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| Application No: 11/00722/F | Ward: Launton | Date Valid: 19/05/11 |
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Applicant: Carillion – Mr David Creasy c/o agent

Site Address: St Georges Barracks, Arncott Wood Road, Arncott, Bicester

Proposal: 3 Storey Single Living Accommodation (SLA) building (BC1220) with associated service road and hard and soft landscaping.

1. Site Description and Proposal

1.1 Site

St George's Barracks forms the principal development within Bicester Garrison and was built mainly in the 1940s. The buildings which form The Barracks are dispersed across the southern slope of Arncott Hill below an area of woodland. A network of tarmac roads and a military railway (most of which is presently disused) link it with key locations around the Arncott Hill and Graven Hill sites.

1.2 To the south of the barracks is 'B-site' which includes some larger warehouse type buildings and isolated areas of hardstanding. Some buildings are used for training purposes and others are let for warehousing and other civilian uses. There are a number of new buildings and facilities approved as part of the existing planning consent 07/01667/F currently under construction.

1.3 The site of the proposed SLA block is located close to the base of Arncott Hill on gently rising ground to the south of Arncott Wood Road (the principal access route) and just to the north of B site. The site occupies the eastern end of an existing informal playing field associated with the barracks and is characterised by closely mown amenity grassland.

1.4 The site lies to the south west of the main group of buildings of St George's Barracks close to the existing officer's mess (BC0027) which is a uniform 3 storey functional, campus style building built of red/brown facing brick, flat roofs and evenly spaced and sized window and door units on each elevation. The extension to this building and the new accommodation block (BC1001) approved under 07/01667/F are currently under construction.

1.5 Security fencing forms the eastern and southern boundaries of the site with open grassland leading to the north and west and dense scrub and woodland forming the outer boundary of the playing field. An existing ditch leads around the east and southern edges of the site beyond the fencing which is currently being re-trenched in connection with the existing construction works.

1.6 The site is unconstrained in terms of formal historic or environmental designations. There are no public rights of way across the site but some pass near to the southern and northern boundaries.

1.7 Proposal

This application seeks consent for the development of a new Single Living Accommodation (SLA) block to provide additional facilities for Junior Officers to stay within St George's Barracks for land based individual training and courses.

- 1.8 The building is proposed to be 3 storeys in height and similar in style and functionality to the existing blocks in the vicinity and under construction. The facility would provide a total of 117 individual bed sitting rooms arranged equally in three separate wings eventually a T-shaped modular building each with a shallow pitched roof. Each wing would be constructed in phases to provide for the training needs of the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME).
- 1.9 Phase 1 is the block nearest to the existing buildings and would provide for 40 bedsits. Depending on the requirements of the military, Phases 2 and 3 would be constructed around 5 years later. Phase 1 is proposed to have a footprint size of 616 sqm with the complete building totalling 1566.7 sqm. The gross internal floorspace of Phase 1 is proposed to be 1752 sqm and the entire building 4452.6 sqm. Each of the wings are proposed to have near identical internal layouts with each individual bedsit having an ensuite and wc facilities including provision for disabled users. Supporting kitchen, laundry and storage facilities are also provided.
- 1.10 Access is proposed in part along the existing temporary access track. There is a requirement to remove three trees which may be necessary to accommodate the site access extension. Access for the Junior officers will be predominantly by coach which sets down at the approved access road north west of BC0027A.
- 1.11 The application also proposes hard and soft landscaping which includes additional tree planting to soften and screen the buildings appearance from Arncott Wood Road. Also external signage, lighting and new security fencing is proposed.
- 1.12 **Relevant Planning History**
Bicester Garrison lies within both Cherwell DC and Aylesbury Vale DC. Planning permission was granted by Cherwell DC in November 2007 for new build, build, alterations and demolitions of existing military training buildings and ground based facilities, including a new accommodation block, Officers Mess facilities and ancillary operational and staff parking on parts of St Georges Barracks, B-Site, Besterman and Piddington fields, Bicester Garrison, Arncott, Oxfordshire (Reference 07/01667/F). Many of the conditions relating to this have now been discharged. The whole of the site affected by this proposal falls within Cherwell DC.

