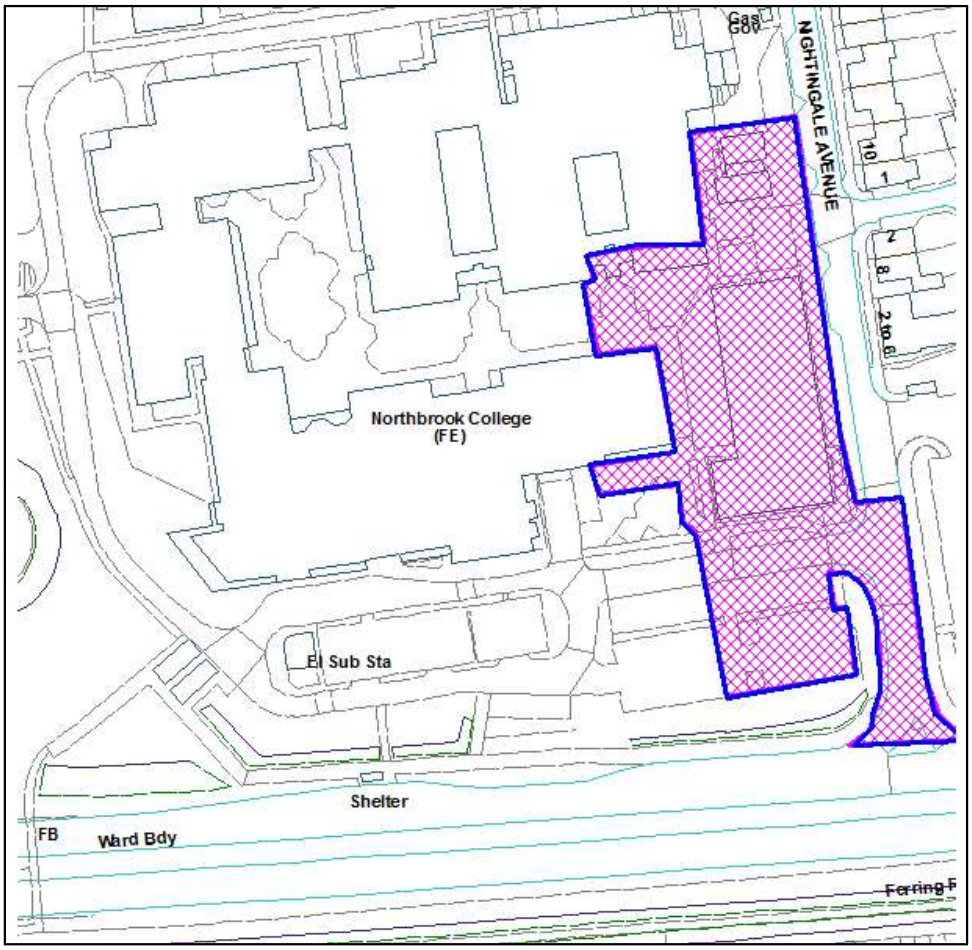
Application Number:	**AWDM/0447/24**	**Recommendation - APPROVE subject to the completion of a planning obligation**
Site:	**Greater Brighton Metropolitan College, Littlehampton Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN12 6NU**	
Proposal:	**Demolition/removal of existing substandard buildings and structures and the construction of a new two, and part one-storey specialist construction workshop building, together with the addition of a new door to the theatre building and improvements to outdoor space and landscaping.**	
Applicant:	Chichester College Group	Ward: Northbrook
Agent:	Mr Chris Barker	
Case Officer:	Amanda Haslett	



Not to Scale

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Site and Surroundings

The Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (formerly Northbrook College) is currently housed in three primary campus locations within Adur and Worthing, at West Durrington, Broadwater Road and Shoreham Airport. This planning application relates to the West Durrington Campus situated in a prominent location on the corner of Littlehampton Road and Titnore Lane.

The main vehicular entrance to the site is off Littlehampton Road to the south onto Nightingale Avenue which leads onto a residential development to the east of the college. The college car park is located north west of the college and accessed by turning west in front of the college and following the road around the side of the building. The west half of this car park has been separated by a fence and is currently being used as a bus depot after receiving temporary consent for this use until 31/01/25. Access to the bus depot is only via Titnore Lane. The eastern half of this car park remains for use by students/staff. There is further parking to the front of the site. Pedestrian access is from the south via a bridge over Littlehampton Road as students arrive via train from Goring-by-Sea station.

