

## 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 Numbers:** S/1110/15/OL

**Parish:** Great Abington

**Proposals:** Zone 2 - Outline application for the erection of Research and Development buildings (Use Class B1b) with a combined floor area of up to 34,220 m<sup>2</sup> (GEFA excluding plant) including means of access (with the provision of an internal link road) strategic landscaping and associated infrastructure including parking.

**Site address:** Phase 2 Land (Zone 2), 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 conflicts with that of Planning Officers

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

## **Executive Summary**

1. The proposed development for a series of buildings which would provide up to 34,220 m<sup>2</sup> of Research and Development office and laboratory space as well as a landscaped park setting, car parking including semi-sunken decked car parks and associated access roads, servicing and landscaping. This is known as the Zone 2 site which is the Northern part of the larger Phase 2 site on Granta Park. The wider Phase 2 site which has extant consents 30,660 m<sup>2</sup> of Research & Development accommodation.
2. A separate application for the southern portion of the site, known as the Zone 1 site, for a three storey building providing just over 21,000 m<sup>2</sup> of research and development accommodation and associated infrastructure is also recommended for approval to this Committee. The Zone 2 application is outline only with all matters except for access and strategic landscaping reserved for future consideration.
2. Concern was initially expressed in respect of the Zone 2 application by the two local Parish Councils and neighbours to the site in respect of size and location of the buildings, the location of the car parks, the impact on neighbouring dwellings, traffic generation, sewage system capacity, surface water flood risk, noise and light pollution and general visual impact on the village, including from the earth bund on the eastern boundary of the site. Further information was provided by the applicant confirming that the earth bund will not be increased in height, but will be re-profiled and planted to provide screening of the buildings.
3. The Parish Councils were reconsulted on the basis of this additional information but both maintained their recommendations of refusal. 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.
4. 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 2 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. While the outline permission would be granted in accordance with the submitted scale parameters for the proposed heights and locations of buildings and the structural landscaping scheme, the layout, scale and design of the buildings as well as the detailed landscaping for each plot would be considered as part of future reserved matters applications.

## **Site and Surroundings**

6. The application sites are 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 2 application site is located on the Northern portion of the Phase 2 land and extends further to the East than the Zone 1 site. To the north of the Zone 1 site is the grade II\* listed Abington Hall and its landscaped grounds originally laid out by Repton and to the East is a large earth bund which backs on to several houses on the High Street further to the East. A permissive path runs across the North of the site from the High Street.

### **Proposals**

8. The Zone 2 application seeks outline permission for a series of research and development buildings providing a maximum of just over 34,000 m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation. Car parking would be provided including double decked car parks which would be sunk into the existing landscaped bund to the East. The bund will be extended to the North and recontoured and landscaped. The means of access, internal layout of the access roads and strategic landscaping are being applied for in detail, with details of the layout, scale and appearance of buildings and the landscaping of individual plots reserved for later detailed consideration subject to the constraints of the master plan and parameter plans which have been submitted with the application.
9. The layout of the site would be with central lakes and landscaping running north from the Zone 1 building up to the grounds of Abington Hall with development zones for the buildings on the East and West sides of the central landscaping served both by undercroft parking and parking areas including surface parking and sunken decked car parks to the East of the site. Further landscaping is proposed for the bund at the easternmost extent of the site.
10. Prior to the submission of the current applications, the applicant requested an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion in respect of the proposed development 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**

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

12. **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).
13. **S/2287/10** - granted an extension of time for the implementation of the above reserved matters permission (S/0248/09/RM).
11. **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**

12. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012**
13. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007**

