

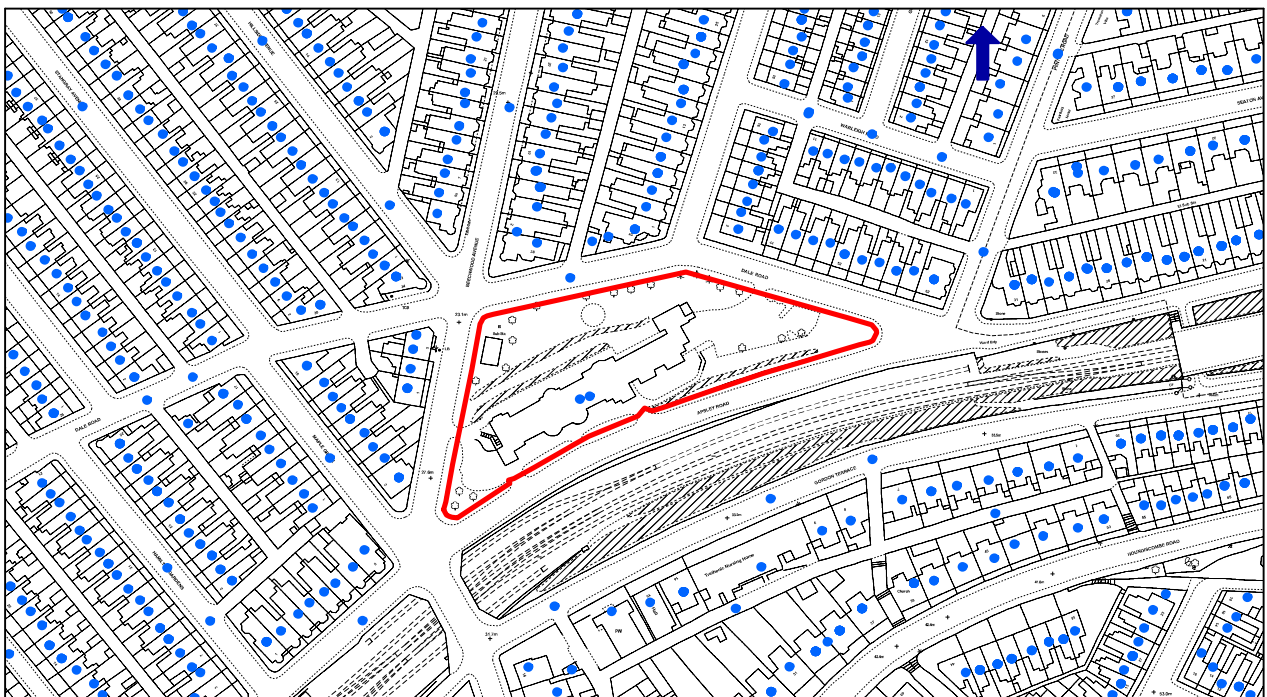
PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT



Application Number	14/01229/LBC	Item	6.2
Date Valid	03/07/2014	Ward	Drake

Site Address	ROYAL EYE INFIRMARY, APSLEY ROAD PLYMOUTH		
Proposal	Change of use, conversion and alterations to existing building to provide 12 apartments and new 4/5 storey building containing 30 cluster flats with 164 bed spaces with ancillary car parking, cycle and refuse storage (demolition of existing extension)		
Applicant	Eagle One Homes Ltd		
Application Type	Listed Building		
Target Date	28/08/2014	Committee Date	Planning Committee: 09 October 2014
Decision Category	Member Referral		
Case Officer	Robert Heard		
Recommendation	Grant Conditionally		

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1. Description of site

The site is located in a central, predominantly residential area to the west of Mutley Plain and to the north of Plymouth City Centre. The surrounding development is characterised by terraced streets that mostly comprise of Victorian era housing, arranged in a non-uniform street pattern derived from historic ownership boundaries.

Measuring approximately 0.59 of a hectare, the site is bound on all sides by public highway and forms an irregular shaped island. Immediately to the south of the site is the main city railway line, with terraced housing to the north, east and west. The topography of the site slopes down from south to north. The level change across the site is approximately 6m at its greatest.

The site is currently occupied by a substantial and imposing building known as the Plymouth Royal Eye Infirmary, a grade II Listed Building Constructed in 1901 and recently vacated by the local health authority. The last use of the building was as an eye infirmary, as originally constructed. It is a red brick Victorian structure with a significant 1930s (as well as other smaller, more recent) extension at the east end. The existing building is in a poor state of repair.

