

MEETING:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	9 JANUARY 2013
TITLE OF REPORT:	<p>S122820/CD - NEW ARCHIVE AND RECORDS CENTRE FOR HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL INCLUDING REPOSITORIES, CONSERVATION ROOMS, STAFF OFFICES, EDUCATION SPACES, SEARCH ROOM AND EXHIBITION SPACE TO ENABLE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO VIEW ARTEFACTS. AT LAND AT FIR TREE LANE, ROTHERWAS, HEREFORDSHIRE.</p> <p>For: Mrs Lane per Mr Mark Barry, Upper Twyford, Twyford, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8AD</p>
WEBSITE LINK:	http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/58286.aspx?ID=122820&NoSearch=True

Date Received: 8 October 2012

Ward: Hollington

Grid Ref: 352928,238052

Expiry Date: 23 January 2013

Local Members: Councillor P Sinclair-Knipe

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a county archive and records centre on land at the junction of Fir Tree Lane and the B4399 Straight Mile Road, Rotherwas, Hereford. The site occupies a prominent location within the Rotherwas Industrial Estate and is allocated for Class B development under Policy E1 of the Unitary Development Plan. The site also falls within the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone.
- 1.2 The building is intended to provide a bespoke energy efficient and publicly accessible solution to the current disparate and unsuitable archive and records storage in the county. A National Archives review of the county's existing stores has confirmed that current provision is not in accordance with the current British Standard, suffering from inadequate space and climate control. If not rectified the archive would have to be stored outside the county.
- 1.3 As part of the Council's accommodation strategy the building is multi-purpose and designed to accommodate a number of uses considered complementary to the archive storage function, including archaeology, the biological records centre (BRC), sites and monuments records (SMR) and local studies records.
- 1.4 The site was part of the Rotherwas munitions factory, but buildings have long since been demolished and the site is now largely overgrown. The Evans Easy-space building is located to the immediate east, with Straight Mile Road bounding the site to the south. Fir Tree Lane, from which vehicular access is proposed, runs parallel with the western boundary. Existing commercial buildings are found to the north and further to the west. The River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is 700m to the north. The site, following flood alleviation work (S112395/CD) has been reclassified as falling within Flood Zone 2 – medium risk zone.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr Edward Thomas on 01432 260479

- 1.5 The building is designed to 'Passivhaus' standards, which aim to reduce space heating requirements by up to 90% by comparison with adopted Building Regulations. The building comprises two distinct components, linked by the public entrance and provides 3,000sqm of accommodation. To the rear is the three storey archive repository. To the south is the 'front of house' building. This is a two-storey structure with a prominent frontage to Straight Mile Road. On the ground floor of this element there is the reception, search area, reference material and education room. The first floor provides office space for the SMR, Archaeology and BRC. Storage, processing and cycle parking for the resident staff is provided via a detached single-storey building set back from the main façade, running parallel with the eastern boundary. The repository element is three-storey and thus taller than the front of house element. It is 13.3m tall and clad with cedar shingles. The front of house offices are clad principally with render and horizontally hung timber cladding, with glazing recessed and shielded so as to prevent over-heating. It is 9.6m tall and 43m wide on its south-facing elevation
- 1.6 Visitor and volunteer parking comprising 45 spaces in total is located to the west of the building, with dedicated staff parking to the north and east. Storm water attenuation is provided by proposed swales to the west, south and east of the building. The principal pedestrian access is from Straight Mile Road at the south-west corner of the site, where a timber bridge is proposed across the depression formed by the swale. The application is accompanied by a detailed landscaping scheme which confirms the retention of all existing trees on site with supplementary native tree planting at the pedestrian access, orchard planting to the north of the building and marginal planting elsewhere.
- 1.7 The application is accompanied by the following documents:
- Design and Access Statement;
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment;
 - Phase 1 Ecological Habitat Survey;
 - Drainage Assessment;
 - Rotherwas Futures Phase 1 & 2 Transport Assessment.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 (Saved policies)

