

APPLICATION REFERENCE: PL/2016/02802/PPRM**Site Address:** Sapphire Court Streetsbrook Road Solihull B91 1RD

Proposal:	Reserved matters application (layout, appearance, scale, landscaping) in respect of hotel approved under hybrid planning permission PL/2012/01081/FULM
Web link to Plans:	Full details of the proposal and statutory consultee responses can be found by using the above planning application reference number at: http://publicaccess.solihull.gov.uk

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee:	It is the opinion of Head of Development Management that the application should be referred to Planning Committee.
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Recommendation:	APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The principle of the development for a new hotel adjacent to the existing Sapphire Court office development has already been accepted under hybrid application PL/2012/01081/FULM.

The previous hybrid application sought full planning permission for the refurbishment of the existing offices with the alteration to vehicular access, car park layout and landscaping arrangements. Outline permission was sought with all matters reserved, except access, for the erection of the hotel.

The principle of the development of a hotel on this site has therefore already been accepted and this application seeks consent for the matters previously reserved, namely layout, appearance, scale and landscaping.

It is considered that the layout, appearance, scale and landscaping of the proposed new hotel development create a coherent development when viewed within the context of the neighbouring office development and provide a new building at the gateway to Solihull town centre. Important trees and hedgerows around the perimeter of the site are retained and combined with landscape proposals would enhance the character of the development within.

Furthermore the siting and relationship of the proposed hotel building would have no unreasonable impact on the amenities of neighbours.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES

The following key planning issues are material to the determination of this application:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Impact on neighbour amenity;
- Highways
- Landscaping

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Statutory Consultees The following Statutory Consultee responses have been received:

None applicable

Non Statutory Consultees The following Non-Statutory Consultee responses have been received:

SMBC Drainage - No objection subject to conditions

SMBC Highways – Final comments awaited

SMBC Landscape - No objections subject to conditions

SMBC Urban Design – no objection subject to conditions

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in accordance with the provisions set down in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2015.

No responses were received as a result of this consultation.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

This report considers the proposal against the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) 2012, the National Planning Practice Guidance and the adopted planning policies of Solihull Council. The policies of the Solihull Local Plan “SLP” 2013 that have been used to assess this application are considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and as such are material planning considerations.

Principle of Development

Outline planning permission was granted on 1st July 2015 under application PL/2012/01081/FULM for the erection of a business hotel, renovation of existing office block, access, parking, and associated works (hybrid application for detailed office application). Thus, the principle of development at the site to erect a new hotel has already been established. This matter carries significant weight and it is therefore necessary to consider the detailed matter relating to layout, appearance, scale and landscaping (the Reserved Matters) in relation to the proposal, which are set out below.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area;

Policy P15 of the Local Plan requires all development to achieve good quality, inclusive and sustainable design, which conserves and enhances the local character, distinctiveness and streetscape quality and ensures that the scale, massing, layout, materials and landscape of a development respects the surrounding natural and built environment. Further, developments will be expected to contribute to or create a sense of place.

The proposed hotel development in terms of layout has been designed to achieve Secure by Design standards as well as being designed to respect the original design ethos for the redevelopment of the site as a whole, including the existing office block. The layout of the hotel building has been designed to respond positively to the configuration of the site by locating the L shaped building into the southern corner of the site. It is considered that this provides the opportunity for sufficient articulation of height and mass to address the constraints along the boundary as well as helping to form a clear arrival court to the building. Furthermore the design and positioning of the building assists in making a clear distinction between the front and rear of the building.

It is noted that there is a levels difference of circa 2.5m from the footpath/verge to the front of the site, stepping down towards the position of the new hotel, and this in turn has shaped the internal configuration of the building with the lower level, not clearly visible from Streetsbrook Road, housing the undercroft parking areas below the podium and with the functional spaces of the bar/café/dining area above and therefore more visible within the streetscene.

The building has been designed with an L-shaped footprint with the projecting element facing Streetsbrook Road at a lower height to that of the main body of the hotel. This approach is consistent with the grain of development and density levels along this section of Streetsbrook Road with the lower section paying regard to the neighbouring fire station and the higher section having regard to the height of the neighbouring office development.

The building has been positioned within the plot so as to ensure a clear flow of building line through from the existing office block, the new hotel and across to the neighbouring fire station. The location of the hotel is such that the outermost wing would be approximately in line with the outermost sections of the neighbouring office block. This assists not only with continuity of built form within the streetscene but also protecting residential amenity of properties opposite the application site in terms of space, lighting and privacy.

The submitted plans provide details of external finishings to the building and indicate a palette of red-brick, complementary grey/beige render and curtain walling using a darker anthracite grey engineering style brick with the 'slabs' of brickwork reading as book ends to each wing. In addition it is proposed to incorporate green and blue glazing into the upper level windows to create a lasting visual impression of the building. It is considered that the use of these materials would assist in bedding the building in within the context of the neighbouring properties either side, which are relatively dark in material choice. In addition the coloured glass and clear glass sections would provide a more vibrant appearance to elements of the building highlighting the areas of more public and active use such as café/dining area and entrance area. Overall the choice of materials palette is considered to create a more iconic building to represent the gateway in to the town centre, whilst respecting the neighbouring buildings either side.

The Council's Urban Designer has reviewed the submitted information alongside the hybrid application and it is considered to conform to the aspirations of the hybrid application. The proposed landscape scheme would be maintained which would retain filtered views of the development whilst the highway improvements to open up the entrance would provide legibility to the front of the site and towards the hotel building.

The original hybrid application sought a footpath link to the train station car park to the rear of the site and it noted that this element is currently outstanding from the plans, however after discussion with the applicant and agent it is considered that this element can be brought forward as part of the wider office redevelopment.