The building sits comfortably within the site curtilage, which is landscaped with a lawn area and car parking, and surrounded by many mature trees, some of which are protected. Access to the site can be taken from all sides. However, Apsley Road to the south and Dale Road to the north east is where the main vehicle access points are located (at different levels).

Unlike many areas of Plymouth, the immediate surrounding area is characterised by housing that is predominantly finished in brick, but there is also evidence of local stone and render, with slate being used on the roofs of much of the surrounding housing. Within the area, corner plots are sometimes defined with differing building features and help to present an attractive book end to many of the nearby terraced streets.

2. Proposal description

Listed Building Consent for the works associated with planning application 14/01229//FUL to redevelop the site by converting the existing former eye hospital into 12 apartments, with a new detached 4/5 storey building adjacent providing 164 student bedspaces, with ancillary car parking, cycle and refuse storage.

The works include demolition of the existing 1938 extension and associated internal works necessary to facilitate the change of use to residential apartments from a former eye hospital.

3. Pre-application enquiry

14/00620/MAJ; Plymouth Royal Eye Infirmary, Apsley Road, Plymouth, PL4 6PL; Conversion of existing REI building into apartments and new student development.

4. Relevant planning history

13/00521/FUL and 13/00523/LBC; Change of use, conversion and alterations to existing building to provide 12 apartments and new 4/5 storey building containing 51 retirement flats with ancillary car parking, cycle and refuse storage (demolition of existing extension). GRANTED

12/01797/FUL and 12/01799/LBC - Change of use, conversion and alterations to existing building to provide 12 apartments and new 4/5 storey building containing 55 retirement flats with ancillary car parking, cycle and refuse storage (demolition of existing extension). WITHDRAWN.

5. Consultation responses

None.

6. Representations

48 letters of representation have been received, of these 2 were repeated (sent twice).

All representations received raise objections to the proposed development. Main issues for objection are listed below:

Transport

- Parking is a current problem, development will make it worse. Not enough parking spaces planned.
- Access to site through Dale Rd will be dangerous- poor sight lines, already quite tight.
- Development will increase traffic in and around area.
- Dale Rd is dangerous and busy, cars speed along it, is a bus route.
- 20/25 min allocated slots over moving in weekend to unpack would cause 'chaos'.

Community

- Loss of community cohesion and residential amenities.
- Not a mixed demographic, mainly students.
- Loss of rare and valuable green space that was once available to the community.
- House prices are low because of the amount of student accommodation, unable to sell properties to move away.
- Push away families/ residents that have lived there for years.
- The proposal doesn't meet the needs of the community, doesn't improve the quality of life for existing residents.

- Area is empty during summer term but has constant construction disturbance from landlords improving student lets.

Design

- The closeness of the proposed building to the existing houses is a concern.
- Loss of daylight and bleak views for existing residents. Will dwarf houses on Dale Rd.
- Eye-sore/ ugly.
- REI building has strong historical value and a well-known local landmark, should be preserved.
- REI building needs to be fully restored.
- Design doesn't integrate the student population with community.
- Over development, not of an appropriate scale or size.
- Design is not in keeping with the local character, will look alien among Victorian buildings.
- Design takes away value of the historic building.
- The luxury apartments will fail to be sold, as no one will want to live next to students. Will get changed into more student accommodation.
- Proposed student block will be overbearing of the REI and surrounding buildings, new build doesn't complement the existing REI.

Students

- Anti-social behaviour
- Noise at unsociable hours, foul language, loud music, parties.
- Litter, not disposing of waste properly, back lanes full of waste.
- No sense of ownership or regard for the community.
- Area already has a high student population, at saturation point.
- Large amount of student lets within area, some struggling to find tenants.
- Students need 24/7 management.
- There are other developments for student accommodation around the city.
- Student population of area is 24%, which is above the 24% threshold.

General

- The council refuse collection is already stretched and wouldn't cope with additional student population.
- Local businesses are impacted as students will shop in major stores.
- The added litter and disturbances will affect the tax payer. Students not paying council tax.

7. Relevant Policy Framework

Section 70 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act requires that regard be had to the development plan, any local finance and any other material considerations. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compensation Act requires that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan comprises of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Adopted April 2007).

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is a weighty material consideration. It replaces the majority of Planning Policy guidance issued at National Government Level. Paragraph 215 of Annex I to the Framework provides that the weight to be afforded to Core Strategy policies will be determined by the degree of consistency of those policies with the Framework.

At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In the context of planning applications, this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay but where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits; or
- specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.

In addition to the Framework, the following Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents are also material considerations to the determination of the application: Development Guidelines SPD.

