



23 February 2016

Agenda Item:9

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR – PLACE

RUSHCLIFFE DISTRICT REF. NO.: 8/15/03017/CTY

PROPOSAL: DEMOLITION OF ‘CLASP’ OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND TWO ADJOINING COVERED LINK CORRIDORS; REINSTATEMENT OF THE SOUTH ELEVATION OF COUNTY HALL ‘H’ BLOCK AND THE EAST ELEVATION OF THE RIVERSIDE BUILDING FOLLOWING DEMOLITION; REMOVAL OF SIX BRICK PLANTER BEDS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PARKING BAYS; RETENTION OF THE BUILDING FOOTPRINT AND CHANGE OF USE TO FORM TEMPORARY CAR PARK; PROVISION OF A NEW 48 PLACE SECURE CYCLE STORE

LOCATION: COUNTY HALL, LOUGHBOROUGH ROAD, WEST BRIDGFORD

APPLICANT: NCC PLACE DEPARTMENT

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a planning application for demolition of a four-storey 1960s office extension, making good of retained elevations following demolition, and temporary use of the building footprint as car parking at County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford. The key issues relate to the impact of demolition and the loss of car parking during the period of works. The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.

The Site and Surroundings

2. County Hall lies to the south of Trent Bridge and to the west of Loughborough Road (A60) on the east bank of the River Trent 700m to the north-west of West Bridgford town centre. Residential properties on Trentside and Sandringham Avenue adjoin the southern site boundary. A garage/car showroom premises lies on the east side of Loughborough Road (Plan 1).
3. The site lies within Flood Zone 3 of the River Trent, as identified by the Environment Agency Flood Zone Map. A flood defence, either in the form of a wall or raised ground completed in 2007, runs between County Hall and the River Trent which forms the south-western boundary of the site.
4. The application site is the principal administrative centre of Nottinghamshire County Council comprising a five storey ‘H’ footprint building (including basement) dating from the 1930s, linked to a 1960s four-storey rectangular CLASP building with a central quadrangle and linked Riverside block. A

detached data centre building lies to the south-west of the CLASP building (Plan 1).

5. The main entrance to County Hall is located centrally on the east elevation of the 'H' footprint 1930s building with a secondary entrance on the opposing side of the building, facing towards the river. The building is local architectural interest on the County Historic Environment Record.
6. The four-storey 1960s CLASP building occupies a rectangular footprint approximately 57m x 38m, linked at first floor level to the ground floor level of the 1930s 'H' building to the north, and the Riverside block to the west, by enclosed walkways. The CLASP building including link corridors provides 7255m² of office and support accommodation, and although presently vacant formerly provided 572 workstations. 40 cycle parking spaces are provided in an enclosed secure area in the building undercroft.
7. Access to the site is via a light controlled junction on Loughborough Road. In addition to using the signal controlled junction, vehicles can leave the site on a slip road onto the northbound A60 at the northern end of the site. 565 car parking spaces are provided on the County Hall site, with 382 of the spaces provided on the lower southern area. The County Council has other office accommodation with 90 parking spaces at Trent Bridge House 300m to the north-east, and has access to 200 parking spaces at Nottingham Forest FC car park 450m to the north-east of County Hall (Plan 2). Access to the County Hall car park is not controlled by barrier and parking spaces can be used by all County Council employees.

Proposed Development

8. Following rationalisation of public services the number of County Council employees has fallen, which accompanied by improved methods of flexible working has led to a reduction in required office floor space.
9. Planning permission is sought to demolish the CLASP office building and link walkways (work which in itself does not require planning permission), the reinstatement of the south elevation of the 'H' building and east elevation of the Riverside building where the walkways currently adjoin, and to temporarily use the footprint of the demolished building for car parking. The CLASP building would be demolished to slab level and some areas of the concrete slab would be removed. The retained floor slab of the building would be approximately 140mm above the immediately adjoining area. Ramps at a maximum gradient of 7.5% (1:13) would be provided to allow suitable access by vehicles. Six raised brick planting beds within the car park would be replaced by permanent additional car parking spaces. Car parking would be rationalised with permission sought for an additional temporary 77 parking spaces provided on the site (Plan 3).
10. The detail of the reinstatement of the 'H' building cannot be accurately determined until the condition of existing Portland stone reveals are exposed following the demolition of the link walkway. Subject to the existing condition being suitable it is proposed to reintroduce a sash window with Portland stone reveals to provide continuity to the symmetry of the south elevation. The

building plinth and parapet to the light well would also be reinstated in stone. A handrail would be provided although no design details have been provided.

