

Contact: Sarah Nicholson DDI No. 01494 421514
App No : 17/06581/FUL App Type : FUL
Application for : Erection of a 2 storey detached B1 office building with associated bin & cycle stores & new pedestrian access
At Land Rear of 7 High Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 1AY
Date Received : 07/07/17 Applicant : Mr S Westwell
Target date for decision: 01/09/17

1. **Summary**

- 1.1. Permission is sought for the construction of a two storey office building fronting onto, and accessed from, Liston Road.
- 1.2. The application site is currently used as a car park by the bank which fronts onto the High Street. The application site is situated in Marlow Town Centre, within the primary shopping area and Marlow Conservation Area. It is also an archaeological notification site and in non-residential parking zone 1.
- 1.3. Members may recall that they considered this application at the meeting on 18th October 2017 when the application was deferred to seek further comments from Buckinghamshire County Highway Authority (CHA), to ensure that in making comments on this application, they had taken full account of survey information held by Buckinghamshire County Council regarding on-street car parking in Marlow and that gathered by Wycombe District Council regarding off-street car parking. Following the submission of this evidence to CHA which confirms that there is spare capacity at peak times in some town centre car parks they have confirmed their original comments on the application.
- 1.4. While the proposals will result in a loss of some parking, given its town centre location, on-street parking restrictions and access to public car parks this level of displaced car parking would be unlikely to result in demonstrable harm.
- 1.5. The scale of the building would be a concern if it was not for the sites context and the established scale of existing office development on this side of Liston Road. In all other respects the proposals are considered to be acceptable subject to conditions and the application is recommended for approval.

2. **The Application**

- 2.1. Full planning permission is sought for the construction of a two storey office building with associated bin and cycle stores and a new pedestrian access on land to the rear of No.7 High Street, Marlow.
- 2.2. The application site is currently part of an area laid to tarmac that is used for parking. It is sandwiched between two other late 20th century office buildings which front onto Liston Road. To the rear of the site are several large trees situated immediately behind the bank which fronts onto the High Street. Consent has already been granted under 17/05575/CTREE for the largest of these to be felled. Above the bank permission has been granted for the conversion of the 1st and 2nd floors of the building to flats.
- 2.3. The proposal is for a two storey office building with a footprint of 15.6m by 6m, a height of 6 m to the top of the parapet walls. The overall height is 8.5m to the top of the ridge, with the gable end facing onto Liston Road. The main front elevation of the building facing onto Liston Road has a door and picture window lighting an open plan

office.

- 2.4. To the rear is the service core with a WC, stairs and lift to the second floor with an emergency access on the side of the building. The first floor contains another open plan office off the service core. This will be lit by front facing windows and “ridge” skylights that run half the length of the building.
- 2.5. To the front of the building it is proposed to site cycle parking which will be partly covered by the overhang of the first floor.
- 2.6. The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Heritage Impact Statement, and a,
 - b) Design and Access Statement.
- 2.7. The application site is situated in Marlow Town Centre, within the primary shopping area and Marlow Conservation Area. It is also an archaeological notification site and in non-residential parking zone 1.
- 2.8. The proposal was the subject of pre-application advice.

3. Working with the applicant/agent

- 3.1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Wycombe District Council (WDC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:
 - offering a pre-application advice service,
 - as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions, and,
 - by adhering to the requirements of the Planning & Sustainability Customer Charter
- 3.2. In this instance the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit, and asked to provide additional information on the current use of the site for parking. The applicant responded by providing the information requested and the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required. The application was referred to the Council's Planning Committee who deferred the application to seek further comments from the County Highway Authority on matters relating to the potential impact of displaced parking. The application has been referred back to the Committee for further consideration following the receipt of comments from the County Highway Authority.

4. Relevant Planning History

- 4.1. 17/05575/CTREE - Removal of 1 x Maple Tree (T1). Not to make a TPO.
- 4.2. 16/05870/PNP30 - Prior notification application (Part 3, Class O) for change of use of existing building falling within Class B1(a) (offices) to Class C3 (dwellinghouses) to create 1 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed apartments.
- 4.3. There is also a long planning history associated with the use of the building fronting High Street as a bank none of which is relevant to this application.