8. Analysis

1. This application has been considered in the context of the Council's adopted planning policy in the form of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007 and Development Guidelines SPD, and is considered to be compliant with National Planning Policy Framework guidance.
2. The main consideration with regards to this application for listed building consent is the impact that the proposed development will have on the existing listed building and its setting.

Impact upon existing REI building

3. The Royal Eye Infirmary was formally opened in 1901 and has remained in use as an eye hospital up until the end of 2012. The proposed development is a result of the need to find a new viable use for the redundant building and site. Since the NHS has vacated the building, the need for a new use to be implemented has become urgent if the listed building is not to lose any fabric of historic interest.
4. The building is prominent in the area by virtue of its size, style, construction, materials and setting. It stands out as a large, tall, predominantly red coloured building, with classical detailing, on its own green site, surrounded by smaller, densely arranged, two storey Victorian terraced houses. There are two main parts to the current building; the original, classically detailed, Victorian section which was opened in 1901 and an eastern extension, of a more utilitarian style, which was added in 1938.
5. Both parts of the building are constructed of red brick. The original part has Douling stone (limestone) dressings: string courses, window surrounds and transoms, door surrounds and eaves corncing. The original part has a steeply sloping roof, covered in plain, clay tiles. The new part of the building has a flat roof. The original part of the building is constructed as a fine, symmetrical composition. The south elevation has a central entrance flanked by curved

wings, topped with half conical roofs fitted with crested ridges, and there are shallow, square wings, or pavilions, at either end of the elevation.

6. The north elevation has a central curved bay, with faceted shallow bays at each end. The south central curved wings and the section between them over the entrance porch are of three full storeys, elsewhere the third storey is accommodated in the steeply sloping roof, lit by dormer windows. All windows are original, multi-pane, vertical sliding sashes, except the first floor window of the north elevation, central bay which noticeably has no glazing bars. The lack of glazing bars is because this room is the original operating theatre and large sheets of plate glass were fitted there, to maximise light.
7. Internally it is apparent that there has been much subdivision of large rooms, all carried out prior to the listing of the building in 1998, but some original partitions, joinery and plasterwork remain. The features of greatest interest that remain are the curving stairs fitted in the south elevation, central wings, doors and door architraves, fire places and pantry fittings.
8. The condition of the building is beginning to decline. The building is suffering failures for which the cost of remedial work, because of the extent of the building, will be significant. The problems include rotting windows, failing rainwater goods, movement and decay in the stone dressings, notably the cornice, and slipping roof tiles. Because of the now rapidly decaying condition of the building and its vacant state it is considered to be a Building at Risk, current Risk Level E (Under repair or in fair to good repair, but no obvious user identified, or under threat of vacancy with no obvious new user), but with the very real risk of escalating to Risk Level A (Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric) if a new use and occupation are not implemented quickly.
9. With regards to the proposed removal of the 1938 extension, whilst it may have been of architectural significance at the time of construction, it has been altered significantly and is no longer considered to retain architectural or historic significance. The plan form and external appearance of the extension were much altered as part of the major works to the hospital between 1976 – 1978, when the main operating theatre was moved from the original hospital to the extension. The loss of any remaining architectural or historic interest that the extension may be considered to have, is considered to be outweighed by the benefits offered to the listed building by the removal of the extension. The benefits presented by the removal of the much altered 1938 extension are the restoration of the original mass of the historic hospital building and the opportunity to construct a new building next to it that will help to fund the repair of the existing REI building.
10. It is also relevant that the storey heights of the 1938 extension, particularly on the ground floor at 4.2m, would not allow efficient re-use of the building. Conversion of the floor plan would be difficult and expensive, due to the load bearing construction. Further, the building has no insulation, nor double glazed windows, the provision of which would only add to the already very high cost of conversion for the original building. Considering the above it is considered by officers appropriate to remove this section to enable the proposed scheme to be realised.
11. Concerning the proposed use of the building as apartments, it is not considered to be a realistic expectation that a new hospital use for the building would be found nor would the retention of a hospital use necessarily be the optimum use for the listed building, as a modern

hospital use would require significant changes to be made to the building. Residential conversion is proposed as it is considered to be the most appropriate use for the area, being close to local amenities and accessible to the city centre.

12. With regards to proposed external alterations, other than the removal of the 1938 extension, which is considered to be beneficial to the heritage significance of the building, the only alteration to the elevations of the existing REI listed building is the refurbishment of the fire escape against the western gable. It is considered by officers that the proposal does not include any significant changes to the elevations.
13. The interior, to accommodate the proposed new use, does require the building to be subdivided. The subdivision proposed is considered by officers to be appropriate and according to the applicant, could be reversed if required in the future. It is considered by officers that the proposed development would help to safeguard the future of the existing REI listed building, and that with regards to the impact of the development upon it, the application is compliant with Policy CS03 (Historic Environment) of the Core Strategy.