11. Following the removal of the link corridor to the Riverside building, the elevation would be made good by re-using panels reclaimed from the demolition of the CLASP building and glazing to maintain the symmetry of the building.
12. Following the completion of works there would be 642 spaces on the County Hall site, 77 of which would be on the former building footprint. County Hall would have 913 employee workstations.

Programme

13. Although not binding on the applicant, it is anticipated that works of demolition would be carried out in three phases with an anticipated start date of mid-July 2016 following procurement and engagement of a demolition contractor. Asbestos would be removed over a period of four months during which existing cycle parking and 45 undercroft parking spaces would be no longer available as a consequence of an exclusion zone being fenced around the area of works. Secure temporary cycle storage for 40 cycles would be provided during the period of demolition works, although the nature and location of the cycle provision has yet to be decided. New showers and changing facilities would be provided in the 'H' building in advance of the demolition of the CLASP building in which existing facilities are located.
14. During the six weeks of demolition (anticipated early November to mid-December 2016), 199 car parking spaces would not be available. An extended exclusion zone would be provided around the CLASP building and a new access to the available parking spaces would need to be defined (Plan 4).
15. Works of reinstatement would take place from mid-December 2016 to early April 2017 at which time 77 additional parking spaces would be provided on the floor slab and a total of 642 spaces on the County Hall site.
16. A 48 space secure roofed cycle store 12.5m x 5.6m and 2.6m in height would be constructed from secure fencing coloured black and faced with horizontal timber and sited to the immediate south of the 'H' building (Plan 3). Cyclists would be able to access showers and changing facilities in County Hall via an existing basement entrance beneath the building. Given the location of proposed cycle parking within the demolition exclusion zone, the cycle facility could only be provided as part of the site reinstatement works.
17. Proposed working hours would be 08:00-18:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00-13:00 hours on Sunday.

Consultations

18. **Rushcliffe Borough Council** - No objection subject to conditions requiring submission of a demolition method statement to deal with noise and dust, and the control of working hours to those specified in the application.
19. **NCC Highways Development Control** - No objection subject to conditions to require a programme for the delivery of measures to help County Hall car park

users plan alternative travel arrangements during the period of works, and details of measures to prevent debris being carried on to the highway.

20. *The proposal would provide additional car and cycle parking on the County Hall campus reducing the need for on street parking in the local area. 199 current parking spaces would not be available during the [full] demolition exclusion period. This figure would reduce to 162 unavailable spaces [once the southern end of the building has been demolished]. The lost parking accounts for a significant proportion of the total available provision on a site which is already heavily oversubscribed. The Highways Authority has concern that unless adequate mitigation measures are instigated to minimise site parking demand prior to removal of parking on site, a significant number of vehicles will be displaced onto the public highway. This in turn may lead to highway safety and amenity issues associated with errant parking.*
21. *Proposed mitigation measures in the design and access statement are vague, stating that 'Advance notice of the effects of parking reduction will be conveyed to NCC staff so they can plan alternative arrangements such as car sharing, public transport, alternative parking facilities on the highway, pay display or cycling.' Without further details of how the above information will be disseminated or what information will be provided to staff it is not possible to determine whether these measures will provide sufficient mitigation to minimise the potential negative impacts on the operation the public highway. [Comment: A framework has subsequently been submitted that would promote opportunities for cycling to work, staff cycle to work scheme, car share scheme, access to the public transport system and discount travel, and publication of advice for staff and visitors on the County Council intranet and public website.] A condition is requested to require the provision of a detailed parking mitigation strategy to be provided and approved in writing by the LPA prior to commencement of demolition works onsite.*
22. **NCC Land Reclamation Team** – No objection subject to conditions to require a pre-demolition asbestos survey, watching brief during demolition works, a post-work validation report to confirm that the site is free of asbestos containing materials in exposed ground, and submission of a Waste Management Plan. *There is little indication that contamination of the site will be significant apart from localised occurrence of asbestos containing materials within any made ground associated with the initial construction of the CLASP building. Retention of the building slab is acceptable if the voids and service ducts are checked for asbestos containing materials and other potential contaminants.*
23. *A Waste Management Plan should identify waste streams from the site and that designated segregation of the wastes would be achieved to prevent potentially asbestos containing materials being deposited and disposed of incorrectly.*
24. **NCC Project Engineer (Noise)** - No objection subject to control of noise levels and hours of work. *The nearest residential receptors lie approximately 80m to the south on Sandringham Avenue where existing noise at the rear facades of these properties will be dominated by local traffic from the A60 Loughborough Road. Given the temporary nature of the works, any impact should be relatively short lived. The proposed working hours will ensure that the most sensitive times of the day are avoided.*

