

**GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE** : **PLANNING**

**DATE** : **14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2016**

**ADDRESS/LOCATION** : **FORMER CAR PARK, WESSEX HOUSE,  
GREAT WESTERN ROAD, GLOUCESTER**

**APPLICATION NO. & WARD** : **16/00303/FUL; (KINGSHOLM & WOTTON  
WARD)**

**EXPIRY DATE** : **25 MAY 2016**

**APPLICANT** : **GREAT WESTERN RAILWAYS**

**PROPOSAL** : **NEW SURFACE CAR PARK AND GATELINE  
ENCLOSURE WITH EXTERNAL RAMPS  
AND STAIRS**

**REPORT BY** : **JON SUTCLIFFE**

**NO. OF APPENDICES/  
OBJECTIONS** : **1. SITE LOCATION PLAN**

**1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 The site is an open area of land which lies to the south of Great Western Road, and is bounded to the south-west by Gloucester railway station. A vacant office building lies on the adjoining site to the north-west of the land, and to the south-east lies an office development.
- 1.2 The site is currently tarmac surfaced, having previously been used as a car park, however the site has been unused for some time and consequently scrub vegetation has started to grow on the site. The site has a range of boundary treatments, with the frontage to Great Western Road having a brick wall along it which contains entrance gates. The southern boundary of the site, which is the boundary with the railway station platform, has a high brick wall.
- 1.3 The proposal is to clear and re-surface the existing car park and provide new road markings etc. Road areas will be in tarmac whilst parking areas will be in free draining open cell / gravel. A total of 243 car spaces will be provided, 12 motorcycle spaces and 10 cycle spaces. One of the car spaces will be an electric car charging space. There are a further two disabled car park spaces currently proposed in this development though exact requirements for users will be determined by Great Western Railway through a DIA in compliance with the Equalities Act 2010.

- 1.4 A new dedicated demarcated pedestrian circulation route will be provided between Great Western Road and the new ramp/step access to the station. Due to the difference in level between the car park and platform, a new DDA compliant ramp and staircase will be provided to a new gate line enclosure at platform level. The enclosure, which is of modular construction, will contain a wide and standard gate lines, ticket machine and call point. The gate line enclosure will be secured out of hours with a roller shutter to both the ramp and the station.
- 1.5 The enclosure of the site will remain broadly as existing with brick retaining wall to the station and metal fencing to the side boundaries. The front boundary wall facing brick with concrete coping will be repaired / made good as necessary and topped with painted steel railings giving an overall height of approximately 1800mm.
- 1.6 Lighting of the site will be from new 6 metre high columns with LED lighting. These will be fitted with time clocks, daylight sensors and an automatic dimming function to ensure that the area is not over illuminated.
- 1.7 The entrance to the car park would be barrier free.
- 1.8 The application has been brought to Committee because the City Council has a direct interest in the site/development.

## **2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 A number of temporary permissions for car parking for hospital staff have been granted on this site since 1993. The most recent of these temporary permissions was granted in 2010 and the use was required to cease following construction of a multi-storey hospital car park. It is understood the site has remained vacant since then. Permission was granted in 1995 for the erection of a five storey office block on the site, but was not implemented.

## **3.0 PLANNING POLICIES**

- 3.1 The statutory development plan for Gloucester remains the 1983 City of Gloucester Local Plan. Regard is also had to the policies contained within the 2002 Revised Deposit Draft Local Plan which was subject to two comprehensive periods of public consultation and adopted by the Council for development control purposes. The National Planning Policy Framework has been published and is also a material consideration.
- 3.2 For the purposes of making decisions, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that, policies in a Local Plan should not be considered out of date where they were adopted prior to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework. In these circumstances due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3.3 The policies within the 1983 and the 2002 Local Plan remain therefore a material consideration where they are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.4 From the Second Stage Deposit Plan the following policies are the most relevant:
- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| B.10   | Trees and hedgerows on development sites |
| FRP.9  | Light pollution                          |
| FRP.10 | Noise                                    |
| BE.21  | Safeguarding of amenity                  |
- 3.5 In terms of the emerging local plan, the Council has prepared a Joint Core Strategy with Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Councils which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Policies in the Submission Joint Core Strategy have been prepared in the context of the NPPF and are a material consideration. The weight to be attached to them is limited by the fact that the Plan has not yet been the subject of independent scrutiny and do not have development plan status. In addition to the Joint Core Strategy, the Council is preparing its local City Plan which is taking forward the policy framework contained within the City Council's Local Development Framework Documents which reached Preferred Options stage in 2006.
- 3.6 On adoption, the Joint Core Strategy and City Plan will provide a revised planning policy framework for the Council. In the interim period, weight can be attached to relevant policies in the emerging plans according to
- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan
  - The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and
  - The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.7 All policies can be viewed at the relevant website address:- Gloucester Local Plan policies – [www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning](http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning); and Department of Community and Local Government planning policies - [www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/).

#### **4.0 CONSULTATIONS**

Police Crime Prevention Design Adviser – has made detailed comments regarding design details intended to reduce the risk of crime arising

Highway Authority – (*Comments on initial application*) – supports the principle of additional car parking to accommodate rail demand in future. However, raises a number of technical issues with the submitted highway statement which need resolving.

City Archaeologist - As discussed I have no comments to make with regard to this application. Archaeological evaluation of this site has revealed some structural remains relating to the former Gloucester Union Workhouse. Whilst these are of some local interest, the proposed development will be of such limited impact that there is no reasonable requirement, in my judgment, for any form of archaeological mitigation.

Urban Design Officer – generally supports the proposal. Comments on the need to secure details of the cladding materials of the new structure, and the proposed railings by condition. Suggests that if this becomes the main access point to the station, then insufficient cycle spaces are being provided.