ST/8 Employment Provision

11. **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

11. **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

11. **Great Abington Parish Council** – 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 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 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.
12. Additional information including an addendum Design and Access Statement was provided and the Parish Council was reconsulted on the scheme. It returned comments stating that it recommended refusal and that it could not recommend approval of the Zone 2 application until the Zone 1 application has been determined.
21. **Little Abington Parish Council** - recommended refusal on the grounds of the deviation from the previous master plan in terms of the increase in scale of the proposed buildings and the extension of the parking area outside the original site area. 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 also referred to the general concerns raised in respect of the Zone 1 proposal in terms of noise pollution, light pollution, sewerage infrastructure and surface water drainage.
22. The Parish Council was consulted on the additional information detailed in paragraph 40 and returned comments maintaining a recommendation of refusal commenting that the only changes to the revised application were of a cosmetic nature (tree planting and landscaping). It stated its recommendation of refusal was on the grounds that there was no trust that Full Planning or Outline Planning won't yet again increase the space (i.e. as in this case from the original masterplan), that there are no proposed tenants yet to occupy the site, that the planned 5 buildings together with the Zone 1 building would result in an 80% increase in number of people working on the site compared to the original permission/masterplan and that there is no supporting traffic plan to support the significant increase people working on the site.
23. **County 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.
24. 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.

25. 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.
26. **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.
27. **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.
28. **South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Conservation Officer** - comments that the introduction of the lakes and associated structures and planting reflects the pleasure grounds theme associated with 19<sup>th</sup> Century landscape principles and this could well be taken further in utilising the grassed slope down to Abington Hall. The cross sections provided are welcomed providing the ability to assess the effect on the setting of the Hall which is limited to the upper stories of both new and old and the aim of creating long views through the site is supported with the potential to use the listed Linton Water Tower as a focal point in much the same way as St Mary's Church was previously.
29. She also states that while historically there has been no visual connection between the Abington Hall landscape and the wider landscape to the south, she supports the recommendation that the 18<sup>th</sup> Century precedent of a short tunnel be used to punch through the east-west ridge to the south of the Hall, providing connection and a contrast from one landscape to another and enabling road and foot traffic to be separated. It is hoped that this idea will be pursued further in consideration of revisions to the landscape scheme associated with the landscaping proposals associated with the recent permissions for the extension of The Welding Institute when the refurbishment of the Hall itself is under consideration.
11. **SCDC Urban Design Officer** - states that submitted plans are a clear improvement on the previously consented masterplan. Proposed heights, plot parameters, typologies and palette of materials are generally acceptable, and the masterplan is well integrated with and connected to the wider park. The development of a new character area around a water body and high quality landscape is welcomed and has the potential to deliver a high quality extension to Granta Park. The new masterplan demonstrates a rational road layout, and sets out the architectural ambition for the buildings, these aspirations will need to be met at detailed planning application stage to ensure the quality of the environment is not lost.
12. She states that the current plans respond much more positively to Abingdon Hall and its associated landscape than the previous masterplan, and will help further enhance the setting of the hall. Investment in clearly needed in Abingdon Hall to secure its long term future and acknowledgement of this is welcomed. The concept of a tunnel to link the two landscapes is welcomed.
13. Her view is that car parking is largely well considered with the incorporation of basement and deck parking.