25. **NCC Nature Conservation Team** – No objection subject to conditions to require re-survey for bats if demolition has not been carried out by 27 July 2016, and control of site clearance works during the bird nesting season. *The supporting Daytime Bat Survey found no evidence of bats within the survey area, and the building was considered to be 'generally unsuitable for roosting bats'. No further survey work or specific mitigation is recommended in the report. An Informative is recommended to draw attention to the procedure to be followed in the unlikely event that bats are encountered during works.*
26. **NCC Built Heritage Team** – No objection subject to the submission of details of stone reinstatement and new hand rail. *The CLASP block has considerable architectural interest as a substantial example of this distinctive type of building that was developed by this authority's in-house architects as a solution to a variety of issues that affected this, and other areas, in the early post-WWII era. Prior to demolition, a Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) level 4 survey and recording of the building should be undertaken and a report provided to the NCC Historic Environment Record in paper and digital form for the purposes of providing a permanent record of the building.*
27. *The demolition requires that two areas of elevation on the adjacent buildings are made good. The proposed reinstatement of these elevations is appropriate and will not harm the architectural interest of County Hall or the Riverside block. However, to ensure the correct detailing of the stone reinstatements, precise details of the reinstatement to County Hall ['H' building] and new handrails in the vicinity of County Hall should be provided prior to the commencement of work.*
28. **Environment Agency** – No objection. *The Environment Agency require confirmation that access to the flood wall will be provided through the period of work.*
29. **Severn Trent Water Limited** – No objection.
30. **Western Power Distribution** – No objection. *Attention is drawn to a high voltage supply to County Hall running through the site.*
31. **Nottingham City Council and National Grid (Gas)** - No response received. Any responses shall be orally reported.

Publicity

32. The application has been publicised by means of site notices, and neighbour notification letters sent to the nearest occupiers in accordance with the County Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement Review.
33. Councillor Steve Calvert and Councillor Liz Plant have been notified of the application. No representations have been received.

Observations

34. Rushcliffe Borough Non-Statutory Replacement Local Plan (September 2006) (RN-SRLP) Policy *EMP4 – Loss of Employment Issues* will allow the

redevelopment of existing employment uses if it can be demonstrated that there is no local demand, a sufficient quantity and range of alternative employment sites available, the premises are no longer capable of providing an acceptable standard of accommodation, there is a wider benefit for the area and the existing use adversely affects the general amenity of the area or causes traffic problems. Whilst redevelopment of the site is not proposed in the application, the loss of office space needs to be considered.

35. A report to NCC Finance and Property Committee (June 2015) identified that the original 1962 CLASP building had a design life of 50 years and a cellular internal layout that could not be easily refurbished without significant cost due to high levels of asbestos present in the fabric of the building. A change to flexible working practices and a reduction of the workforce means that the building is surplus to requirements. The condition of the building is deteriorating, and letting of the building would be restricted by an inability to make internal alterations and the health and safety risk related to asbestos would need to be actively managed. It is considered that the offices no longer provide suitable accommodation and demolition of the building would be in compliance with RN-SRLP Policy *EMP4 – Loss of Employment Issues*.
36. The applicant has adequately described the significance of the non-designated heritage asset in compliance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 128. In determining the application the scale of loss and the significance of the heritage asset needs to be considered. NCC Built Heritage Team does not object to the proposed demolition but has advised that the building is recorded prior to demolition (Condition 11). NPPF Paragraph 136 advises that local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred. In this instance it is considered that demolition will open up enhanced views of the south elevation of the retained 'H' building of County Hall and would be in compliance with Rushcliffe Core Strategy (RCS) Policy 9 *Design and Enhancing Local Identity* which states that development will be assessed in terms of treatment of elements including *the potential impact on important views and vistas, including townscape, landscape, and other individual landmarks, and the potential to create new views; and the setting of heritage assets*.
37. The Daytime Bat Survey supporting the application has not identified the presence of bats in the structure. However, the bat survey is time-limited and, following the planned programme of works, demolition will not have been carried out by 27 July 2016. Although unlikely to be present, the absence of bats should be confirmed through an updated survey (Condition 6).
38. There would be a period of nine months when reduced car parking would be available at County Hall. Parking may be displaced onto the local highway network, or a lack of convenient parking may encourage a modal shift in means of travel and employee work practices through more flexible working arrangements. The site is well located on the bus network adjacent to Trent Bridge which carries the majority of bus journeys to and from Nottingham City. Details of engagement with staff and alternative travel options that will be available are considered to be satisfactory subject to the submission of a programme of delivery (Condition 4). The provision of an enhanced replacement cycle facility is welcome and may encourage staff to cycle to work beyond the life of the project. Details of the location and design of temporary cycle parking