The site lies on the edge of the built up area of the Borough, with the South Downs National Park to the west. To the north of the site are the residential properties accessed from Red Kite Way with St Barnabas Hospice located north of this. The residential development wraps around to the east of the site accessed from Nightingale Avenue on to Robin Road and Cuckoo Gate. Caffyns car sales and servicing is located to the south east. A close board fence runs along the east side of the college car park and the north and east boundaries of the campus, separating adjoining properties. Dense hedging and trees screen the site to the east boundary as far up as Robin Road and along the north car park boundary. Residential properties to the south of the site are separated by the dual carriageway (Littlehampton Road) and dense tree screening.

The site is not within a conservation area, is not a listed building and there are no protected trees on site. The site is within an Archaeological Notification Area.

Background

Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (GB Met) was assessed as being financially unsustainable on five campuses by the FE Commissioner in the August 2020 Report.

The Report noted that space utilisation across the sites was low, opportunities for partial site disposal had already been delivered, and that the overhead cost of running five sites was expensive, with efficiency opportunities for curriculum rationalisation diluted by low learner numbers.

An initial strategy to release one Worthing site for disposal was developed – delivery of this initial strategy would have required transfer of some provision out of area to Brighton, and therefore the loss of some local provision for students.

Following the merger of GB Met with Chichester College Group (CCG) in August 2022, there are three large campuses in the Worthing area, West Durrington, Broadwater, and Worthing College.

As part of the merger process, CCG made a commitment to produce an Estates Strategy for Worthing to include plans for rationalisation, but with a commitment to maintain local provision, as long as there was sufficient demand to allow for this to be economically viable.

This application has been submitted following the decision to close Broadwater Campus which through an estate rationalisation process has created an opportunity to invest in the West Durrington site. West Durrington is predominantly a vocational campus. To complement this and maintain provision within the Worthing area, it is planned to relocate the Construction Trades Centre (CTC) into new purpose built accommodation on the site to replace the outdated and unused temporary building to the south east.

The proposals also include the relocation of other curriculum areas into refurbished, underused existing buildings. This, along with enhancements to shared student areas and external spaces will make the campus more efficient and improve the overall student experience.

Proposal

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition/removal of the existing substandard buildings and structures and the construction of a new part two storey and part single storey building to form a Construction Trades Centre, together with the addition of a new door to the theatre building and improvements to outdoor space and landscaping.

The single storey, L-shaped substandard building 'A Block', situated in the south east corner of the campus has already been demolished. The flat roof temporary buildings and storage containers currently to the north of A block will also be removed. A new purpose built construction block will be built, forming an L-shaped building with a two storey element to the front and single storey to the rear.

The two storey element would measure approximately 24m wide x 24.4m deep with a flat roof and parapet of 9.25m high. The flat roof would accommodate solar photovoltaics to provide a source of renewable energy. This part of the building would accommodate the carpentry and machine workshops, timber store, plant room, staff workroom and toilets at ground floor and classrooms, workshops, toilets and staff room at first floor. A lift and stairs would provide access to the first floor.

The single storey element of the building would adjoin the north of the two storey building and would extend approximately 46.8m deep x 10.75m wide with a mono-pitch roof of 3.2m high rising to 4.5m high into the site. There would be a covered canopy section at the north end of this single storey structure. This part of the building would accommodate the brick workshops and a store.

The proposed building would provide a total GIA of 1550m2, 1001m2 at ground floor and 549m2 at first floor. The demolished building had a footprint of 1093m2 and that proposed has a footprint of 1084m2 and is located in the same position.

The ground floor elevations would be finished in 'Woodward Doonmore Smooth' blue bricks with grey mortar and the upper elevations and roof in standing seam metal cladding 'Euroclad Vieo' in Pure Grey. Doors, windows and louvres would be aluminium in grey.

The building would have feature windows with brise soleil and louvred detail to the south, west and part of the east elevations. Signage consisting of projecting aluminium box text in silver with 'Welcome to West Durrington' would be applied to the south elevation and 'Construction Trade Centre' to the north elevation. Galvanised escape stairs would be attached to the east elevation providing emergency egress from the first floor. The main entrance to the building would be to the north elevation and access to the single storey element would be via individual doors and roller shutters to the west side.

In addition to the new building other elements of the proposal include new double doors within the existing glazing to the entrance to the theatre bar and the addition of a plant room enclosure and materials store to the south of the existing building. The plant room and materials store would be single storey buildings measuring approximately 14.6m wide x 4.65m deep with flat roofs of 2.65m high and 3.4m high positioned in front (south) of the existing two storey building and set back behind the landscaped garden area and pergolas. A brick wall and metal gates would be constructed in line with the plant room to secure the site.