S1	-	Sustainable development
S2	-	Development requirements
DR1	-	Design
DR2	-	Land use and activity
DR3	-	Movement
DR4	-	Environment
DR7	-	Flood risk
DR10	-	Contaminated land
E1	-	Rotherwas industrial estate
E5	-	Safeguarding employment land and buildings
E8	-	Design standards for employment sites
T6	-	Walking
T7	-	Cycling
LA5	-	Protection of trees, woodlands and hedgerows
LA6	-	Landscaping schemes
NC1	-	biodiversity and development
NC5	-	European and nationally protected species
CF5	-	New community facilities

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework:

- Paragraph 14 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Paragraph 17 - Core Planning Principles
- Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design
- Chapter 8 - Promoting Healthy Communities

2.3 Rotherwas Futures Drainage and Flood Management Strategy 2009

2.4 The Unitary Development Plan policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Councils website by using the following link:-

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/29815.aspx>

3. Planning History

- 3.1 S112395/CD: Construction of a flood attenuation scheme comprising soakaway pond and associated lower scrape area, 3 no. balancing ponds and shallow swales: Approved 14th December 2011
- 3.2 S111601/F: Construction of a shared footway/cycleway from Outfall Works Road through Rotherwas Industrial Estate to the B4399 at Sink Green Farm, including a new bridge over the River Wye: Approved 31st August 2011.
- 3.3 CE091593/CD: New highway, cycleway and associated drainage infrastructure off Vincent Carey Road to serve future allocated employment land (Rotherwas Futures Phase 3): Approved 11th November 2009
- 3.4 DCCE2008/2973/F: Proposed demolition of existing ammunitions bunkers and change of use of land for mixed B1, B2 and B8 employment use comprising phases 1 & 2 of Rotherwas Futures, along with highway and drainage infrastructure for phase 2. Approved 18th November 2010.

4. Consultation Summary

- 4.1 Environment Agency: No objection.
The site is now within Flood Zone 2, where the annual probability of flooding from river sources is between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 years. Access to and from the site may be cut off in a flood event and a flood evacuation management plan should be required via planning condition. A condition to deal with unexpected contamination during the construction phase is also recommended.
- 4.2 Welsh Water: Recommend conditions to prevent the discharge of surface water and land drainage run-off to the public sewerage system.

Internal Consultations

- 4.3 Conservation Manager (Ecology): No objection. The findings of the ecologist's report in relation to habitat provision and landscaping should be followed.
- 4.4 Traffic Manager: No objection. The site formed part of the Rotherwas Futures proposals and the impact of traffic generated over that much larger site have already been assessed and approved. Parking provision is consistent with standard and informed by existing levels of use across the intended occupants.
- 4.5 Land Drainage Engineer: No objections

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr Edward Thomas on 01432 260479

5. Representations

5.1 Dinedor Parish Council: Objection

The proposal is contrary to UDP policy E5. The Enterprise Zone designation is intended to bring new employment opportunities into Herefordshire. This proposal would set a precedent for local businesses to relocate to prime sites on the Enterprise Zone. Flood risk and the generation of non-employment traffic within the Enterprise Zone are other areas of concern.

5.2 Lower Bullingham Parish Council (adjoining): No objection

5.3 Three letters of support have been received. The content is summarised as follows:

- The existing archive storage facility at Harold Street is too small, costly to maintain and not to the requisite National Archive standard in terms of size and environmental controls;
- This bespoke building will safeguard the county archive, which would otherwise be relocated outside of the county;
- The building is an exemplar of energy efficient, sustainable design and will create an excellent environment for users;
- Potential flooding issues have been resolved, there is no impact on adjoining amenity and car parking levels are satisfactory;
- The building offers the opportunity to co-locate other complementary council services.

5.4 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/searchplanningapplications.aspx

Internet access is available at the Council's Customer Service Centres:-

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community_and_living/consumer_advice/41840.asp

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 The application is for the erection of a purpose built county and archive records store, together with accommodation provision for complementary services on land allocated for employment use and within the Enterprise Zone at Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas. The existing provision is considered sub-standard and the application clarifies that if deficiencies are not rectified, the county archive is likely to be relocated out of county. The application documents describe a long process of consultation with stakeholders that has concluded that the application site is best suited to meet the long-term needs. The site is within Council ownership and capable of being developed in a manner that meets the requisite National Archive standard. The need for such a facility and the benefits of retaining it in county are thus acknowledged. The remaining key issues in the determination of this application are as follows:

- The principle of development having regard to Unitary Development Plan policies and the Enterprise Zone designation;
- As assessment of flood risk and drainage;
- Traffic impact and alternative modes of transport;
- An assessment of the building's design;
- Impacts upon ecology, landscape and residential amenity.

