
62. The building would be located some 400m from Abington Hall to the North and over 300m from the boundary of the Conservation Area and the southernmost extent of the gardens of the Hall. While the strategic landscaping of the northern portion of the Phase II land between the building and Abington Hall would open up long distance views somewhat, the proposed building would not have a profound impact on the setting of the Hall. This is particularly the case when considering the impact of the original Phase 2 permission which had a building proposed directly to the South of the Hall and its gardens and which would have been much more prominent in views South from the Hall.
63. The proposed building is similarly considered to be far enough away from the Great and Little Abington Conservation Area that it would not significantly impact on its setting. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the historic environment of the local area.
64. The potential for significant archaeology to be present on the application site has been considered by the County Archaeologist. He has confirmed that archaeological evaluation has previously been carried out on the site, in respect of previous permissions and that subsequent excavation was targeted on identified features considered to be of prehistoric date. The findings from that excavation proved to be primarily of medieval and post medieval date with little evidence of prehistoric activity and is of the view that no further archaeological investigation is necessary. On that basis, it is considered that the proposed development of the site would not have any significant impact on archaeological interests on site.

## **Trees and Landscaping**

65. The proposed development would result in the removal of some trees from the site, primarily in two areas, namely the in the vicinity of the roundabout and at the Western edge of the site and in the grounds of the existing nursery which is to be demolished to make way for the development. The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment which identifies the trees to be removed and the necessary tree protection measures required to ensure the retained trees are not damaged during construction. While the proposals require the removal of approximately 44 trees from Zone 1, many are of relatively low quality and are not considered to be either irreplaceable nor do they individually contribute significantly to the wider visual amenity of the area.
66. The most significant tree to be removed, an early mature Beech tree, has already been accepted as requiring removal as part of the permitted scheme to install a roundabout on the Western edge of the site. Given that the amended proposals for Zone 1 allow the retention of more of the existing shelter belt planting, the fact that many trees would be planted in a landscaping scheme as part of the proposed

development and the fact that the trees proposed for removal are generally of a relatively limited quality, the application is acceptable in terms of their impact on existing trees on site.

67. In response to the Landscape Officer's concern regarding the use of spoil from the site to further build up the earth bund to the East of the northern portion of the Phase 2 site, the applicant has confirmed that other than for the re-profiling of that bund to allow landscaping, the spoil created from the development will be taken off the site rather than deposited within it. This is welcomed in terms of maintaining the general topography of the site.
68. The amendments to the location of the building, the Eastern access road and the parking areas has allowed the retention of existing shelter belt planting and additional structural planting on the Eastern boundary. In terms of the landscaping of the boundary of the site, these changes are welcomed. The Landscape Officer initially expressed the view that additional swales could be introduced and that alterations were made to the parking areas to incorporate more appropriate landscaping. These suggestions were taken on board in the revised proposals and the applicant has indicated that they are content to use the species suggested by the Landscapes Officer in the tree planting strategy for the site.
69. On that basis, the proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of the proposed landscaping arrangements.

### **Ecology**

70. The application has been accompanied by an ecological appraisal of the site and by reptile, badger and bat inspection reports. The Council's Ecology Officer has assessed the reports and is content that there would be no impact from the development on reptiles or badgers. Given the presence of a number of trees on the site which are potential bat roosts as well as the potential for bat roosting in the nursery building proposed for demolition, further investigation of that potential was requested.
71. An additional survey of was conducted by the applicant's ecological specialist in response to the request of the Ecology Officer and this took the form of two nocturnal bat surveys focused on the nursery building and the silver birch tree in its grounds which are potential bat roosts which would be affected by the development. The surveys found that while bat activity was moderate, there was no evidence of roosts in the nursery building or the Silver Birch tree. The bat report made several recommendations associated with the carrying out of development and the ecological enhancement of the scheme post development. On the basis that these recommendations are secured by condition, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on protected species.
72. The Ecology Officer is very supportive of the inclusion of wet woodland within the SUDS which he considers to be an innovative approach which would become important invertebrate habitat over time.
73. In addition to the implementation of the recommendations of the bat report, the Ecology Officer requests conditions in respect of the control of vegetation removal during bird breeding season, the re-inspection of bird boxes prior to commencement of development and the submission and implementation of an Ecological Management Plan in order to secure the habitat enhancements detailed in the submission documents.