A landscaping scheme is proposed to the west and north of the new building, leading to the entrance for the new building and the existing theatre entrance. The landscaping scheme would incorporate permeable block paving and banding, concrete paving, native tree, shrub and hedge planting, ornamental and wildflower planting and feature benches. A 1.8m high fence and native hedgerow would form a visual screen between the brick workshops and theatre entrance.

Ecological enhancements would include integrated bird and bat boxes into new buildings, invertebrate boxes in both sunny and sheltered locations to cater for a range of species.

The application is accompanied by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Sustainability Statement, Preliminary Geotechnical and Preliminary Contamination Status Assessment Report, Statement of Community Involvement, Surface Water Drainage Strategy, Landscape Design Strategy, Noise Impact Assessment, Travel Plan, Transport Assessment, Energy Statement, Indoor Air Quality Plan, Air Quality Assessment, Lighting Statement, Ecological Impact Assessment, BNG Metric, Post Development Habitat Plan, BNG Baseline Plan, Tree Schedule, Tree Constraints Plan, Archaeological Evaluation and Property Strategy Report.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/1444/22 - Temporary change of use to bus depot (incorporating college car parking during the day) and erection of an ancillary building and associated facilities adjacent to the southern boundary of the site and the erection of a 2 metre fence separating the bus depot from the remainder of the car park - Approved 08/02/22

AWDM/1760/14 - Non-material amendments to AWDM/1044/13 extensions and new drama studio (including amendments to elevations, fenestration, roof, and cycle and refuse shelters as detailed on application form) - Approved 28/04/15

AWDM/1044/13 - Demolition of 755m2 GIA of sub-standard accommodation and the construction of two extensions to the existing building, a 1495m2 GIA new entrance and LRC to the front of the College and new 443m2 GIA Drama Studios to the rear, together with minor alterations to existing south-east facade and associated external hard and soft landscaping works and signage - Approved 22/01/14

Consultations

West Sussex County Council Highways: No objection from a transport/highways aspect subject to conditions requiring implementation of the Travel Plan and a Construction Management Plan.

UK Power Networks: Advice regarding the requirements and notification for development located within 6m of a substation and the need to maintain 24 hour access to the substation at all times.

WSCC - Lead Local Flood Authority: No objection on surface water grounds. Recommend the approval of the application with conditions:

- All development shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted and approved Surface Water Drainage Strategy (ref: 23-418 P01 dated 29/02/2024).
- Details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme to be submitted and approved.
- Upon completion a survey and report to be submitted and approved to demonstrate that the surface water drainage system has been constructed in accordance with the details approved.

WSP: No objection on surface water grounds. Repeated the same advice as above.

Southern Water: Advice regarding the water main located in the access of the development site for which the exact position must be determined on site by the applicant in consultation with Southern Water before the layout of the proposed development is finalised. Measures advised to ensure the protection of public apparatus.

Should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site.

Foul and Surface Water Drainage
Our investigations indicate that Southern Water can facilitate foul sewerage disposal to service the proposed development. Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.

Under certain circumstances SuDS will be adopted by Southern Water should this be requested by the developer. Where SuDS form part of a continuous sewer system, and are not an isolated end of pipe SuDS component, adoption will be considered if such systems comply with the latest Design and Construction Guidance (Appendix C) and CIRIA guidance. Where SuDS rely upon facilities which are not adoptable by sewerage undertakers the applicant will need to ensure that arrangements exist for the long-term maintenance of the SuDS facilities. It is critical that the effectiveness of these systems is maintained in perpetuity. Good management will avoid flooding from the proposed surface water system, which may result in the inundation of the foul sewerage system.

Water Connection
Our investigations indicate that Southern Water can facilitate water supply to service the proposed development. Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the water supply to be made by the applicant or developer.

Historic Environment Consultants - Archaeology: No objections subject to specified conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: Archaeological Excavation and/or preservation in situ
(i) A mitigation strategy detailing an excavation / preservation strategy (and including an appropriate programme of archaeological outreach) shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval.
(ii) No development or preliminary groundworks can commence on those areas containing archaeological deposits until the satisfactory completion of fieldwork, as detailed in the mitigation strategy, and which has been approved in writing by the local planning authority.
(iii) The applicant will submit to the local planning authority a post excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority). This will result in the completion of post excavation analysis, preparation of a full site archive and report ready for deposition at the local museum, and submission of a publication report.