to be provided throughout the period of work have not been submitted in support of the application and are the subject of recommended Condition 5 to ensure compliance with RN-SRLP Policy MOV6 – *Facilities in New Development*.

39. Although submitted schematic plans of the building show identified and potential asbestos conditions are recommended to require the submission of a pre-demolition survey. Demolition will need to be carried out in accordance with an approved watching brief and it should be confirmed that exposed areas of the site are verified to be asbestos free following the completion of work (Condition 12, Condition 13 and Condition 14).
40. The future of the cleared site is not known and any development proposals would be the subject of a separate planning application. Without knowing the long-term end use, the standard to which the site would need to be remediated cannot be determined. It is considered expedient to demolish the existing building to slab level and make the proposed minor level modifications to allow the surface to be used for car parking. The site level lies below the level of Loughborough Road and the temporary nature of the finished surface would not be readily visible. However, the site should not remain in a temporary finished condition over a longer period and the grant of a time-limited permission for use as a car park for five years is recommended. If at the end of the life of the permission the future use of the site has not been determined, consideration would need to be given to extending the time-limited permission, or if the site is to be retained, to require the slab foundations to be grubbed, the site remediated, and constructed as a permanent car park (Condition 16).
41. Standard days of working and hours of work are proposed. The period of demolition and associated impacts should be relatively short lived. Conditions are recommended to ensure that controls are in place so as not to give rise to unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents, particularly to the south on Sandringham Avenue (Condition 8, Condition 9 and Condition 10).
42. The design details of proposed reinstatement of both the 'H' building and Riverside building are considered to be acceptable and in compliance with RN-SRLP Policy GP2 *Design and Amenity Criteria* which (amongst other criteria) will permit development where the design and materials of proposals are sympathetic to the character and appearance of neighbouring buildings and the surrounding area, and RCS Policy 9 *Design and Enhancing Local Identity* which states that development will be assessed in terms of treatment of elements including *materials, architectural style and detailing*. Precise details of materials and finishes will be required (Condition 15).

Other Options Considered

43. The report relates to the determination of a planning application. The County Council is under a duty to consider the planning application as submitted. Accordingly no other options have been considered.

Statutory and Policy Implications

44. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment,

and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

45. Service users would be temporarily disadvantaged during the period of parking exclusion, although would benefit from an overall increase in available on-site parking space following completion of the project.

Crime and Disorder Implications

No changes are proposed to the security of the site. The proposed enlarged secure cycle parking facility is welcome.

Human Rights Implications

46. Relevant issues arising out of consideration of the Human Rights Act have been assessed. Rights under Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life), Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) and Article 6 (Right to a Fair Trial) are those to be considered. In this case, however, there are no impacts of any substance on individuals and therefore no interference with rights safeguarded under these articles.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

47. Proposed additional cycle parking would offer increased opportunity to travel by a more sustainable mode of transport.
48. There are no Financial, Equalities, Safeguarding of Children or Human Resource implications.

Statement of Positive and Proactive Engagement

49. In determining this application the County Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant by entering into pre-application discussion; assessing the proposals against relevant Development Plan policies; all material considerations; consultation responses and any valid representations that may have been received. Issues of concern have been raised with the applicant and addressed through negotiation and acceptable amendments to the proposals. This approach has been in accordance with the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

50. It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted for the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1. Members need to consider the issues, including the Human Rights Act issues, set out in the report and resolve accordingly.

TIM GREGORY

Corporate Director – Place

Constitutional Comments

Planning & Licensing Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

[SLB 04.02.2016]

Comments of the Service Director - Finance

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

[SES 05.02.16]

Background Papers Available for Inspection

The application file available for public inspection by virtue of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

West Bridgford
Central and South

Councillor Steve Calvert
Councillor Liz Plant

Report Author/Case Officer

David Marsh

0115 9932574

For any enquiries about this report, please contact the report author.

FR3/3403 – 8042CCD

5 February 2016