

Application Number:	2019/0943/FUL
Site Address:	Land adjacent to Yarborough Leisure Centre, Riseholme Road, Lincoln
Target Date:	21 st February 2020
Agent Name:	LK2 Architects
Applicant Name:	Bishop Grosseteste University
Proposal:	Erection of a three storey building for new teaching space and erection of five buildings for student accommodation, of three, four and five storeys with vehicular access from Riseholme Road.

Background

This application, on land in front of Yarborough Leisure Centre, proposes to build a three storey building for additional teaching space for Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) together with a further five buildings of three four and five storeys to provide purpose built student accommodation for 295 bedrooms. A new vehicular access will be formed to Riseholme Road and 40 parking spaces provided.

The land in question is allocated as a site for residential development in the adopted Local Plan. It is currently owned by the City of Lincoln Council with an agreement to sell to the applicants.

Site Visit

Undertaken 10 February 2020.

Issues

An application such as this raises a number of planning issues as follows:

- National and local planning policy
- Visual appearance and impact
- Impact on adjacent residents
- Traffic and pedestrian safety
- Trees, open space and ecology
- Drainage, archaeology, ground conditions

Policies Referred to

National Planning Policy Framework. Chapters:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision making
- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 6. Building a strong competitive economy
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. Policies:

- LP1 – A presumption in favour of sustainable development
- LP10 – Meeting accommodation needs
- LP26 – Design and Amenity
- LP32 – Lincoln’s Universities and Colleges
- LP29 Residential Allocations - Lincoln

Consultations

Consultations were carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, adopted June 2006.

All representations received on the application are copied in full at the end of this report and are also available to view on the website:

<https://development.lincoln.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=Q1BTW8JFM1C00>

The applicant also undertook pre-application engagement with the local community and made a presentation to Councillors on 29th January.

Consideration

National and Local Planning Policy

The site is allocated in your adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan for residential development and has an indicative number of thirty nine dwellings attributed to the site. The NPPF and the Local Plan emphasise the importance of good design and considerate design that takes account of the local context. The site is sustainably located, within the City’s urban area and there are also good public transport connections adjacent to the site. The development will help the continued growth and associated economic benefits that BGU brings to the City. The applicant has provided a full assessment of the relevant planning policies which is available to view on the Council website and we are satisfied that the summary that they have made is suitable.

Visual Appearance and Impact

The application site, as described above, is open land bounded by trees on the Riseholme Road frontage. The surrounding context is of two and some three storey dwellings on Riseholme Road with the larger scale of buildings at the Leisure Centre to the west along with the adjacent school buildings. Riseholme Road is a main approach road into the City.

The proposed buildings are three storeys on the site frontage, both the teaching building which is positioned to the south of the new entrance and the most prominent building for student accommodation to the north of the proposed access. The subsequent buildings to the west of the three storey

student block would then progress to one of four storeys and then two of five storeys deeper into the site with a fifth building at the south western side of the site of four and three storeys, stepping down as it approaches the rear of the gardens of properties on the north side of Yarborough Crescent.

The architects have taken references from the successful remodelling of the Constance Stewart Hall on the south eastern corner of the adjacent Riseholme Road/Long Leys Road roundabout and the teaching block that is proposed would have extensive glazing to the classroom areas facing the road, the proportions and detailing of which are contemporary and also appropriate for the local area. The design does not copy adjacent houses but does reference the scale and proportions that are characteristic of the area.

The student accommodation building to the immediate north of the teaching building, also of three storeys, references again the local proportions and reflects the architectural style of the wider proposals. The window sizes are smaller, reflecting the residential use but attention has been paid to reveals and framing and also to the texture and colour of the exterior finishes, adding interest and warmth to the appearance. The three storey height of the building is appropriate to this part of the City; any higher and the building could appear overly dominant on the road frontage.