Sussex Police: The National Planning Policy Framework demonstrates the government's aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places which are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear, and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high-quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

Recommend the siting of an intruder alarm and CCTV to protect the new building out of hours.

As indicated within the accompanying lighting statement, lighting will conform to the recommendations within BS5489-1:2020. Lighting is an effective security measure and a useful tool for public reassurance in that it enables people to see at night that they are safe or, to assess a developing threat and if necessary, to identify a route they could take to avoid potential issues. It is recommended that contact is sought by the developer with local Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT) to establish good relations whilst the development is in the construction phase.

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 heightens the importance of taking crime prevention into account when planning decisions are made. Section 17 of the Act places a clear duty on both police and local authorities to exercise their various functions with due regard to the likely effect on the prevention of crime and disorder. You are asked to accord due weight to the advice offered in this letter which would demonstrate your authority's commitment to work in partnership and comply with the spirit of The Crime & Disorder Act.

Adur & Worthing Councils:

The ***Environmental Health*** officer confirmed that the acoustic and air quality reports are acceptable. The ground contamination report recommends further testing so the full contaminated land condition should be added to any permission. They have completed phase 1 of this condition already.

A Construction Management Plan condition is required.

Private Sector Housing - No comment

Representations

One objection received*: We are concerned about how many more students the additional courses being held in the new buildings will bring to the area. The car park is close to full every day, and with half of it currently being used as a bus depot, where will the additional students park? If students cannot park in the campus car park, they will likely overflow into Yeoman Chase, taking up resident and visitor parking and congesting the local area.*

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036:
SP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
SP2 Climate change
SP3 Healthy communities
DM5 Quality of the Built Environment
DM8 Planning for sustainable communities / community facilities
DM15 Sustainable Transport & Active Travel
DM16 Sustainable Design
DM17 Energy
DM18 Biodiversity

DM19 Green Infrastructure
DM20 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage
DM21 Sustainable Water Use & Quality
DM22 Pollution
DM24 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework (DLUHC 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations.

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy DM8 a) of the Worthing Local Plan states that *The Council will support improvements to health, education, social, community and cultural facilities to ensure they meet the needs of local communities where it is demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties.*

c) The Council will work with service providers to deliver appropriate facilities in accessible locations. Proposals by service providers for the delivery of facilities in appropriate locations to meet the needs generated by new development and existing communities will be supported in principle.

Paragraph 99 of the NPPF states *'it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education'.*

The College is experiencing an increased uptake of construction courses across all sites including practical brickwork, carpentry and woodwork. The level of uptake means that the existing teaching facilities cannot meet the current demands and expansion is required. The proposal to provide a large scale, part single and part two story construction building to accommodate the trades courses would safeguard and improve the educational facility to meet the increasing growth and uptake of these courses.

The site is in a sustainable location in close proximity to bus and cycle routes and within walking distance of Goring Train Station.

The principle of development to provide improved education facilities within the Borough to serve the local population, is therefore supported.

Visual amenity

The NPPF states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It requires decision-making to ensure that developments are (amongst other things) visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; function well and add to the overall quality of an area; and establish or maintain a strong sense of place (paragraph 135).

Policy DM5 of the Local Plan requires that all new development to be of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area.

The site is located in a prominent position to the north of Littlehampton Road, which forms the main route through Worthing. The new building would be located to the south east corner at the front of the site and adjacent to the entrance to the campus off Nightingale Lane. The building would be viewed in context with the two and three storey college buildings to the north and west, the three storey block of flats to the east and the two storey Caffyns building to the south east. The new building would form a focal point at the entrance to the site.

The area proposed for redevelopment was previously occupied by a single storey temporary building with brown/beige boarding to the walls and a shallow pitch roof that was rundown in appearance and of no architectural merit. The site also includes a further rundown single storey building to the north and several shipping containers, all of which would be removed from the site as part of the redevelopment. These structures offered no positive contribution to the appearance of the wider campus and their removal is welcomed.

The proposed building has been designed to respond sensitively to its surroundings with the two storey element confined to the front of the site so that the single storey element is opposite the residential properties to the east. The modern flat roof design, with metal cladding and blue/grey bricks would complement the existing college buildings, reflecting the colour palette, materials and form. The same blue engineering bricks are used on the lower elevations of the earlier extension to the west of the site and the use of grey metal cladding would echo the zinc clad exterior of this building together with the flat roof form. The proposed building and the earlier extension would form bookends either side of the original building, providing a cohesive design solution across the site. The use of bricks would complement the more traditional buildings and the monopitch roof to the single storey element would reflect the form of other buildings within the site.