14. She raised concerns relating to levels of spoil from all the excavation required and where this will be displaced to and that some of the earth works already formed on the park have created an undulating topography which is not in keeping with the geography of the area and should not be further extended or exacerbated and that further sections are required in respect of assessing the impact of any additional earth works to the bund on the eastern side of the site on existing houses in Great Abington that back onto the bund. She also raises the question of how the service yards for the new buildings would be integrated into the pavilion style buildings and the landscape and how the service functions will be screened.
28. **SCDC Landscapes Officer** - welcomed the proposals for a varied landscape based on water and integrating this landscape with that around Abington Hall and the parkland beyond to the north. He expressed concern over additional spoil being added to the existing landscape bund on the east of the site given the potential for it to become an overbearing presence when viewed from the High Street and connecting paths and made suggestions regarding the landscaping of parking areas. Although the proposed layout and form of buildings is indicative at outline stage, he commented that the position of building H appears to cut across the line of vision when approached on the permissive path from Gt Abington High Street and in long views into the landscape when heading West and suggested that a strong designed landscape will be needed along this northern edge to retain a pleasant access route from the High Street and resolve conflict between the service areas and the lake and Hall landscapes immediately to the west. He also stated that the area suggested between buildings F and G will need strong boundary landscapes which relate well to the building facades and avoid elevated views of the service area to building F.
29. In respect of the landscaping proposals, he has made suggestions in respect of the planting mix, the use of native species (based on the best examples of local native woodland) in the screen planting to the bund and the establishment of areas of chalk grassland on the bund.
30. **SCDC 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 also requests a condition in respect of the lighting in the vicinity of a tree which may have a bat roost unless a further bat survey shows the tree not to have a roost associated with it. The applicant has 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. He states that the general design of the development's landscaping and SuDS is very much welcomed as it will provide extensive open spaces of natural habitats. The wildflower meadows will become valuable habitats for invertebrates and birds and the inclusion of wet woodland within the SuDS an innovative approach as such habitats become important for invertebrates in time. The general mix of formal and more naturalistic planting is very much welcomed and should provide an attractive working environment rich in biodiversity in time.
31. **SCDC Environmental Health Officer** - has considered the potential for noise pollution and light pollution and is of the view that the lighting levels resulting from the proposed development including buildings and car parking would be acceptable in terms of their impact on neighbouring dwellings and that the noise impacts from plant associated with the proposed building will not significantly impact on neighbouring dwellings. On that basis, he is content that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of noise and light pollution subject to conditions relating to full 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.

32. **SCDC Development Officer** - confirms that potential health impacts for the proposal have been identified and addressed through the Health Impact Assessment.
33. **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.
34. **Anglian Water** - has not commented separately on the Zone 2 application however its concerns in respect of the foul sewerage network and a risk of flooding downstream (identified in the Zone 1 consultation response) and its request for a condition requiring the approval of such a drainage strategy to determine the necessary mitigation measures have been noted.
35. **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 to attenuate surface water run-off to greenfield run-off rates. It requests a condition to ensure the Sustainable Drainage System is implemented.
36. **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.
37. **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.
38. **Natural England** - does not object to the proposed development.
39. **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.

### **Representations**

41. 7 representations have been received in respect of the proposed development of Zone 2, regarding a variety of the following issues:
  - Increased scale and mass of buildings closer to the villages and neighbouring homes
  - Increased traffic and vehicle movements and their impact on highway safety and the capacity of road network to accommodate the development.
  - Screening of the buildings
  - Light pollution
  - Noise pollution
  - That the development is larger than originally approved plans



- The Location of car parks
- Flooding from surface water run off into the village
- Impact on the currently problematic sewerage infrastructure in the village
- Impact of the earth bund to the East of Zone 2 on visual amenity and neighbouring dwellings.

### **Planning Comments**

42. The main planning considerations in respect of the proposed development for zone 2 is the principle of the development; transport impacts, highway safety, access and parking provision; flood risk, surface water drainage, contamination and sewerage; layout, scale and design; sustainability; impact on historic environment and archaeology; trees and landscape; ecology; residential amenity; noise disturbance and light pollution.

### **Principle of Development**

48. 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. It is considered that the proposals for the Phase II land would be consistent with the aspirations of these policies.
49. 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, it is considered that the proposed development is therefore acceptable in principle.

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

50. 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.
51. 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.
52. 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.