Impact upon the setting of the existing REI building

14. The layout of the proposed student block is reflective of the existing Royal Eye Infirmary (REI) building and faces south onto Apsley Road, overlooking the existing railway line. Removal of the existing 1930s extension allows for the new build to sit comfortably alongside the existing listed building, oriented on the same axis and providing an imposing street frontage to Apsley Road. The existing building line is respected and the demolition of the existing 1930s extension allows the existing and proposed buildings to sit together but with clear separation between them.
15. It is considered by officers that the layout of the proposed development respects both the positioning and orientation of the existing listed building on the site, whilst being consistent with the established pattern of development in the surrounding area, which is characterised by a traditional layout with dwellings fronting onto the public highway. The proposed development provides a street frontage to both Apsley Road and Dale Road and is considered a sensible solution to the constraints and opportunities that the site presents.
16. With regards to scale, the existing REI building is large, with generous proportions, high ceilings and a big curtilage. The scale of the proposed building has been carefully considered and whilst containing more storeys, its overall height is less than the existing REI building. This is due to the high floor to ceiling heights in the existing building, which were constructed at a time when building regulations were much different to today's modern standards. Despite the difference in floor to ceiling heights (necessary to ensure compliance with current building regulations), the scale of the proposed new build is very similar to the existing REI building, ensuring that both buildings sit alongside each other comfortably. The overall height of the proposed building, being slightly lower than the ridge height of the existing REI building, ensures that with regards to bulk and massing, the proposed building will be subservient to the existing listed building.
17. The scale of the new build element of the proposal reduces towards the rear of the site where it provides a frontage onto Dale Road. This follows the existing topography at the site and ensures that the massing of the proposal is reduced when the building line is closer to the existing residential development on Dale Road.

18. Overall, the scale and massing of the proposed development is considered acceptable. The proposed new build is of an appropriate size, being large enough to have a presence at the site whilst not being dominated by the existing REI building. The separation distance between the buildings helps to ensure that the setting of the original REI building is not harmed and that the buildings are clearly individual.
19. Concerning appearance and design, the existing REI building has a strong presence in the area, being a unique and imposing building that has a distinctive symmetrical plan and elevation. The application proposes to restore the original symmetry and balance of the existing listed building by removing the 1938 extension. Where the extension is removed it is proposed to restore the walls and re-insert windows in their original positions. The only difference to the layout of the original east elevation will be an escape staircase that is required for emergency exit from the building. The existing dormer windows will be retained and refurbished and the original chimneys will be restored.
20. The design of the proposed new build is contemporary, but with subtle reference to the existing REI building through repetition of materials and features. It was considered that a pastiche style development would never be able to successfully replicate the high quality design and appearance of the existing building, which is a spectacular example of architecture from a previous period. Any attempt to copy the existing building would in officers' view lessen its impact and destroy its uniqueness, whilst significantly harming its setting.
21. The proposed new build has thus been designed to complement the existing building and not compete with it. Whilst the storey heights cannot be repeated due to current building regulations requirements, the simple string course eaves trim of the existing REI is repeated on the new build, to ensure there is consistency in the design and treatment of the elevations. The top floor of the proposed new build has been recessed and treated in a different finish and colour to the main building in order to reference the roof of the existing REI building, so that despite the difference in floor to ceiling heights, the overall proportions of the existing REI building are respected.
22. The proposed layout of the site and scale, massing and design of the proposed new build student accommodation is considered acceptable, being complimentary to the existing listed REI building and compatible with the existing surrounding townscape. In summary, it is considered that the proposed retirement accommodation will provide a positive addition to the streetscene and help to improve local visual amenity, whilst securing the long term future of the existing REI listed building and respecting its setting.. It is therefore compliant with Policies CS02 (Design) and CS03 (Historic Environment) and CS34 (Planning Application Consideration) of the Core Strategy.

9. Human Rights

Human Rights Act - The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

10. Local Finance Considerations

None.

11. Planning Obligations

The purpose of planning obligations is to mitigate or compensate for adverse impacts of a development, or to prescribe or secure something that is needed to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations can only lawfully constitute a reason for granting planning permission where the three statutory tests of Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 are met.

No planning obligations are required with regards to this planning application.

12. Equalities and Diversities

No issues raised.