## Residential Amenity

74. The primary potential impacts of the development are from the visual impact of the proposed building and associated structures on neighbouring buildings, the noise generated by the use of the building and the associated parking areas and service yard and light pollution from the building and the external areas.
75. As detailed above in the consideration of the scale of the building, the previous outline permission placed a restriction on the heights of buildings in various parts of the site. Following the amendments which reduced the height of the building proposed, it would now have a height of approximately 14.65 metres above the external ground level to parapet level with an additional 4 metres above that for roof based plant. When compared to the height limits on the extant outline permission, the building would be located almost entirely within the 13 and 15 metre zones although a small portion of the south eastern corner of the building would be just within the 11 metre zone. While the height of building plus plant of approximately 18.65 metres is higher than the original outline permission would have allowed, the scheme would result in virtually no built development within the 11 metre zone previously approved which would have been significantly closer to neighbouring properties to the South and South East.
76. The plant level on the roof would be set well back from the parapet on the main roof of the building which would reduce the visual impact of the building when seen from the properties on Pampisford Road and Cutting Road. In addition, the siting of the building further to the North and West and the relocation of the Eastern access Road has allowed additional space for screen planting on the Eastern boundary to be widened which will help screen the building from view.
77. The Visual Impact Assessment submitted with the application identifies that the houses on Pampisford Road to the South East of the building and Cutting Road to the South will have some views of the proposed building but that these will be at least partially screened by existing vegetation, both on the boundaries of the individual properties and the shelter belt planting on the Southern and Eastern boundaries of the site. The building will be relatively prominent in views from the nearest dwelling on Cutting Road as it has windows in the North facing elevation, however on balance, this would not cause significant harm to the amenity of the occupants of that dwelling, given that the proposed building is some 100 metres away.
78. It is accepted that the building is of a greater height and overall scale than those previously permitted. Nonetheless, the location of the building; the setting back of the plant level from the main facades; the screen planting already in place which will be supplemented as part of the development and will increasingly mature; are considered to be sufficient that the overall impact on the neighbouring properties to the site would not be significant, either in terms of being visually intrusive or overbearing.
79. Depending on the precise use of specific areas of the building, flues would be required in addition to the plant level shown. The zones for those flues have been shown on submitted drawings as being in the Western half of the roofs of the eastern and central wings of the building. The proposed heights for these flues is an additional 5.5 metres above the height of the plant level, which would add to the overall height of the buildings considerably. These flues would, however, not add significantly to the bulk of the buildings and while they would be seen in views of the



site due to their height, they would not cause any significant impact on the amenity of neighbouring dwellings. The details of the flues would be required by condition.

80. In respect of potential overlooking from the three storey building into neighbouring properties, the applicant has submitted a Planning Addendum, showing sections to the two nearest properties which are directly faced by the South East elevation of the building. In addition it shows the position of the building relative to the property on Cutting Road to the South. This shows that there is approximately 100 metres between the new building and the neighbouring properties. Given the level of intervening screen planting and existing mature trees, as well as the distance between the dwellings and the new building, the overall impact of overlooking from the upper floors of the building on the neighbours to the South East is considered to be negligible. The neighbouring dwelling to the South would not be directly faced by a primary elevation of the building, as its elevations are oriented towards the South West and South East. Given the separation distances and boundary planting, there would not be any significant overlooking of the neighbouring dwelling to the South.
81. The proposed decked car parking originally raised concern with neighbours in respect of its height close to the boundary and potential overlooking from it. The application has been amended to relocate the decked car park further from the boundary and to fully sink it into the ground so that the top deck is now at surface level. This amendment is considered to overcome any concerns in respect of the impact of the decked parking area in terms of its height or potential for overlooking from it.

**Noise disturbance and light pollution, waste, air quality.**

82. The operation of the proposed Zone 1 building would be noise generating, primarily from plant which would be roof mounted and the use of the parking areas and service yard. Based on the information initially submitted, the Council's Environmental Health Officer was content with the principle of the development and with its noise impacts within the park, but requested additional information in terms of the impact of noise generating plant and vehicle movements on external receptors, namely the dwellings to the South and South East of the Zone 1 building.
83. At the Council's request, the applicant submitted additional information in respect of the noise impacts of the development which demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Environmental Health Officer that the noise levels from the buildings on site will not impact on existing residential premises compared to existing background levels. This is particularly the case when the existing permission for the outline site is taken into consideration.
84. On that basis, the proposed development would not cause any significant harm to neighbouring amenity through noise nuisance associated with building plant. The Environmental Health Officer has requested conditions be applied to the permission in respect of the submission of an Operational Noise Minimisation Management Plan to detail measures which would be taken to minimise the noise across the site, details of noise generating plant and a condition relating to the maintenance of the plant.
85. The proposed parking areas would be located further away from the Eastern boundary of the site than proposed in the original outline permission and additional screen planting would be implemented between those areas and the boundary which would further mitigate the noise impact on neighbouring properties. The proposed service yard has been raised as a point of concern locally in respect of the potential disturbance from vehicle movements and deliveries. The applicant has submitted

additional information stating that the use of the service yard would be relatively light in terms of the frequency of deliveries and the type of vehicle making those deliveries.