The subsequent changes in height as the development progresses west and away from the road gives interest and variation to the longer views, particularly from the north; a set of buildings of the same height could be unduly repetitive. The increase in height to five storeys is not inappropriate and will be read in the context of both the lower buildings to the east on this site and the larger scale of buildings at the school and the Leisure Centre. The careful modelling of these buildings and the stepping down towards Yarborough Crescent means that the scale can be satisfactorily accommodated without the development feeling overbearing, over tall or causing any unacceptable level of harm.

The materials proposed for each building have been detailed by the architects which provide variety across the five buildings but also reference materials evident in the locality; there is a lot of brick deployed on the main parts of the elevations, with the ground floors tending to act as a plinth, being clad in dark grey brick and cement panels, and then brickwork on the floors above. The top floor of the four and five storey buildings are then clad in a glazed curtain walling system and the roofs of all of the buildings, which are varied and designed to break up what would otherwise be extensive areas of conventional flat roof, have a strong soffit/eaves overhang and would be clad in aluminium and zinc in a mid-grey with a standing seam detail.

The careful blend of traditional and more contemporary materials, alongside the modelling and variety introduced into the different buildings means that this significant development does not appear over dominant or assertive in the street, the relationship to the main campus is created and the architecture does not therefore harm the character of the local area.

The existing trees and hedging, particularly on the main road frontage, also contribute to the visual amenity of the local area and these will be considered separately below.

Impact on Local Residents

The application proposes teaching space associated with the main BGU campus which is 90 metres away to the south east and predominantly proposes student accommodation with 295 bedrooms and 40 parking spaces.

The design and scale of the buildings has been carefully considered to minimise any physical impact on adjacent residents and the applicant has provided details as to how they will manage the use of the site to ensure that the day to day activity that this proposal will generate again in order to minimise any effect on the amenity of local residents. The site will be managed by BGU themselves and they have a good track record of successfully managing student accommodation. There are strict rules in relation to behaviour and indeed in relation to car use and parking which means that whilst students will be expected to not have a car, any who do will not be able to park it in local streets. Residents in Thonock Close have an understandable concern about this but it is matter that can be managed. The proximity of the accommodation to the main campus and the good public transport connections to the City Centre, which is in any event within easy walking distance, means that there is no reason for students to bring a car and BGU are clear that those who choose to do so and who seek to park it locally will be open to further action.

There will be an increase in students in and around the site and on Riseholme Road as a consequence of the development but there are no grounds for asserting that this would be harmful to the amenity of local residents. This is a busy part of the City due to the activity already generated by Castle academy during the day and by Yarborough Leisure Centre on evenings and weekends and as a consequence any increase in activity generated by this site is unlikely to be particularly noticeable. Equally more people walking along Riseholme Road, a main approach road into the City, does not in itself constitute harm.

It is considered that the use proposed and the scale of development can be satisfactorily accommodated within the local area.

Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

The application has been the subject of consultation with the Highway Authority at the County Council and their comments are appended to your report. The site proposes to create a new access from Riseholme Road into 40 parking spaces. This parking area will be access controlled. The Highway Authority is happy with the position of the new access, in relation to both the adjacent roundabout and also in relation to the junction into Thonock Close.

The parking spaces will not be available to students, except for those who have particular mobility needs.

The proximity of the main campus to the south east means that there will be a level of pedestrian movement between this site and the campus across Riseholme Road/Yarborough Crescent and the Highway Authority is satisfied that this can happen safely. Each leg of the roundabout junction has within it a pedestrian island and, as adults, the students can be expected to negotiate crossing the road safely.

The advice from the Highway Authority also contains a request for this site to fund increased bus services to and from the City Centre – as your officers we have discussed this request with the Highway Authority and advised that we do not consider such a request to be reasonable or proportionate. It does not therefore meet the tests set out in legislation in relation to off-site contributions from development.

Trees and Landscaping

The applicant has provided a detailed assessment of the current landscape of the site and following representations from residents and questions raised at the presentation to members and by your Arboricultural officer they have supplemented this assessment with further works which looks at all aspects of the existing and proposed landscaping.