The proposed building would not appear excessively tall in relation to surrounding buildings and would be consistent with the height of the two storey blocks on site and lower than the adjacent residential flats to the east. The flat roof form would also echo the design of the Caffyns building to the south east whilst maintaining its own identity in appearance.

The landscaping proposed by the development would significantly improve the appearance of space around the buildings, providing an attractive route through the campus and enhancing the natural habitat on site.

The proposed building would make a positive contribution to the local character and would assimilate well with its surroundings in terms or scale, form, design, massing, siting, layout, height, materials, and landscaping and would enhance the street scene and wider setting.

Residential amenity

Policy DM5 viii) of the Worthing local Plan states, *development should not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, particularly of residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook, an unacceptable increase in noise giving rise in significant adverse impacts, or vehicular movements resulting in severe cumulative impacts on the road network, or loss of important open space of public value (unless it satisfies any of the exceptions set out under Policy DM7 – Open Space, Recreation and Leisure)*

The neighbours most affected by this proposal are those to the east of the site along Nightingale Way and to the north along Red Kite Way.

The proposed building will be constructed on the same footprint as the existing building. The two storey element of the building extends approximately 24m deep into the site to the north before dropping down to single storey height about 5m south of the residential flats to the east at No.4 Nightingale Avenue. The single storey element extends a further 55m into the site (including a canopy at the north end) finishing in line with the garage to No.12 Nightingale Avenue and to the same extent as the existing temporary structures on site. The single storey building would be directly opposite and 15m to 16.6m to the west of the dwellings at No.2 through to 12 Nightingale Avenue.

The dense trees and hedgerow to the east boundary of the site extend as far as No.8 Nightingale Avenue and would provide screening for the ground floor and part of the upper floor of the building due to their height. The first floor of the building would be visible above this but would be positioned at the front of the site and not directly opposite residential properties. Similarly, the metal fire escape to the east elevation serving the first floor of the building would be forwards of any residential dwellings and would not result in overlooking or loss of privacy. The east boundary further to the north (opposite No.8) and the north boundary are screened by 1.8m high fencing interspersed with trees. Views into the site would be possible above the fence, from the residential dwellings, however this part of the site would accommodate the single storey element of the proposal and whilst this would be visible it is not excessive in height with its lowest point (approx. 3.2m high) closest to

this fence. The properties to the north along Red Kite Way and No.1 Nightingale Avenue are at least 40m from the proposed building and the remaining dwellings No.14 to 24 Nightingale Avenue to the east are beyond the extent of the proposed development. The removal of the shipping containers and run down temporary buildings from the site and their replacement with the proposed building and landscaping would improve the appearance of the site from neighbouring properties.

The two storey element would be to the south-west of the three storey block of flats at No.2, 4 and 6 Nightingale Avenue however due to the spacing between buildings and the lower height of the building in comparison to the flats, the proposal is not considered to significantly affect daylight/sunlight or result in overshadowing to these properties or appear overbearing or oppressive in outlook. Openings to the proposed building would not be directly aligned with the windows of the residential flats and no significant loss of privacy would occur.

Noise Impact

The Noise Impact Assessment submitted with the application investigates the potential for the proposed development to give rise to impacts on the amenity of existing dwellings close to the development.

The new construction trades building will be constructed to provide the relevant sound insulation level to protect nearby residents from excessive noise.

The report detailed the following Mitigation measures:

Residential Receptors
The models and assessment showed that no major mitigation measures are required (good acoustic design has been implemented by placing plant away from the non-college NSRs. The brick workshop doors also face away from the receptors.). Where possible keeping the brickwork windows that face east, closed may be recommended.

College Receptors
The existing areas will have to be reviewed to see what mitigation measures may be required for the plant noise (secondary glazing or bolt on silencer etc.) For the new areas the building's ventilation system (fans and openings in wall etc.) will be reviewed at the detailed design stage.

The report concludes *'For the nearest non-college NSRs noise mitigation measures (close concrete mixer room east facing windows) have been recommended and if they are implemented correctly the noise levels, affecting the nearby NSRs, will achieve the guideline criteria detailed in, BS4142, WHO and BS8233. No mitigation measures were required in relation to the new heating/cooling and ventilation plant (ASHPs have been positioned away from the residential receptors to the east of the college).*

Achieving these criteria will result in a good acoustic environment inside/outside the existing dwellings close to the development.

For the new college spaces the building's ventilation system (fans and openings in wall etc.) will be reviewed at the detailed design stage to ensure the internal noise level achieves the BB93/BREEAM criteria'.