5. Issues and Policy considerations

Principle and Location of Development

CSDPD: CS1 (Overarching principles - sustainable development), CS2 (Main principles for location of development), CS10 (Town centre hierarchy)

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), DM6 (Mixed-use development), DM7 (Town centre boundaries), DM8 (The Primary shopping areas), MR5 (Liston Road Car Park)

Draft New Local Plan: CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (Settlement Hierarchy), DM32 (Accessible locations, sustainable transport and parking), CP6 (Securing Vibrant and High

Quality Town Centres)

- 5.1. There is no objection to the principle of office development in the town centre providing it does not impact the vitality and viability of the town centre as a destination, and respects other policy considerations including access and parking arrangements.
- 5.2. The High Street frontage of No. 7 High Street is within the Primary Shopping Frontage and the whole of site is in the Primary Shopping Area. Policy DM8 of the adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan allows for retail development and all other defined town centre uses. Office development is an acceptable town centre use especially in less prominent positions. Liston Road is considered to be one such location and therefore there would be no objection in principle to office development on this frontage of the site.

Transport matters and parking

ALP: T2 (On – site parking and servicing), T4 (Pedestrian movement and provision), T5 and T6 (Cycling), T7 (Public transport), T8 (Buses), T12 (Taxis), T13 (Traffic management and calming), T15 (park and ride), T16 (Green travel)

CSDPD: CS16 (Transport), CS21 (Contribution of development to community infrastructure)

DSA: DM2 (Transport requirements of development sites)

Draft New Local Plan: CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM32 (Accessible locations, sustainable transport and parking)

- 5.3. Town centres are considered to be the most accessible locations close to a wide range of services, community facilities, public transport links and public car parks.
- 5.4. The site is currently used as staff parking by the bank which occupies the ground floor of 7 High Street providing 9 parking spaces for staff. If this development were to proceed the number of spaces on the site would be reduced to 3, a loss of 6 spaces. In addition the proposed offices which provide an additional floor area of just under 158 sqm, would generate an optimum requirement for 7 spaces, based on providing 1 space per 25 sqm of gross floor space.
- 5.5. The applicant has provided information which states that the existing car park serves a bank which accommodates 9(no) parking spaces. The proposed office building requires 7(no) parking spaces.
- 5.6. The applicant has stated that given the sites town centre location, the proposed office building will be a car free development and that 3(no) spaces are to be retained to serve the existing bank. Cycle parking is also to be provided for the office building. Nevertheless, it is considered that this proposal will result in loss of 6(no) existing parking spaces associated with the site.
- 5.7. The original comments received from the County Highway Authority (CHA) acknowledged that while overall the parking situation in Marlow is a concern, given the sites town centre location which makes use of public car parks and parking/waiting restrictions in the form of double yellow lines along Liston Road, they would be unable to sustain a reason for refusal at an appeal scenario. Members were concerned that in making these comments full weight may not have been given to the recent parking reviews undertaken by both WDC and BCC. The application was deferred and further comments have been sought from the CHA which are reported in full in Appendix A.
- 5.8. To summarise the Marlow parking reviews:
- 5.9. Public Car Parking Review (Marlow Parking Review prepared by Jacobs for WDC (July 2016)): This evaluates off-street parking provision in the seven car parks in Marlow managed by WDC. The survey data shows that the busiest days are Thursdays and Saturdays and that while there is some spare capacity overall during the day (existing capacity 765, existing peak demand 666), some car parks (Central,

Liston Road, West Street and Riley Road) are full at times of peak demand. The main type of parking demand is for a shorter period of time with little evidence that any of the car parks are used for commuter demand (i.e. by those who arrive in the morning and leave their car all day until returning in the evening).