There is a hedge which currently runs the full length of the site frontage, this will be retained other than in the area of the new access. The applicants have detailed the exact number of plants to be removed, the protection to be afforded to the hedge during construction and the areas proposed for replanting elsewhere on the site. There will be a net gain in terms of hedge planting.

The trees on the site frontage are a notable feature locally and consequently, proposals to remove some or all of them have been looked at very carefully. The trees are mostly sycamore and are growing in a tight group which means that there is an overall green canopy which is a feature of the area but individually the trees are of a generally poor quality. The trees are growing very close together and the applicant instructed their tree advisor to look at two options, retention of selected trees or removal and replacement.

The retention option has the advantage that it retains some of the existing canopy and therefore the visual appearance of the tree works is less significant. However, as a consequence of the group growing so close together, the canopies of the individual trees have not developed consistently and the removal of the very poorest trees will inevitably leave a less than conventional appearance to the remainder. Trees on the edge of the group are leaning and should be removed and trees more central to the group have a canopy which has developed higher than would be expected and also would result in the remaining trees being more susceptible to wind damage and may over time result in further removals. The trees are not covered by Tree

Preservation Orders or within a conservation area and so replacement could not be required in such circumstances.

The alternative is to remove the group of trees and then replant with large trees along the site frontage. This is considered to be a better long term option, it would allow more suitable native species to be planted and would result in trees that will develop more naturally. It would be perfectly reasonable to expect, in the fullness of time, that such trees could be the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.

The removal of trees is not something that should be considered lightly and there has been significant thought and effort on the part of the applicant and your officers to find the best solution to this issue. We would advise that the longer term option of removal and replacement is the better option, subject to the new trees being agreed in terms of both their species and their size – extra heavy standards.

The tree planting and landscaping strategy for the wider site shows other tree removals and then sets out detailed new planting proposals which demonstrates a net gain in trees overall, understanding that the new planting will not attain the size of the trees removed for a number of years. Overall however this will give long term benefits to tree cover in this part of the City.

Drainage, Archaeology and Ground Conditions

Drainage – the applicants have submitted a drainage strategy that demonstrates that the positive drainage of the site as a result of the development will deal with any potential surface water issues that are currently experienced. The run off from the site will be collected, attenuated and directed to soakaways as the sub strata is largely permeable limestone. The drainage strategy will ensure that there is no increased risk of flooding.

Ground conditions – the site is greenfield in nature but historically had a use as allotments and so further information has been requested by your Scientific Officer in relation to potential contamination. We are satisfied that this can be dealt with by way of a suitably worded condition.

Archaeology – the applicants have submitted a desk based archaeological assessment following consultation with the City Archaeologist and he and we are satisfied that a condition will be able to deal with any such matters during the course of construction. The applicants are aware that Riseholme Road follows the route of roman Ermine Street and so there is some potential for archaeology within the site.

Conclusion

The application before you has been carefully considered and is sensitive to the context of the local area. The site has an allocation for housing in your adopted Local Plan and the use proposed, whilst not conventional housing, provides significant residential accommodation. The proposal allows BGU to

continue to develop and ensures that there is little impact on their neighbours and the wider City. The design of the new buildings, their scale, location and the materials with which they are to be built are appropriate to this part of the City and the use will not cause harm to the amenity of local residents. The tree cover and landscaping of the site has had detailed consideration and an acceptable solution can be agreed.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None.

Amendments Negotiated either at Pre-Application or During Process of Application

Yes.

Application Determined within Target Date

Yes.

Recommendation

That planning permission is granted subject to the conditions set out below.

Conditions

1. Development to commence within three years
2. Development in strict accordance with the approved drawings and associated documents
3. Hedge and tree protection to be in place at all times during construction
4. Details of new tree planting, species and size, to be approved before trees are removed from site
5. Archaeology
6. Contaminated land assessment
7. Retention of parking spaces at all times

All relevant drawings are attached to your report but the full set of drawings and representations are available to view on the website. There are drawings within the Design and Access statements as well as provided individually and we would encourage you to visit the website for the fullest picture of the detail available with the application.

<https://development.lincoln.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=Q1BTW8JFM1C00>