6.2 The application site is within the Enterprise Zone (EZ), the designation being confirmed in August 2011. Whilst the EZ designation promotes inward investment and not the relocation of existing jobs, the site is nonetheless allocated for employment use under Unitary Development Policy E1 and safeguarded for such use via Policy E5.

- 6.3 Policy E1 acts to allocate areas within the estate for Part B employment use, subject to constraints associated with their development (i.e. flooding) being overcome. The application site is part of the allocation. The dominant use within the building is as an archive store (Use Class B8) or offices falling within Use Class B1. Officers conclude that in terms of its use the proposal complies with Policies E1 and E5. Although conscious of the Parish Council objection to the principle of locating a municipal building on this site, currently adopted Unitary Development Policies do not discriminate between public and private sector investment or job creation. Whilst the Enterprise Zone designation is material, officers conclude that the policies of the Unitary Development Plan should be afforded more weight in the determination of this application. Insofar as the uses inherent in the building are concerned, they comply with Policies E1 and E5 and the principle of development at this location is considered acceptable.
- 6.4 The application also confirms that the site has been chosen following a site selection process. Other sites, including adjacent the Council's Plough Lane offices, have been discounted for reasons including availability, ownership and the inability to expand the facility if required in the future.
- 6.5 Recent flood modelling has removed the application site from the highest risk flood zone classification to the medium risk Zone 2. The proposed use is classified as less vulnerable use. The Environment Agency has no objection to the proposal. The site specific flood risk assessment confirms that floor levels within the building will be set to withstand the predicted 1 in 1000 year event, a level that provides more certainty than the levels set out in the Rotherwas Futures Drainage and Flood Management Strategy 2009. Given the sensitivity of the items to be stored, officers consider this precautionary approach, which involves a relatively modest cut and fill exercise, to be appropriate in the context. Lower lying parts of the site would still be inundated in the event of a serious flood and it is thus recommended that the applicants sign up to the Environment Agency early warning system. As per the Flood Management Strategy, a flood evacuation management plan is also recommended via condition. The scheme also promotes the use of swales within the site as a means of attenuating storm water, and this accords with the wider Rotherwas drainage strategy and satisfies UDP Policy DR7 and guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Given the reduced risk of flooding, finished floor levels capable of withstanding the 1 in 1000 year event and the use of sustainable drainage systems, officers conclude that there is no undue risk of flooding and that the principle of developing the site for the use intended is acceptable.
- 6.6 The application site was subject to a wider Transport Assessment in support of the application for Rotherwas Futures Phases 1 & 2. The impact of developing a much wider area at Rotherwas has already been assessed and approved via application DCCE2008/2973/F. The trip generation associated with the proposal falls well within the accepted parameters and as such the implications for the flow of traffic on the strategic network (A49) has been accounted for. Furthermore, alternative sustainable access via the approved Connect2 shared footpath and cycleway will also be possible within a comparatively short time-frame, with work on that project under way and likely to be completed later this year. The junction with Fir Tree lane, parking provision and pedestrian access are also considered to accord with Policy DR3, which requires safe, attractive and convenient patterns of movement into, out of and across development sites.
- 6.6 The building, which would serve not only as a municipal repository but as a publicly accessible resource, is designed to meet Passivhaus standards in terms of its energy efficiency. The south-facing orientation of the front of house element and use of significant amounts of glazing therein increases the capacity to utilise passive solar gain. In the winter, energy efficient boilers, triple glazing, heat recovery and low temperature radiators will ensure a suitable ambient temperature. In this manner the building will be designed to perform to the highest standards in terms of energy efficiency. In this regard it should act as a stimulus for other development locally and a template for the future development of the Enterprise Zone. The

building design therefore achieves one of the government's over-arching ambitions for good quality, sustainably designed architecture that is capable of leading to an increased standard of design locally.