Sustainability

Energy & CO2

In accordance with Policies DM16 & DM17, the proposals are designed to meet the following energy and CO2 targets:

i) Built fabric which achieves a 27% reduction in CO2 emissions compared with the Building Regulation standards and achieves a BREEAM 'very good' rating.
ii) A 'B-rated' Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
iii) In addition and beyond these measures the production of at least 10% of energy site through renewable measures
iv) Building designs minimise excessive solar gain and maximise passive cooling, and give access to shaded outdoor space
v) Incorporate facilitate for high rates of recycling and re-use of waste and materials

In its energy strategy, the proposal states that the built fabric will use thermal efficiency specifications for proposed walls, floors and glazing which are greater than current Building Regulations (for instance 14% better for glazing and 37% for walls).

Computer modelling has also been undertaken to test thermal comfort. This indicates that thermal efficiency together with a combination of openable windows with blinds and brise-soleil, also a building ventilation system which recovers heat for re-use, will produce an A-rated' Energy Performance Certificate, greater than the B-rated policy requirement.

Heating and renewable electricity generation is via a combination of air source heat pumps and solar PV panels. These are intended to meet the policy-required CO2 reduction target and the 10% or more of renewable energy. Confirmation of the percentages for both of these have been sought and an update will be given. Low water consuming fixtures are targeted at 25% better than standard consumption (although this is not a policy requirement for non-residential development). A planning condition can require verification of the energy and CO2 performance of the completed development.

The PV panels (approximately 48 no.) would be located behind the parapet around the edges of the southern part of the first floor roof and are unlikely to be externally visible. Details are required by a planning condition. The heat pumps would be within an external compound to the west of the new building, set well back from the southern frontage and partly behind existing landscaping. Details, including the appearance of the compound and its relationship to landscaping, can also be required by a planning condition.

A further advantage of the use of heat pumps and the associated 'wet' piped heat distribution system, is that this makes possible a future connection to a wider

communal system if made available on the site or in the Northbrook/Durrington area in the future, connecting to the new plant room within the proposed building.

Air Quality

Alongside the reduced CO2 emissions of the energy strategy, the applicant's air quality assessment acknowledges that the development is unlikely to result in increased average daily traffic, as indicated in the submitted transport statement and agreed by the Highway Authority. The use of a travel plan (as described in the Highways, Accessibility and Parking section of this report), is a factor in this assessment and a planning condition will require its implementation.

The Environmental Health officer agrees that local air quality conditions do not currently exceed air quality standards and that the development impact upon local air quality is insignificant. During the construction works the construction management plan will govern the management of short term air quality impacts, including dust and fumes.

Sustainable Drainage and Floodrisk

The site is located within the low flood risk zone 1. National and Local Plan policies raise no objection to development in this location. More detailed assessment shows that groundwater levels are close to surface level and this is a consideration in the approach to surface water drainage.

Policies DM20 & DM21 require the use of Sustainable drainage measures (SuDS) for major developments on already-developed sites. An objective of this approach is to attain a new pattern of drainage and surface water storage which comes as close as possible to that of undeveloped land.

The proposed drainage strategy relies upon the use of permeable surfaces around the building to allow percolation of rainwater. A series of below-ground storage tanks are also proposed so that surplus rainwater can be stored and slowly released into the public sewer at a controlled rate.

Water quality is also covered by Local Plan policies. The applicant's strategy uses the granular base of the permeable paved area to act as a filter. Gullies are also included, and would be implemented under a planning condition. Drainage consultees, including the County Lead Local Flood Authority and Southern Water are satisfied with this approach and a final further comment has been requested from the County Council to check whether any further details would be required, in which case the recommended planning condition could be appropriately adjusted.

Biodiversity, Landscaping and Trees

The existing site offers low biodiversity value, due to being largely hard-surfaced with only fringes of non-native hedging, scattered trees and, although there is a modest area of lawn to the west of the recently demolished temporary buildings, albeit this has low biodiversity value.

The Environment Act 2024 and Local Plan Policy DM18 require that development of this scale (major development), must produce a biodiversity net gain value of at least 10%, the Local Plan requires 20% for previously developed sites such as this. In line with this requirement, the applicant has submitted a Biodiversity Gain Plan, prepared by an ecologist using nationally prescribed measurements of biodiversity value. In parallel the proposals include an Ecology Assessment with biodiversity enhancement measures corresponding to a proposed landscaping strategy.

The application is supported by a Tree Constraints Plan, existing Tree Schedule and Landscape Design Strategy. These documents confirm that no trees would be removed or affected by the proposal.