13. Conclusions

It is considered that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact upon the existing grade II listed REI building, or its setting. It will help to secure the long term future of the building and retain its historic fabric. The application is thus recommended for approval subject to conditions.

13. Recommendation

In respect of the application dated **03/07/2014** and the submitted drawings • 1885 – 001 – Site Location Plan;

- 1885 – 002 – Site Plan as Existing;
- 1885 – 003 – Demolition and Tree Removal Plan;
- 1885 – 004 – Floor Plans as Existing;
- 1885 – 005 – Floor Plans as Existing;
- 1885 – 006 – Elevations as Existing;
- 1885 – 007 – Existing Block Proposed Floor Plans;
- 1885 – 010D – REI Proposed Ground Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 011J – REI Proposed First Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 012J – REI Proposed Second Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 013J – REI Proposed Third Floor Plan;

- 1885 – 014K – REI Proposed Fourth Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 017A – REI Proposed Roof Plan;
- 1885 – 019D – Proposed Site Plan;
- 1885 – 023 – Site Elevations and Sections;
- 1885 – 024 – New Block Elevations (North and East);
- 1885 – 025A – New Block Elevations (South and West);
- 1885 – 026 – Site Sections;
- 1885 – 027 – Site Sections.,it is recommended to: **Grant Conditionally**

14. Conditions

CONDITION: TIME LIMIT FOR COMMENCEMENT (1)

(1) The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason:

To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

CONDITION: APPROVED PLANS (2)

(2) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- 1885 – 001 – Site Location Plan;
- 1885 – 002 – Site Plan as Existing;
- 1885 – 003 – Demolition and Tree Removal Plan;
- 1885 – 004 – Floor Plans as Existing;
- 1885 – 005 – Floor Plans as Existing;
- 1885 – 006 – Elevations as Existing;
- 1885 – 007 – Existing Block Proposed Floor Plans;
- 1885 – 010D – REI Proposed Ground Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 011J – REI Proposed First Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 012J – REI Proposed Second Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 013J – REI Proposed Third Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 014K – REI Proposed Fourth Floor Plan;
- 1885 – 017A – REI Proposed Roof Plan;
- 1885 – 019D – Proposed Site Plan;
- 1885 – 023 – Site Elevations and Sections;
- 1885 – 024 – New Block Elevations (North and East);

- 1885 – 025A – New Block Elevations (South and West);
- 1885 – 026 – Site Sections;
- 1885 – 027 – Site Sections.

Reason:

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of good planning, in accordance with policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007, and paragraphs 131, 132 and 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

SCHEDULE OF WORKS (3)

(3) No works shall commence until a detailed schedule of works relating to the demolition of the 1938 extension to the Royal Eye Infirmary has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said schedule shall include a methodology statement for the demolition of the 1938 extension, as well as details of construction methods and specification of proposed works for initially making good the east elevation of the Royal Eye Infirmary building; the works to ensure that the elevation is wind and watertight pending completion of refurbishment works to the building. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure appropriate design and quality and that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

SCHEDULE OF WORKS (4)

(4) Prior to the commencement of works relating to the conversion of the Listed building into 12no apartments a detailed schedule of all proposed repair, refurbishment and new works relating to the conversion of the Royal Eye Infirmary is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said schedule shall include details of design, construction methods, materials and finishes relating to the external works and internal works [Confirmation of the scope for works relating to internal alterations is to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority]. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure appropriate design and quality and that the details of the proposed work do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

BUILDINGS RECORDING

(5) No works shall commence until provision has been made for the recording of the 1938 extension in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (VSI) which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

This work shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme and in accordance with other such details as may subsequently be agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure an adequate archival record of the 1938 extension prior to its demolition, and to ensure that the proposed development works do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

STONEHOUSE LEAT

(6) No part of the development allowed by this permission shall be commenced until the applicant (or their agent or his successors in title) has made provision, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, for a programme of archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme and in accordance with other such details as may subsequently be agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure an adequate investigation and recording of any remains of the Stonehouse Leat that may be affected by the proposed development, and to ensure that the proposed development works do not conflict with Policy CS03 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

Informatives

INFORMATIVE: (NOT CIL LIABLE) DEVELOPMENT IS NOT LIABLE FOR A COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY CONTRIBUTION

(1)The Local Planning Authority has assessed that this development, due to its size or nature, is exempt from any liability under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

INFORMATIVE: CONDITIONAL APPROVAL (WITH NEGOTIATION)

(2) In accordance with the requirements of Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 and paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the Applicant, including pre-application discussions, and has negotiated amendments to the application to enable the grant of planning permission.