Drainage Engineer – No objection subject to a condition

Network Rail - Raise no objection in principle to this proposal and give detailed comments and requirements for the safe operation of the railway and the protection of Network Rail's adjoining land.

Environmental Protection – Views awaited

Tree Officer – (*Comments on initial application*) There are a handful of self-set trees on site (cherry, birch, young sycamore). They do not provide a significant amount of amenity and I have no objections to removal.

However, this application provides an opportunity for new tree planting in my opinion. As far as I can see no landscaping at all is proposed. In my opinion we should be seeking new tree planting within the proposed car park and along the Great Western Road frontage to improve amenity in the area and soften what is a very harsh and unappealing landscape both presently and with what is proposed.

## **5.0 PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS**

5.1 The application has been publicised through Site Notice and notification of neighbouring properties. No representations have been received.

5.2 The full content of all correspondence on this application can be inspected at Herbert Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, or via the following link, prior to the Committee meeting:

<http://planningdocs.gloucester.gov.uk/default.aspx?custref=16/00303/FUL>

## **6.0 OFFICER OPINION**

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that where regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 This application raises the following key issues – the principle of the development; highway issues; landscaping and visual impact; other amenity impacts; and benefits of the proposal.

#### Principle

- 6.3 The site is identified in the 2002 Local Plan as a commitment for B1 Use. Obviously, since that time no proposals have come forward for such use, and consequently it is not considered that resisting an alternative development on the basis of it being contrary to that identification such a long time ago would be sustainable. It has to be concluded that if there were interest in such B1 use for the site it would have come forward by now.
- 6.4 The site has been vacant for some years, since its last use as a temporary car park associated with the hospital. As the last use was car parking, it is reasonable to suggest that use as a car park should in principle be acceptable, subject to the detailed impacts of the proposal being acceptable.

#### Highway issues

- 6.5 The applicant has undertaken a traffic assessment to identify the highway impacts of the proposal. In initial comments the Highways Engineer raised queries regarding the data that had been utilised, and the applicant has provided additional information to clarify details. Comments are still awaited on the response provided, and the Committee will be further updated on this issue.

#### Landscaping and visual impact

- 6.6 The site currently has no landscaping within the site. There are small trees growing within the site which are self-seeded, and reflect the somewhat derelict nature of the site which has effectively been abandoned since its last temporary use for parking. These small trees and the other scrub vegetation will be removed from the site as part of this proposal.
- 6.7 The originally submitted scheme proposed no tree planting or other landscaping. This was considered to be a missed opportunity to enhance the development with suitable planting to soften the appearance of what would appear as a very 'urban' use. Details of planting within the site and also along the Great Western Road frontage have now been provided and it is considered that this planting will enhance the development and ensure it has an acceptable visual impact. There are no sensitive properties which overlook the site, so the appearance of a car park will not be unacceptable. The addition of railings to the top of the boundary wall on Great Western Road

would add to the visual interest of the site. The structure which will be erected to link the car park to the station platform, which is at a higher level, will be a functional structure of profiled metal cladding, but this is not considered unacceptable in this location, providing details are agreed by condition.

#### Amenity impacts

- 6.8 As there are no sensitive neighbours to the site, the noise and activity associated with vehicle movements to and from the site is not likely to have a noticeable impact. There are residential properties further along Great Western Road, and obviously traffic which does not currently visit the site will pass such properties as a result of the development. However, it is suggested that being in a location close to the city centre and such major traffic generators as the hospital, the increases in traffic should be judged in that context, and consequently are not considered to be significant.
- 6.9 New lighting of the site will be installed, using 6m high columns. The site previously had pole mounted lighting when used as a car park in the past. With the lack of sensitive properties in the vicinity of the site, it is not considered that the lighting of the site will be likely to have any adverse amenity impacts. Obviously for safety reasons a car park will have to be provided with suitable lighting to deter crime and enable users to feel safe.

#### Benefits

- 6.10 This proposal will provide significant additional car parking for rail travellers using Gloucester railway station. This will almost double the current number of long-stay spaces at the station. Passenger numbers using rail continue to rise on a year by year basis, and consequently the pressures on parking facilities also increase. The applicant points to future improvements to services which will occur in the years to come, and as such it is considered that additional parking provision will undoubtedly be required. The proposal will also be beneficial for current rail users driving to Gloucester station, as for journeys from some parts of the city accessing the car park on Great Western Road could entail a shorter journey than accessing the current car park off Bruton Way. It is considered therefore that there are significant benefits which would arise from this proposal, which when seen in the wider context of the new bus station on the other side of the rail station will facilitate easier accessibility for the use of rail service for residents of the area.

#### Conclusions

- 6.11 This application seeks to use a piece of land for car parking which has historically been used for this purpose, although has been vacant for some years and has a run-down appearance. The use of the site would re-vitalise the site and have a positive appearance. It is not considered that the proposals would have any adverse effects, and subject to the Highways Engineer confirming they have no objections to the proposal it is considered that it conforms with national and local planning policies referred to earlier in this report.

**7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING**

That, subject to the Highway Engineer raising no objections to the proposal, power be delegated to the Development Control Manager to grant planning permission subject to conditions covering the matters below.

Commencement of development; approved documents; drainage details; details of railings; details of materials, construction management programme; details of tree and shrub planting.

Statement of Positive and Proactive Engagement

In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF the Local Planning Authority has sought to determine the application in a positive and proactive manner by offering pre-application advice, publishing guidance to assist the applicant, and publishing to the council's website relevant information received during the consideration of the application thus enabling the applicant to be kept informed as to how the case was proceeding.

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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Person to contact:

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16/00303/FUL

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Planning Committee 31.05.2016