53. 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.
54. 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.
55. The access to the Phase II 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 Phase 2 land 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.
56. Parking for Zone 2 is proposed at a ratio of 1 space per 34 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace which equates to 1,018 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 for Zone 2 would be provided via an undercroft parking to the buildings within the Western area of development and, for the buildings in the Eastern area of development, via surface and sunken double decked car parks cut into the earth bund on the East of the site. 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.
57. 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**

58. The Phase 2 application sites are 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 on Zone 2 would have any significant impact on flood risk from surface water run-off.
59. 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 area to the North of the site has been used as a construction compound for the recent Welding Institute extension and spoil from that construction has also been deposited on the Northern section of the Zone 2 site. It identified this made ground and spoil as a potential source of contamination however it concludes that they are likely to contain largely inert material and are unlikely to pose a risk to the development. It therefore recommends that clean topsoil is used for landscaping, any imported soil is validated to ensure its suitability for use, further assessment of excess spoil to confirm its suitability for use and that a watching brief is maintained on site for any contamination.
60. 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.
61. Concern has been raised by the Parish Council's 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 sewage infrastructure does not cope with existing flows and 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 Phase 2 development 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.
62. 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.

63. 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 applicants engineer is therefore that Granta Park flows would assist with the existing problems experienced by residents in the villages.
64. 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 and Scale including impact on visual amenity**

65. The indicative layout is of two buildings on the West of the site, a central landscaped area around series of lakes, three buildings to the East of the lakes, with the access road, semi-sunken two decked car park and surface car parking further East and landscaping of the existing bund, including an extension of the bund to the North close to the Eastern boundary of the site. As the application is for outline permission, the number, design and precise location of buildings would be determined at reserved matters stage, however the parameter plans included with the application show the building zones and the maximum heights of the buildings, as well as the locations of the parking and landscaped areas and reserved matters applications for buildings would have to accord with the constraints of those parameter plans.
66. The Council's Conservation Officer, Urban Design Officer and Landscapes Officer are in agreement that the proposed scheme is an improvement in terms of its layout when compared to the previously consented scheme. As noted in the Historic Environment section below, the layout will significantly open up and improve the setting of the Grade II\* listed Abington Hall to the North and also better reflects the existing character of the wider Granta Park site. The layout is more spacious, allows greater visual permeability and is focused around a central landscaped area which will enhance the Phase 2 site and the wider park.
67. In terms of the scale of the proposed buildings, the building zone to the West of the site would allow buildings of a height up to 15 metres to the height of the parapet and 17.5 metres to the top of the roof mounted plant level which would be set back from the main facade of the building. This would allow the construction of 3 storey buildings plus roof plant. This is larger than the previously approved outline scheme would have permitted, as the restriction on that zone previously was 15 metres in total height, however the additional height is not considered to cause any significant harmful impact on the visual amenity of the area particularly considering the improvements to the layout and landscaping of the site detailed above.
68. The southern portion of the building zone to the East of the lakes would have the same height restrictions as the Western building zone, however the northern portion would have a lower building which would be a maximum of approximately 10.5

metres to the parapet and 13 metres to the top of the roof mounted plant level, allowing the construction of a 2 storey building. The buildings in the Eastern building zone would be taller and would be located further to the East than in the original extant scheme for the Phase 2, as the area in which they are proposed was originally where a large surface car park would have been located. This increased height and proximity to the village has been of some concern locally and significant consideration has been given to the visual impact of the proposed buildings on the local landscape.