- 5.10. On-Street Car Parking Review by BCC: A review of the streets where limited waiting bays are located was carried out in 2017, which showed that all bays are heavily used throughout the day. The survey showed that the key issue was the overstaying of vehicles, resulting in a loss of 209 short stay episodes on a Saturday and 196 on a Thursday. This is largely an enforcement issue, caused by the current infrequency of enforcement. In response to this the County Council are consulting on draft proposals for the introduction of additional waiting restrictions within the greater Marlow area and extensions and conversions of the existing on-street limited waiting bays within the town centre to paid parking. The public consultation is planned to start on 9th February and run until 9th March 2018. The result of the survey will be feedback to the Cabinet Member for Transport and if any changes to the current on-street parking regime are approved the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders will be processed and street furniture ordered for implementation in the late spring/ summer 2018. Parking enforcement would commence as soon as the street furniture is in place.
- 5.11. In their additional response to this current application, County Highways have confirmed the original comments they made on the application, noting that while they appreciate the concerns regarding parking in Marlow, there is proven spare capacity currently in the town centre car parks (99 spaces at peak demand) that could accommodate displaced car parking. Whilst Liston Road car park is nearing capacity during peak periods, there is spare capacity in other car parks which can be utilised. On this basis the County Highway Authority confirm that they would not be able to sustain a highway safety reason for refusal on this application.
- 5.12. While users of the proposed development may not be able to conveniently park in the nearest town centre car park to the site, there is spare capacity for long stay parking in other town centre car parks within easy walking distance and it would be unreasonable to delay the determination of this application any further to await the outcome of the County's consultation on on-street parking. On this basis and without the backing of the County Highway Authority this Council could not reasonably sustain an objection to this application on the basis of parking and.

Impact on the Marlow Conservation Area and raising the quality of place making and design

ALP: G3 (General design policy), G8 (Detailed Design Guidance and Local Amenity), HE6 (Conservation areas), HE10 (Burgage plots), G11 (Trees), G26 (Designing for safer communities),

CSDPD: CS19 (Raising the quality of place shaping and design) CS17 (Environmental assets)

Draft New Local Plan: CP8 (Sense of place), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF), DM33 (Delivering green infrastructure in development), DM34 (Placemaking and design quality)

- 5.13. The proposal will provide an active frontage onto Liston Road at a point where there is currently a blank wall punctuated by a section of railings and the access to the bank's car park.
- 5.14. The proposed two storey office building is located within a burgage plot associated with No. 7 High Street. Although large the proposed two storey building is commensurate with the scale of the office buildings either side of the application site. Unlike the buildings either side which span across the historic burgage plots, this proposal sits within one plot, although it does divide it. These long narrow plots are integral to the character of the Conservation Area and traditionally evolved through construction of simple, utilitarian buildings perpendicular to the plot associated with the burgage head. This proposal would fragment the burgage plot and while the form

is appropriate, the scale and height is larger than traditionally typical. However, given the extent of development fronting onto Liston Road, it is not felt that an objection to such development would be warranted in this location.

- 5.15. Notwithstanding the scale of the building its design although different from its neighbours will not look out of place in the wider street scene subject to the use of appropriate materials including good quality external materials (including hard landscaping), timber window joinery, conservation type roof lights and boundary treatments/details. Should permission be forthcoming these matters can all be controlled by condition.

Amenity of existing and future residents and occupiers

ALP: G8 (Detailed design guidance and local amenity), H19 (Residents amenity space and gardens) Appendix 1

CSDPD: CS19 (Raising the quality of place shaping and design)

Housing intensification SPD

Draft New Local Plan: DM34 (Placemaking and design quality), DM38 (Internal space standards)

- 5.16. The neighbouring properties bounding the application site are in a mix of uses including retail, offices and residential on the upper floors of 7 High Street and some of the other properties fronting High Street and on the opposite side of Liston Road.
- 5.17. All the residential properties will be located too far from the application site for it to have any direct impact in terms of loss of light, outlook or privacy. By only building on part of the width of the burgage plot the proposals retains the existing pedestrian access arrangements for the flats at 7 High Street, which are only accessible from Liston Road via the existing car park.
- 5.18. The proposed building which is situated tight on the northwest boundary of the site will have no direct impact on the office building located to the south east. Although it will almost abut the office building to the northwest this building has no flank windows facing towards the application site.

Environmental issues

CSDPD: CS18 (Waste, natural resources and pollution)

Draft New Local Plan: CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF)

- 5.19. Provision has been made for the storage of waste and recycling to the rear of the building in an area where it will not be overtly prominent in the street scene.
- 5.20. Offices are a use which are considered to be compatible in a residential area and in this town centre location where ambient background noise levels are likely to be relatively high the proposal will not lead to a loss of amenity due to any associated increased in noise and activity.