- 6.7 It is also evident that careful consideration has been given to the landscaping of the remainder of the site, particularly with a view to creating an environment that is visually attractive, but also capable of sustaining wildlife. The Council's Ecologist commends the landscaping proposals and the decision to incorporate opportunities for nesting birds. All existing trees on site, which are limited to the south-west corner, will be retained and protected during construction and supplemented with further native coppice planting around the principal pedestrian entrance. The landscaping is well considered and in accordance with UDP Policies LA5 and LA6. Whilst no European Protected Species were present on site at the time of the ecology survey, the consultant ecologist recommends the phased removal of the existing vegetation under qualified supervision in order that presence of any nesting birds can be managed. This, allied to the habitat enhancement measures outlined above combine to satisfy the requirements of UDP policies NC1, NC6, NC7, NC8 and NC9.
- 6.8 In conclusion the development is for Class B employment uses upon allocated employment land. The proposal is thus in accordance with UDP Policies E1 and E5. The design of the building is to the highest standards of energy efficiency, with architecture capable of realising an improvement to future standards of design locally. This accords with the government guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.9 The need for the facility is established and the development would result in a good quality, multi-purpose publicly accessible resource in accordance with UDP Policy CF5.
- 6.10 The use is not inherently noisy and involves no industrial processes. There are thus no adverse implications for the residents of the Firemans' Quarters to the north-west.
- 6.11 Safe and convenient access is possible by a variety of transport modes. The completion of the Connect2 shared cycle/footway in 2013 will aid accessibility by residents/staff who reside north of the river.
- 6.12 Setting the finished floor level at 50.97mAOD will safeguard the building from inundation. Sustainable urban drainage is designed to attenuate storm water run-off in a manner that will not create issues elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1. A01 Time limit for commencement (full permission)**
- 2. B01 Development in accordance with the approved plans**
- 3. L01 Foul/surface water drainage**
- 4. L02 No surface water to connect to public system**
- 5. L03 No drainage run-off to public system**
- 6. G11 Landscaping scheme - implementation**
- 7. The recommendations set out in the ecologist's report dated May 2012 should be followed. Prior to commencement of the development, a full working method statement and habitat enhancement scheme should be submitted to and be approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the work shall be implemented as approved.**

Reason: To ensure that all species are protected having regard to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species

Regulations 2010 and Policies NC1, NC6 and NC7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

- 8. **M06 Finished floor levels**
- 9. **H13 Access, turning area and parking**
- 10. **H21 Wheel washing**
- 11. **H27 Parking for site operatives**
- 12. **H29 Secure covered cycle parking provision**
- 13. **Prior to the first occupation of the development, a Flood Evacuation Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall include full details of proposed awareness training and procedure for evacuation of persons and property (including vehicles), training of staff; and method and procedures for timed evacuation. It shall also include a commitment to retain and update the plan and include a timescale for revision of the plan.**

Reason: To minimise danger to people in the flood risk area in accordance with Policy DR7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan and guidance contained within the PPS 25 Practice Guide.

Reasons for Approval

- 1. **The application has been considered having regard to Unitary Development Plan policies S1, S2, DR1, DR2, DR3, DR4, DR7, DR10, E1, E5, E8, T6, T7, LA5, LA6, NC1, NC5 and CF5. Guidance laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 has also been considered, alongside the Rotherwas Futures Drainage and Flood Management Strategy 2009.**

The local planning authority concludes that the proposed archive store complies with Unitary Development Plan Policies E1 and E5 in that the primary uses within the building fall within classes B1 and B8 of the Use Classes Order 2012 (As amended). Weight has also been apportioned to the need for the facility and the site's suitability when assessed against other potential sites.

The building is an exemplar of energy efficient design that has the potential to raise the standard of design locally in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework's aspirations and Unitary Development Plan policies S1 and DR1. Parking provision and accessibility is in accordance with Policy DR3 and the use would have no impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties, including the former fireman's quarters to the north-west.