69. The primary viewpoints from which the proposed buildings would be seen is from the rear of some of the properties on the High Street to the East, the rear of properties on Pampisford Road to the South, in glimpses from the High Street itself and by those using the permissive paths into Granta Park from the East. The upper parts of the proposed buildings would be seen above the earth bund and landscaping proposed for it when viewed from the High Street and from properties on the High Street, however this would be at distances of approximately 350 metres. While the buildings would be more prominent than those originally approved for the site, it is not considered that the height of the buildings would be harmful to those viewpoints, given the location of the buildings within a park where existing tall buildings are the backdrop and where landscaping in the foreground will soften and filter views.
70. When viewed from the properties on Pampisford Road and in glimpses from public viewpoints along the road, the buildings would be partially screened by the proposed Zone 1 building and partially by existing mature planting around the Eastern boundary of the site. These viewpoints are approximately 200 metres from the southernmost point of the building zone and, while the buildings are taller and located further East than in previous permissions, they are not overly prominent or stark in those viewpoints.
71. The buildings would be partially screened in views from the permissive path into the site from the East by the earth bund which would be extended North and the landscape planting on and around the bund. Given the permissive path leads into the wider Granta Park site, it is inevitable that large commercial buildings will be seen from the permissive paths but the buildings would not appear overly large or out of context.
72. Some wider views of the site exist from higher ground in the surrounding area, however these are very distant views and while the rooftops of the proposed buildings would be perceived in such views, given the context of the park, they would not cause any significant harm to the visual amenity of the area.
73. The proposed parking areas would be set into the existing earth bund and would be screened from outside views of the site by the bund and by additional landscape planting which would be implemented on and around the bund. The parking areas would not be prominent in public views of the site, nor would they significantly impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.
74. The bund itself would be extended further to the North to the same width as it is as existing in order to provide additional screening for the northernmost building plot and its associated parking area. While this would somewhat increase the prominence of the bund, it would not be significantly harmful to the visual amenity of the area, particularly considering that it would be re-profiled to give it a more natural appearance than at present and landscaped to help it assimilate more comfortably into the wider landscape.

75. The proposed scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its layout, scale and impact on the visual amenity of the area.

### **Sustainability**

76. 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 on each zone will meet the requirement.
77. The statement is not specific in respect of precise calculations of energy usage given the outline nature of the application, however it assesses the available technologies and identifies the possible technologies which could be used to achieve at least a 10% provision of renewable energy. The preferred options for the buildings are solar photovoltaic panel arrays, horizontal ground source heat pumps and air source heat pumps. It states that the solar photovoltaic in combination with heat pumps could be specified which would be sufficient to contribute at least 10% of the energy requirements of the building although clearly this would need to be specified on a building by building basis to ensure the measures take account of the detailed design of the individual buildings. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of policy NE/3.
78. Policy NE/12 requires that development incorporate all practicable water conservation measures and that development of the scale proposed for Zone 2 will be required to submit a Water Conservation Strategy to demonstrate how water conservation will be achieved.
79. The Sustainability Statements submitted in support of the application identifies water conservation as an issue and state 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**

80. The application proposes an alternative layout to that originally approved which is considered to provide benefits to the setting of the Hall. The northernmost building in the approved outline scheme was located opposite the main south facing elevation of the hall, close to the boundary with its landscaped gardens. At that stage, the southern outlook from the Hall was constrained by the existing canteen building which serves The Welding Institute so the building was not considered to significantly impact on the setting of the Hall. However, since the extension of The Welding Institute has allowed for the imminent removal of the canteen building which would open up views south from the hall, the proposed Zone 2 scheme has been laid out in such a way as to open up the central spine of the site which and provide a landscaped area running south towards the Zone 1 site which will allow views out from the hall to be improved and a more spacious setting created which better integrates the Hall and the wider park. This revised layout provides an enhancement to the setting of the Hall when compared with the extant outline scheme.
81. The Zone 2 site is situated just to the South but outside of the Great and Little Abington Conservation Area. The site is largely separated from the bulk of the

Conservation Area in the villages by the mature tree belt on the southern boundary of the Conservation Area and the part of the Conservation Area closest to and most visually linked with the site is Abington Hall and its gardens. Given the limited contribution of the existing site to the setting of the Conservation Area and the above assessment that the proposed layout represents an enhancement of the Hall and its grounds, it is not considered that the proposed development would cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

82. The potential for significant archaeology to be present on the 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, the proposed development across the Phase 2 site would not have any significant impact on archaeological interests on site.