Flooding and drainage

CSDPD: CS1 (Overarching principles - sustainable development), CS18 (Waste, natural resources and pollution)

DSA: DM17 (Planning for flood risk management)

Draft New Local Plan: DM37 (Managing flood risk and sustainable drainage systems)

- 5.21. The application site is in an area not liable to flooding and surface water flooding in the area is low. As the site is already laid with an impermeable surface of tarmac the proposal will not significantly alter the amount of runoff from the site.

Archaeology

CSDPD: CS17 (Environmental Assets)

Draft New Local Plan: CP8 (Sense of place)

- 5.22. The site is located within an archaeological notification area to the rear of the High

Street, which was laid out in the medieval period. Burgage plots extended back from the High Street to the east and west and their layout can still be seen in plot boundaries today. Within these burgage plots archaeological evidence of back-yard activities often survives and can provide evidence of the medieval origins of the town.

- 5.23. Accordingly the County Archaeologist has recommend that archaeological trial trenching is carried out on the footprint of the proposed development. In line with the requirements of paragraph 141 of the NPPF a condition is recommended on any consent that may be granted to secure appropriate investigation, recording, publication and archiving of the results.

Building sustainability

CSDPD: CS18 (Waste, natural resources and pollution)

DSA: DM18 (Carbon reduction and water efficiency)

Draft New Local Plan: DM39 (Optional technical standards for Building Regulation approval)

- 5.24. Following the Adoption of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (July 2013) and in particular policy DM18 (Carbon Reduction and Water Efficiency) it would have previously been necessary to impose a condition to secure the required 15% reduction in carbon emissions as well as reducing future demand for water associated with the proposed dwelling. However, this was superseded in October 2016 by ministerial policy to transfer the issue to Building Regulations. It is only considered necessary to condition water efficiency.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

CSDPD: CS21 (Contribution of development to community infrastructure)

DSA: DM19 (Infrastructure and delivery)

Draft New Local Plan: CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth)

- 5.25. The development is a type of development where CIL would be chargeable which will be calculated separately should consent be forthcoming.

Weighing and balancing of issues – overall assessment

- 5.26. In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:

(a) Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material

(b) Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (in this case, CIL)

(c) Any other material considerations

- 5.27. As set out above it is recognised that while the proposals will result in a loss of some parking, given its town centre location and access to public car parks an objection on this ground could not reasonable be sustained. Similarly, the scale of the building would be a concern if it was not for the sites context and the established scale of existing office development on this side of Liston Road. In all other respects the proposals are considered to be acceptable.

- 5.28. It is considered that the proposed development would accord with the development plan policies and it is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers 01 and 16-071-10 unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.

- 3 The applicant shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development takes place.

Reason: In view of the history of the site and the desirability of recording any items of interest.

- 4 The scheme for parking and manoeuvring indicated on the submitted plans shall be laid out prior to the initial occupation of the development hereby permitted and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose.

Reason: To enable vehicles to draw off, park and turn clear of the highway to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the adjoining highway.

- 5 Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, a schedule and/or samples of the materials and finishes for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work to the external finish of the development takes place. For the avoidance of doubt this shall include timber window joinery and conservation type roof lights. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory external appearance.

- 6 Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, a schedule and/or samples of all surfacing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work to the finished surfaces of the development takes place. For the avoidance of doubt this shall include details of all boundary treatments. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory appearance.

- 7 The development, hereby permitted, shall be designed and constructed to meet a water efficiency standard equivalent to 'excellent' under the BREEAM rating with a maximum number of water credits for the commercial element.

Reason: In the interests of water efficiency as required by Policy CS18 of the Adopted Core Strategy and Policy DM 18 of the Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (July 2013).

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Wycombe District Council (WDC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service,
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions, and,
- by adhering to the requirements of the Planning & Sustainability Customer Charter

In this instance the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit, and asked to provide addition information on the current use of the site for parking. The applicant responded by providing the information requested and the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required. The application was referred to the Council's Planning Committee who deferred the application to seek further comments from the County Highway Authority on matters relating to the potential impact of displaced parking. The application has been referred back to the Committee for further consideration following the receipt of comments from the County Highway Authority.