INFORMATIVES:

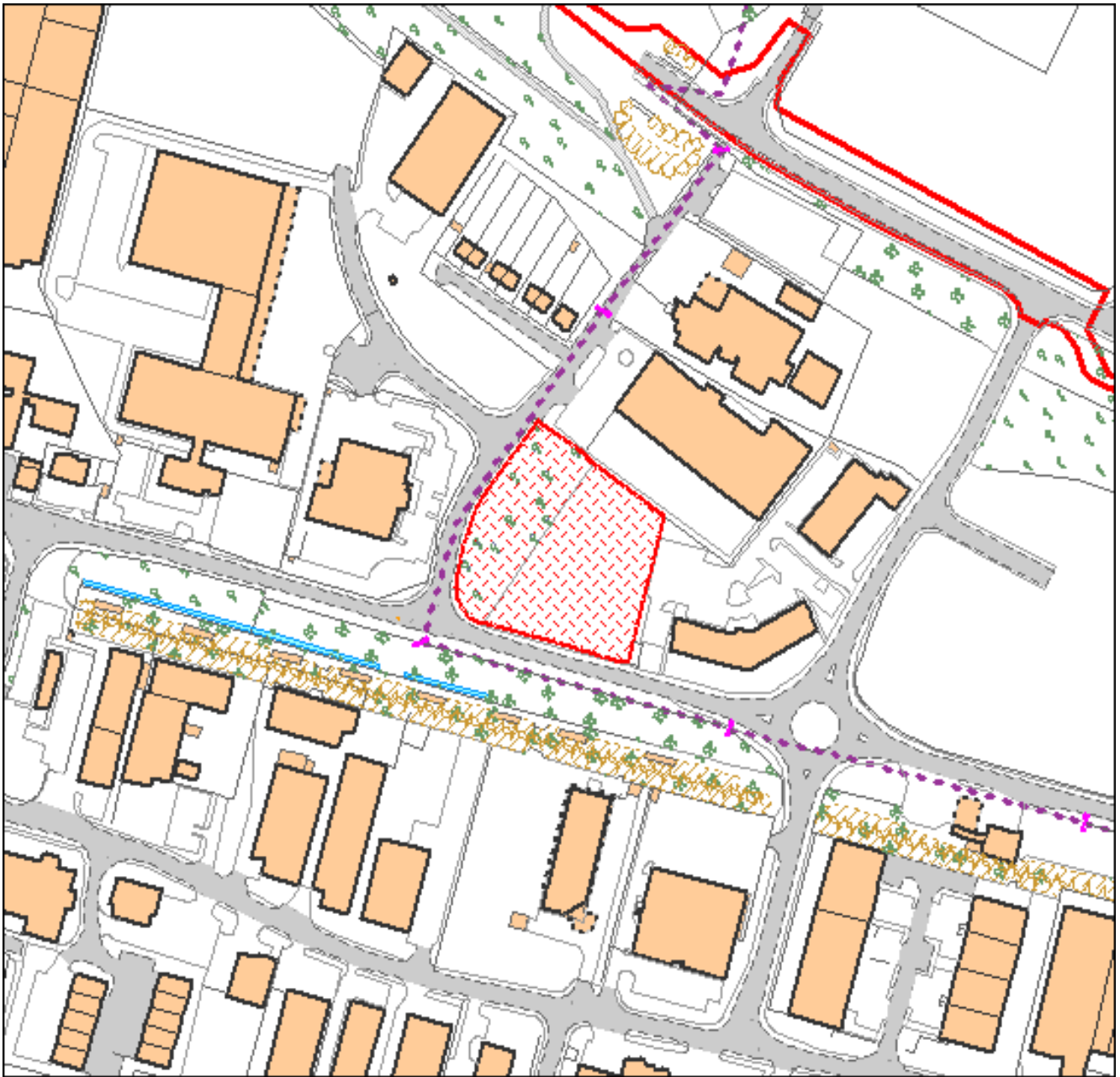
- 1. **The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against adopted planning policy and other material considerations, including representations that have been received. It has subsequently determined to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.**
- 2. **N11C General**

Decision:

Notes:

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



This copy has been produced specifically for Planning purposes. No further copies may be made.

APPLICATION NO: S/122820/CD

SITE ADDRESS : LAND AT FIR TREE LANE, ROTHERWAS, HEREFORDSHIRE

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Herefordshire Council. Licence No: 100024168/2005

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr Edward Thomas on 01432 260479