### **Trees and Landscaping**

80. The proposed development would result in the removal of some trees from the site, primarily in two areas, namely 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. The proposals require the removal of approximately 8 trees from Zone 2, 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.
81. 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 site, the applicant has confirmed that other than for the re-profiling of that bund to allow landscaping, the spoil created from the excavation of the lakes and for the undercroft and decked parking will be taken off the site rather than deposited within it. This is welcomed in terms of maintaining the general topography of the site.
82. The landscaping proposals are considered to be of a high quality and are a significant enhancement over the proposals permitted under the previous outline permissions. They would provide a more appropriate wider landscape setting for Abington Hall and connectivity with its grounds and would generally provide a high quality environment around the proposed buildings.
83. The existing earth bund to the East of the site would be extended further to the North to help shield the northernmost building in Zone 2 from the High Street. While this would increase the length of the current bund which is considered to be somewhat out of character with the general topography of the area and would cut off some long distance views into and out of the site along the existing permissive path, on balance, its overall impact is considered to be acceptable on the condition that a suitable and strong designed landscape is provided along the Northern edge of the site to ensure a pleasant access route to the village remains. Such a landscaping detail would be expected to come forward in association with reserved matters applications for the Northernmost building.

84. On that basis, the proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of the proposed landscaping arrangements.

### **Ecology**

85. 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.
86. 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 focussed on the nursery building and the silver birch tree in its grounds which are potential bat roosts which would be affected by the Phase II 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 Phase II development is acceptable in terms of its impact on protected species.
87. The Ecology Officer was very supportive of the proposed landscaping scheme across the Phase 2 which would provide extensive open spaces of natural habitats and the wildflower meadows would become valuable habitats for invertebrates and birds. The living walls around the car parking areas would also benefit habitat provision. He considered the inclusion of wet woodland within the SUDS an innovative approach which would become important invertebrate habitat over time.
88. 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**

89. The buildings proposed within the building zone to the West of the lakes are relatively central within the Granta Park site and, given the screening provided by existing landscaping and existing and proposed buildings, would not have any significant impact on the amenity of occupants of dwellings in the vicinity of the site.
90. To the East of the lakes, the building zone is split into two area. The two plots to the South of the building zone are shown as having maximum heights of approximately 15 metres to the parapet and 17.5 metres to the top of the roof mounted plant level (which would be set back from the main facade of the building). This would allow the construction of 3 storey buildings plus roof plant. The single plot to the North of the zone would be a lower level having a maximum height of approximately 10.5 metres to the parapet and 13 metres to the top of the roof mounted plant level, allowing the construction of a 2 storey building.



91. While buildings could be taller and would be located further to the East than the extant scheme for the Phase 2, at their closest points these buildings would still be located approximately 350 metres from the residential properties on the High Street to the East, approximately 200 metres from the residential properties on Pampisford Road to the South and approximately 240 metres from the residential properties on the Hall Farm site to the North East. At this distance, while the upper floors of the buildings would be visible to occupants of those dwellings to the East and South of the site over the proposed landscaping, it is considered that there is sufficient distance between them that they would not be unduly overbearing or result in any significant harm to the outlook of the properties nor would there be any significant overlooking from the buildings into those residential properties.
92. The proposed parking areas including the decked car parks would be located further to the East than in the original scheme, however given the level of proposed screening and the existing earth bund, it is not considered that the parking would the level of landscaping proposed in the current Zone 2 scheme is greater and there would not be any significant harmful visual impact or overlooking from those parking areas.
93. Concern has been expressed locally regarding the impact of the earth bund on the Eastern boundary of the site, both in terms of its impact as existing and the potential for enlargement of the bund, either in height or in terms of its proximity to neighbours for it to further impact on the amenity of neighbours to the East. While the bund would be extended to the North to provide additional screening for the northernmost plot and its parking areas, this would not bring it closer to the neighbouring properties on the High Street to the East.
94. The bund would not be enlarged in terms of its height, however it would be reprofiled on its Eastern bank to provide a more natural landscape feature rather than the stark, manmade appearance it currently has. It would also be planted with trees and shrubs which would have the effect of both softening the appearance of the bund and providing screening to the development beyond. It is not considered that the extension of the bund to the North or its landscaping or reprofiling would have any significant impact on the residential amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties.