The existing hedging would also be retained. The low value lawn would be reorganised into a series of individual planted spaces around a re-planned permeable pathway and amenity area, with new seating. These planted spaces would include wildflower meadow planting, new hedges and shrubs using native plants, and additional trees. The following are included:

- Seed and fruit bearing tree species to provide a foraging resource for birds and insects.
- Log and compost piles in habitat creation areas to provide for reptiles and amphibians
- A small bare earth ‘bee bank’ to provide habitat for mining bees.
- Bird and bat boxes into new buildings, and ‘bug-hotels’, and invertebrate boxes in both sunny and sheltered locations,
- Bird, and bat boxes to mature trees.
- Incorporation of small structures to serve as ‘Hedgehog Homes’

The Biodiversity Gain Plan indicates that overall biodiversity value will increase by 29.6%, and the hedgerow component by 189%. Both of these are well in excess of Statutory and policy requirements and provide a strong, positive benefit. A more detailed landscape and biodiversity plan can be required by a planning condition to deliver these measures and the landscape strategy. This would include ecologist’s confirmation of the net gain values.

Long term management is required by statute for a period of 30 years and this would need to be secured by an appropriate s106 agreement ensuring the delivering of the biodiversity net gain and appropriate monitoring fees are paid to the Council.

Highways, Accessibility and Parking

Policy DM15 of the Worthing Local Plan states that the Council will promote and support development that prioritises active travel by walking, cycling, non-motorised user routes and public transport, and reduces the proportion of journeys made by car.

A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan has been submitted with the planning application.

Cycling
The site is well located in terms of cycling connectivity, with the A2032 benefiting from a shared cycle/footway to the northern side of the carriageway. There is a shared cycle/footway bridge over the A2032, to the east of the Goring Crossways Roundabout. In addition, there is a shared cycle/footway on Goring Street. The residential area to the south of the site provides the potential for routes on quieter residential roads. The wider college site already benefits from a range of cycle parking, changing facilities and showers, in accordance with local cycle parking standards.

Bus
The nearest bus stops are located adjacent to the college on the A2032, with the westbound stop located at the overbridge ramp, with a walking distance of 220m (2-minutes), and the eastbound stop located adjacent to the college around 90m (1-minute) walking distance from the site. Further bus stops are located on Limbrick Lane to the east, and Yeoman Road to the east, a walking distance of around 750m (10-minutes).

Rail
The nearest railway station, Goring-by-Sea, is located approximately 800m walking distance (10-minutes) to the south of the site.

Parking
The site presently benefits from 245 standard car parking spaces (including 6 EV charging bays), 12 accessible parking spaces, and 128 cycle parking spaces.

Services/Deliveries
Servicing and deliveries will be retained as per the existing arrangements on site.

Conclusion
The proposals will not involve an increase in student or staff numbers, but provide an improvement to the facilities and amenities available to existing students. The college already provides an appropriate level of car and cycle parking which accords with parking standards.

Travel Plan

The site is well located to provide and promote travel by sustainable means, with good pedestrian and cyclist facilities in the area, as well as a realistic and frequent offering of public transport opportunities. The Travel Plan represents a long-term strategy that aims to promote the use of sustainable and active modes of travel and reduce vehicular movements for journeys to/from the site.

The overall aims of the Travel Plan are to:

- Minimise the carbon emissions and environmental impacts of all aspects of the developments' travel activity;
- Minimise the development's impact on the congestion, noise and emissions generated on surrounding roads;

- Raise awareness of the sustainable, attractive and safe travel options available to staff, and students; and
- Promote and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes by highlighting the benefits including improved physical fitness and reduced environmental impacts.

The travel plan sets out the measures proposed to promote walking, cycling and public transport which include:

- Noticeboards provided with local area walking and cycling maps, setting out health and cost saving benefits of walking and cycling.
- Extensive cycle parking is provided in accordance with the current standards and cyclist facilities such as lockers, showers and changing rooms will be provided.
- A pedestrian and cyclist friendly development, for all types of user, regardless of the level of mobility or visual impairment.
- Lighting, landscaping and shelter is already present in the surrounding area to create pleasant pedestrian waiting areas.
- Public Transport will be promoted through the College notice board.
- Cycle Training
- Cycle to Work Scheme for staff

WSCC Highways have confirmed that with regards to impact of the proposal on the local highway network, given only a marginal increase in staff over the site and no proposed increase in student numbers it is agreed that the proposal is unlikely to have any detrimental impact on the public highway.