Overall it is considered that the building is well-designed and positioned within the plot to integrate well within the streetscene and locality and therefore it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with Local Plan Policy P15 and therefore weight can be attributed to this matter having a positive impact in the planning balance.

Impact on neighbour amenity:

The Solihull Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance the amenity of existing and potential occupiers of properties. The proposed development would provide a new building on site where it is currently open parking/landscaped areas and therefore careful consideration must be made towards respecting neighbour amenity.

The design of the hotel building is such that it provides a subservient four storey wing to the frontage facing Streetsbrook Road with the larger 5 storey block set behind. This design tool seeks to ensure that the building would not be overbearing to residents directly facing towards the hotel.

The proposed hotel building would sit between the existing office block to the west, the fire station to the east and the train station car park to the south. The nearest residential properties would be directly opposite the application site and would be situated some 50m away from the frontage of the building. The generous separation between the front of the building and residential properties opposite, in conjunction

with screening to the front of the building in the form of a strong landscape buffer is considered to provide adequate relief from the proposed development and avoids the insertion of an over dominant building.

To the southern elevation the hotel site would abut the two level decked car park for use by railway passengers to Solihull Train Station and it is considered that given the nature of this structure there would be no detrimental impact on amenity of users of this car park. It is noted that beyond this there are occupants of properties on Dorchester Road and the rear gardens belonging to these houses however separation is in excess of 100m and therefore not considered to result in an overbearing impact or unacceptable overlooking.

Turning to the buildings either side of the application property, namely the fire station and Sapphire Court office development it is not considered that either of these buildings would suffer in terms of overbearing impact or loss of privacy as a result of the hotel development. It is noted that the hotel building would be situated forward of the closest section of the office development and would be separated by the existing and proposed car parking and vehicular turning areas. Furthermore separation between the hotel building and fire station is considered sufficient and would be supplemented by the existing high hedging and trees which form a screen between the two sites. Given the nature of the neighbouring units immediately either side of the proposed hotel block it is not considered that there would be a detrimental impact on amenity.

In summary, the siting and relationship of the proposed hotel building would have no unreasonable impact of the amenities of neighbours and accords with policy P14 of the Solihull Local Plan and this should be weighed neutrally in the planning balance.

Highways

The means of access to the site was approved under the hybrid application. As a result of the hybrid application the internal site layout would alter with the existing in/out access rationalised to form a priority junction, two way movement around the site would be facilitated and direct pedestrian routes through the site would be created. At the hybrid stage these improvements were welcomed in terms of movement of vehicles and pedestrians in and around the site as a whole (office and hotel development).

In respect of car parking provision, the proposal seeks to provide 52no. external parking spaces (including 3no. Accessible Spaces) for the 82 bed hotel and this is considered sufficient parking provision given the size of the building and the sustainable location of the site.

The SMBC Highway Engineer has assessed the proposal and raises no objection to the proposal in terms of the layout of the site subject to the submission of a plan indicating servicing of the hotel. A plan indicating servicing has been submitted and comments are awaited from the SMBC highway engineer. An update on these details will be provided to Members via an update note.

Taking account of the layout of the building and site, and acceptance of servicing to the building, and access being previously approved it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy P8 of the Solihull Local Plan and as such positive weight can be attached to this matter.

Landscaping

Policy P10 of the Solihull Local Plan recognises the importance of a healthy natural environment in its own right. Policy P14 requires new developments to safeguard important trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

The submitted information has been reviewed by the Council's Landscape Architect and throughout the application discussions have taken place to ensure adequate provision of landscape areas and tree retention within and around the hotel building.

The proposed building and car park area will result in the removal of a number of trees on site (approx. 16) and therefore a robust scheme has been designed to mitigate for the removal of trees on site. In addition to this the removal of one of the access roads and creation of a grassed area to the front of the site assists in providing a more unified roadside edge. However in order to ensure that this area is a high quality addition to the site and affords the site the stature it requires as a main access route/gateway into Solihull town centre this has been bolstered with additional planting.

It is noted that no details of tree protection measures and methods statements have been provided however these details can reasonably be conditioned and are required to ensure that damage does not occur to the frontage and boundaries of the site when inserting the new access. It is noted that the site is heavily screened to the frontage and where possible the landscaping scheme has been designed to retain this characteristic landscape feature along this stretch of Streetsbrook Road.

The proposed layout and landscape details therefore safeguard important trees and hedgerows around the perimeter of the site with the landscape proposals enhancing the character of the development within. Appropriate landscaping is provided within the development that accords with the aspirations of the hybrid planning permission. The proposal accords with Policy P10 and P14 of the Solihull Local Plan and weighs positively in the planning balance.

CONCLUSION

The above analysis indicates that the proposed scheme responds positively to the development plan policy. The layout, appearance, scale and landscaping of the development have been designed to accord with the aspirations of the hybrid application and pay due regard to the location of the building along the gateway into Solihull Town centre whilst respecting the neighbouring uses.

It is considered that the impact of the development on the character of the area, the landscape character of the area and the neighbouring amenities of the area are viewed positively in the planning balance and address soundly the details required to

deal with the reserved matters. On this basis the proposal is considered to respond well to Development Plan policy and is therefore, recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval is recommended subject to the following précis of conditions a full list of standard conditions is available using the following link:

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Planning/searchplanningapplications>:

1. CS00 – Compliance with all plans;
2. CS04 – Commencement within 3 years (reserved matters);
3. CS06 – materials to be submitted;
4. Drainage details;
5. CL03 – Barriers around trees to be retained;
6. CL06 – Implementation of landscaping scheme
7. CI01 – Parking to be provided, surface and drained prior to occupation

Notes:

EN01 – Noise during construction.