**Noise Disturbance and Light Pollution, waste, air quality.**

95. The operation of the proposed Zone 2 buildings would be noise generating, primarily from plant which would be roof mounted and the use of the parking and service areas. While the precise scale and location of the buildings is not yet known, given the distance of the buildings from the nearest residential neighbours, the Council's Environmental Health Officer is content that the principle of the development is acceptable subject to conditions being applied to the permission relating to full details of plant, maintenance of such plant and the submission of a noise minimisation management plan.
96. The proposed parking areas would be located approximately 200 metres from dwellings to the South and East and would be screened by the existing earth bund and the existing and proposed landscape planting. At that distance, the impact of noise associated with parking and access is very limited and would not cause any significant impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposed service yards would be at least as far away from neighbouring properties as the

parking areas and the daytime use of those yards is not considered likely to impact on residential amenity. In order to ensure that the service yards are not used at unsociable hours, when noise would be more prominent and more likely to cause nuisance, a condition would be applied to the planning permission, restricting the use of the service yards to daytime hours. On that basis, the impact of the development in terms of noise from access, parking and service areas is acceptable.

97. As would be the case were the extant outline permission implemented, the proposed buildings would create some noise disturbance during construction. While some of the buildings would be closer to the East of the site than previously approved, given the significant overall distances from neighbouring dwellings, the construction noise would not be significantly greater than could be expected were the previous scheme to be built out. Provided the construction work 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, it is not considered that the proposed construction would have any harmful impacts on the amenity of near neighbours.
98. The proposed buildings and external areas including the parking facilities, will require lighting and the potential impact on the amenity of nearby dwellings in terms of light pollution has therefore been considered. Given the outline nature of the application, it is not possible to undertake detailed lighting assessments, however, based on the assessments provided for a similarly sized building on Zone 1 as well as its parking areas, it is considered that the impacts of the lighting of building and parking areas on neighbouring properties can be controlled such that it would not be harmful to neighbouring amenity.
99. The assessment undertaken in respect of the Zone 1 building demonstrated that the level of illumination from car park lighting on neighbouring properties would be negligible and as the proposed car parks in Zone 2 would be equally well screened and further from neighbouring dwellings, it is considered that a lighting scheme could be specified which would result in an acceptable impact on neighbouring dwellings. This would be the subject of a condition on the outline permission requiring the submission of further assessment and the specification of lighting proposals. Again, similarly to the Zone 1 building, buildings in Zone 2 could operate perimeter lighting on time clocks to ensure it is dimmed or switched off at night. Given the significant distances separating the proposed buildings and nearby dwellings and the existing and proposed landscape screening, light spill from the windows of the buildings would not have any significant impact on the amenity of nearby dwellings.
100. 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 2 is acceptable in terms of its impact on site waste.
101. 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**

102. 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.

## **Recommendations**

80. 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:

Submission of Reserved Matters

Timescale for Submission of Reserved Matters (6 Years)

Timescale for Implementation (6 Years or within 2 years of approval of final reserved matter, whichever is the later).

Approved Plans

Construction Traffic Management Plan

Travel Plan

Details of Cycle Parking

Details of Car Parking

Details of Fire Hydrants

Surface Water Drainage Scheme

Foul Water Drainage Scheme

Details of Materials

Details of Hard Landscaping

Details of flues and chimneys

Details of Renewable Energy

Details of Water Conservation Measures

Details of Soft Landscaping around buildings

Details of Extension of Earth Bund

Retained trees

Tree Works and Protection

Bird Protection Measures

Bat Protection Measures

Ecological Management Plan

Details of Mechanical 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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