

Heritage Team Response

Date – 19/4/2022

APP/22/00172

Site – Langstone Technology Park, Havant

Proposed development:

Outline Planning Application for Phased demolition of existing buildings and the erection of new flexible use employment floorspace (Use Classes E(g)(i)-(iii)/B2/B8) and ancillary uses (Use Classes E(b), E(d) and E(f)); and associated works. All matters reserved except Access.

The Site

Langstone Technology Park consists of four main buildings of modular construction with minimalist landscaping linking around the buildings.

The site is a 'campus style' industrial park with buildings dating from the early 1970s. Originally built for IBM it housed one of two manufacturing plants in the UK. The smallest building was the first to be built on the site and appears in the In-house Arup Journal April 1971 the caption refers to the building being completed in 1970.

The buildings were designed and built by Arup with landscaping for the courtyard and grounds by James Russell. Design 39 Journal – VADS reports that 'the Financial Times award for industrial architecture 1972' was won by 'the new plant at Havant, Hampshire, designed by Arup Associates'.

In terms of social history, the sites links with the development of the computing technology is of significance.

Building 6000 was put forward for statutory listing in 2019 however, it did not meet the requirements and was subsequently turned down for listing. However, the current buildings because of their design/construction provenance and social history significance are considered collectively as non-designated heritage assets. Whilst the existing building are quite plain by today's standards, they do represent an era of design and have by their association to Arup a certain level of standing in terms of design.

Legislative and Policy Context

When assessing the proposal, the following legislation and policy context is taken in consideration.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the policies that the Council must take into account when determining planning applications. The 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2', states at paragraph 4:

'The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest' and provides at paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 that in order for the Local Planning Authority to make decisions in line with legal requirements, the objectives of the development plan; and, the policy requirements of the NPPF, great importance is placed on understanding the nature, extent and level of the significance of the heritage asset.

The revised NPPF sets out in Chapter 16, the core principles relating to development affecting Heritage Assets that local planning authorities should consider in making planning decisions in the following paragraphs:

‘189. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

196. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Considering potential impacts

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Local Policy

With regards to local planning policy, the following are relevant:

Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that:

Protects and where appropriate enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites, buildings of local historic or architectural interest.

Policy CP16 (1a) of the Core Strategy states Planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. All development should demonstrate that its design:

Identifies and responds positively to existing features of natural, historic or local character within or close to the proposed development site.

Policy DM20 of the Allocations Plan states that development proposals must conserve and enhance the historic assets of Havant.

Proposal:

The proposal is for an outline application to demolish the existing buildings on the site and erection of new buildings to accommodate flexible employment floorspace. This would include the demolition of the buildings which have been identified as non-designated heritage assets in the 2021 pre-application response.

Assessment:

The application is accompanied by an updated Heritage Statement (February 2022) by EDP. This includes an assessment of the historical significance of the site and its buildings. The report concludes the following key points:

“The buildings of the Langstone Technology Park occupy the former IBM manufacturing complex established in the late 1960s. The assessment has demonstrated that the factory was built for IBM as the second manufacturing plant in the UK and as part of a larger global expansion of all IBM facilities.

“In terms of its architectural interest, the factory was built at a time of great change within the approach to the design and function of factories, and yet it is not in itself at the cutting edge of either the technology of construction, design of plan form or implementation of forward thinking, especially when compared to other comparable factories of the period. This is clearly recognised in its rejection for statutory listing by Historic England and the buildings within the complex carry no statutory protection as a consequence.

“It is recognised that, collectively, the complex as a whole has a modicum of architectural interest in the broadest terms at local level, insofar as they are representative of an expanding technological industry in the latter part of the 20th century within the area. This little interest is not represented in the whole of the complex however, and it is apparent that few areas remain unaltered”.

Whilst the heritage statement recognises that buildings have collective, local historic interest, it does not conclude that the loss of the non-designated heritage assets would result in any harm. Para 203 of the NPPF (July 2021) states that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”.

As the proposal would result in the total loss of the buildings, it is considered that ‘**substantial harm**’ will result. As such, the proposal cannot be supported on heritage grounds. The wider benefits of the proposal would therefore have to be weighed up against this level of harm going forward in an application.

If it is deemed necessary to approve the application, it is advised that a condition is included which requires a historic building record to be carried out prior to the demolition of the buildings (suggested wording provided below):

1. Prior to the demolition of the building known as ‘Building 6000’, a historic building record (including a full photographic record of the exterior and interior of the building), shall be submitted to, approved and will be retained by the Local Planning Authority. Original photographs suitably referenced, dated and supplemented by a key plan will be needed in fulfilment of this condition.

Reason - To serve as a record of the building in its existing state. It is considered necessary for this to be a pre-commencement condition as these details need to be agreed prior to the demolition of the building and thus go to the heart of the planning permission.

Conclusion

As the proposal would result in the total loss of the Building 6000, which is considered to be a non-designated hertiage asset, it is considered that '**substantial harm**' will result. As such, the proposal cannot be supported on heritage grounds. As advised in paragraph 203 of the NPPF, the wider benefits of the proposal would therefore have to be weighed up against this level of harm going forward in an application.

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