86. On the basis of the distance from neighbouring properties, the additional screen planting proposed adjacent to the service yard and on the condition that the proposals for use of the service yard form part of the required Operational Noise Minimisation Management Plan, the impact of the development in terms of noise from access, parking and service areas is acceptable.
87. As would be the case were the extant outline permission implemented, the proposed building would create some noise disturbance during construction, however provided it is constrained to reasonable hours of working and that in the event of piled foundations being required piling that mitigation measures be proposed to protect local residents from noise and vibration, the proposed construction would not have any significant harmful impacts on the amenity of near neighbours.
88. Concern was expressed locally in terms of light pollution from both the proposed building and the lighting of external areas including the car parks. In response to those concerns, the applicant commissioned and submitted additional assessment of the lighting impact on neighbouring properties. The submitted assessment states that lower lighting columns are to be used for the car park areas where they are close to the dwellings to the south east to minimise the impact of the lighting on the neighbouring properties and the lux calculations show that in respect of the car park lighting, the level of illumination received by neighbouring dwellings will be negligible and well below the recommended levels for a rural area. These calculations have been carried out without factoring in the existing and proposed boundary planting which would further mitigate the light received by the neighbouring properties.
89. The Council's Environmental Health Officer is content that the proposed external lighting would result in an acceptable impact on neighbouring dwellings and a condition would be applied to the permission requiring the submission of a lighting scheme to ensure this impact is controlled.
90. There will be some light spill from the windows of the existing building. However, the applicant has stated that the perimeter lighting within the building will be on a time clock to ensure that the lighting is dimmed down at night. Given the separation distances between the building and neighbouring dwellings and the fact that measures can be taken to ensure internal lighting is on timers which would dim or turn it off at night, the proposed development would not have any significant impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties through excessive light spill from the buildings. The Council's Environmental Health Officer is content with this conclusion and confirmation of the internal lighting measures would be required as part of the above condition.
91. The proposals for waste management in respect of the operation of the building, contained within the submitted Site Waste Management Plan are considered to be acceptable. The SWMP notes that a Construction Site Waste Management Plan will be required for the construction phase and this would be the subject of a condition on the planning permission. On this basis, the proposed development of Zone 1 is acceptable in terms of its impact on site waste.
92. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has assessed the impact of the proposed development on air quality, both in terms of the construction phase and the subsequent use of the building. He is content that provided conditions are applied to the permission to require the submission of a management plan to control the spread

of airborne dust during construction and the submission of full details of all extraction and filtration equipment prior to the first use of the building, that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact in terms of air quality.

### **Conclusion**

93. It is concluded that there are no overriding reasons why the development should not be approved subject to a raft of safeguarding conditions and a S106 agreement to secure both contributions to mitigate off site impacts of the development on the local highway network and to ensure the development supersedes rather than adds to the development previously consented.

### **Recommendation**

94. Delegated powers to approve, subject to the completion of a S106 agreement relating to transport infrastructure mitigation measures for the Phase 2 land and conditions relating to the following matters:

Timescale for implementation

Approved Plans

Construction Traffic Management Plan

Travel Plan

Cycle Parking Provision

Car Parking Provision

Provision of Fire Hydrants

Surface Water Drainage

Foul Water Drainage and Pollution Control

Details of Materials

Details of Hard Landscaping

Further details of flues and chimneys

Renewables

Water Conservation

Landscaping

Retained trees

Tree Works and Protection

Bird Protection Measures

Bat Protection Measures

Ecological Management Plan

Details of Plant

Noise Minimisation Plan

Restriction on Service Areas Hours of Use

Dust Mitigation Measures

Restriction on Construction Hours

Details of Piled Foundations

Lighting Scheme

Site Waste Management Plan

### **Background Papers**

Where the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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 Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission July 2013
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Planning File Refs: S/2495/04/O, S/0248/09/RM, S/2287/10, S/1365/10, S/1109/15/FL and S/1110/15/FL

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