The proposals are suitably supported with appropriate car and cycle parking provision and supported by a Travel Plan, and as such, there are no transport grounds to resist the development. The s106 agreement will also need to secure delivery of the Travel Plan and monitoring fee required by the County Council.

Land Remediation

The Preliminary Geotechnical and Preliminary Contamination Status Assessment Report was submitted with the application and confirms that the first stage of ground investigation to check for historic contamination, has been completed. It is recommended that further investigations be undertaken in order to provide a level of assessment sufficient to satisfy designers, as well as the requirements of regulators and/or warrantors.

Environmental Health have recommended the addition of a Full Contamination condition to ensure all risks from contamination are investigated and any necessary remedial measures are taken.

Archaeology

An Archaeological Evaluation has been submitted with the application and assessed by the Historic Environment Consultant.

The report details that multiple archaeological features were uncovered in each of the excavated trenches, with the majority dating from the Roman period and tentatively interpreted as being associated with the nearby villa complex.

The results of the evaluation, combined with the high archaeological potential of the site generally, strongly suggests that further significant archaeological remains will survive on the proposed development site and be negatively impacted by the groundworks associated with the development proposals. Accordingly, it is recommended that a programme of archaeological mitigation/preservation in situ is undertaken on the site prior to the commencement of development. A condition to this effect will be applied.

Lighting

A lighting statement has been submitted which states that lighting will be directional, predominantly low-level, pointed away from ecological assets and neighbours and will avoid light spill. Light intensities are targeted on the access road with lower intensities around the building. Although the site is within a suburban area, this approach can be seen as an acknowledgement that the wider Northbrook complex adjoins the edge of the South Downs National Park (west of Titnore Lane), which is an International Dark Skies Reserve.

A planning condition is recommended to require that any external lighting should not exceed the terms set out in the lighting statement.

Summary

The proposed development would result in improvements to education facilities and provision to serve the local population within the Borough. The detailed design of the building has been carefully considered to integrate well with the existing buildings on site and surrounding development in terms of scale, form, height, materials and siting and would make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The development would not result in any significant detrimental impact or loss of amenity for local residents and the proposal would comply with the relevant noise levels.

Heating and renewable electricity generation is to be provided via a combination of air source heat pumps and solar PV panels and the development would meet the required energy & CO2 targets. There would be no adverse impact on Air Quality in the locality. The site is located within flood risk zone 1 indicating a low flood level risk. Details of sustainable drainage measures (SuDS) have been provided with the application and have been agreed in principle by the County Lead Local Flood Authority and Southern Water.

The submitted Biodiversity Gain Plan and Metric indicates that the overall biodiversity value will increase by more than 20% and in excess of Statutory and policy requirements for major schemes, therefore providing significant benefits for biodiversity on site.

The proposal would not result in any significant increase in vehicular movements or student numbers as the intention is to improve existing facilities. Sufficient car and

cycle parking is already provided on site which is located in a sustainable location well served by public transport and easily accessible by foot and cycle.

An Archaeological Evaluation accompanies the application, detailing artefacts found during trial trenches. The Historic Environment Consultant has recommended a programme of archaeological mitigation/preservation to preserve the archaeological remains found on site.

Lighting would respect the designated International Dark Skies Reserve of the South Downs National Park located to the west of the site.

The application is therefore considered to accord with Local Plan policies, The NPPF and National Guidance and is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the receipt of a planning obligation securing the biodiversity net gain and delivery of the Travel Plan with appropriate monitoring fees to the Borough and County Councils and the following planning conditions:

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard Time Limit
3. Surface Water Drainage - Details for approval and implementation
4. Maintenance/management of Drainage
5. Surface Water Drainage Completion Report
6. Full Contaminated Land Condition - surveys and any arising remediation works and verification (Phase 1 survey already complete)
7. Construction Management Plan - approval and implementation
8. Programme of archaeological mitigation
9. CO2 reduction and renewable energy Verification of Energy, Thermal and Carbon Efficiency within 3 months of completion
10. Samples/details of Materials
11. Details of solar panels
12. Travel Plan - measures and initiatives to be implemented as per approved document
13. Hours of construction
14. Biodiversity and Landscaping - detailed plan to be submitted, approved and implemented, including verification of biodiversity net gain in accordance with the submitted Biodiversity Gain Plan, Ecological Impact Assessment and Landscape Strategy.
15. Lighting - any external lighting to conform with the details and not exceed the specifications contained in the lighting statement submitted with the application, unless otherwise agreed.
16. Details of external plant compound and materials store

19 June 2024

Local Government Act 1972
Background Papers:

As referred to in individual application reports

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