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by site notice and press notice. The final date for comment was 24 June 2011. No consultation responses have been received representing third party interests.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 Whilst all the responses to the consultation exercise are detailed on the core file, available electronically via our website, a summary of the submissions received is provided below:

- 3.2 Parish Council: Comments awaited.
- 3.3 Environment Agency: No objection subject to a planning note to ensure compliance with the Land Drainage and Water Resources Acts.
- 3.4 Oxfordshire County Council (Highways): No objection subject to condition to ensure a Travel Plan in line with the County's Travel Choices Team including a monitoring fee secured via a Unilateral Undertaking.
- 3.5 Oxfordshire County Council (Drainage): No objection subject to conditions relating to design details, calculations, soakage tests and details of who is responsible for ongoing maintenance.
- 3.6 Oxfordshire County Council (Archaeology): No objection subject to a planning note to ensure that the County are advised if finds occur.
- 3.7 Oxfordshire County Council (Developer Funding Officer): A section 106 agreement is sought to secure funding for library and monitoring.
- 3.8 CDC Ecologist: No objection subject to conditions relating to ensuring ecological enhancements are implemented.
- 3.9 CDC Landscape: No objection but would like the tree species to be more mature than indicated.
- 3.10 CDC Arboriculturalist: No objection subject to conditions.
- 3.11 CDC Environmental Protection Officer: Formal comments awaited.
- 3.12 Thames Water – No objection. No build over agreement is required.

4. Policy Considerations

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| National Policy Guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development • Supplement to PPS1 – Planning & Climate Change • PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment • PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas • PPS9 – Biodiversity & Geological Conservation • PPG13 – Transport • PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control. |
| South East Plan 2009 Policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Cutting – CC1, CC4 & CC6 – Sustainable Development & Sustainable Communities, Design & Construction and Character of the Environment • Transport - T1 & T4 – management, investment and parking • Countryside & Landscape Management - C4 - Landscape and countryside management • Management of the Built Environment - BE1 & BE6 - Management for an urban renaissance and of the historic environment • Natural Resource Management – NRM1, NRM4, NRM10 and NRM11 – Sustainable water resources & groundwater quality, |

Flood risk management, Noise and Development design for energy efficiency and renewable energy

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 saved policies

- C7 – Landscape conservation
- C9 – Compatibility of development with rural location
- C28 – Design, layout etc standards
- ENV1 – Pollution Control
- ENV12 – Contaminated Land

Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

- Transport & Development policies TR1, TR3, TR5, TR9 & TR11
- Conserving & Enhancing the Environment policies EN1, EN15, EN17, EN25, EN34 & EN47
- Urban Design & The Built Environment policies D1, D3, D9,

Cherwell Local Development Framework (LDF) Draft Core Strategy 2010

The draft document went through the first round of public consultation in the Spring of 2010. The second draft is due out for public consultation in the next few weeks. It indicates the strategy that the Council is putting forward and contains a series of key objectives and a number of policies highlighting a focus of growth in and around Bicester with limited growth in the rural areas towards larger and more sustainable villages thereby protecting open countryside areas. Policies seek to mitigate and adapt to climate change and ensure sustainable construction methods including SuDs.

- SD1 – Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
- SD5 – Sustainable Construction
- SD6 – Sustainable Drainage Systems
- SD8 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity & the Natural Environment
- SD11 – Local Landscape Protection & Enhancement
- SD13 – The Built Environment

5. Appraisal

5.1 Introduction

There is no specific policy guidance relating to the on site requirements of the MOD in the district or on this site at Arncott. The development is constrained by the functional needs for the applicant to be on the MOD site to provide facilities for officers training at the site during their time there. The development needs to be flexible to adapt and cater for future training requirements as they evolve over time in response to changing service demands upon the armed forces. To this end, the development is proposed in phases. Phase 1 would comprise 40 bedrooms and perhaps 5 years later phases 2 and 3 would be developed to provide an additional 77 bedsits. All will be for single officers (not married quarters).

5.2 It is considered that the principle issues to address relate to layout, scale & design, landscape impact, highway safety, effect on the cultural heritage of the area and ecology.

5.3 Siting, layout, scale and design

Before settling on the siting for the building as proposed, other sites have been considered but dismissed for reasons described in the submission and this siting

offered the fewest disadvantages in terms of ecology, tree loss and ground conditions generally. The siting proposed is considered to have a sound relationship to other built forms and uses within the site in terms of limiting the impact on the landscape setting and minimising disturbance by providing shared access routes. There are on site opportunities to mitigate the visual impact of the development through landscape screening.

- 5.4 The building is proposed to be laid out in a T shape, once finally complete. The development of phase 1 allows for extensions to enable the 2 remaining wings to be added later. The curtilage is proposed to be laid to lawn with supplementary planting and hard landscaping with pathways linking to the existing buildings. Phase 1 can function independently for a number of years before progressing phases 2 and 3.
- 5.5 It is apparent that the design of the building has been influenced by the previously approved extension to the officer's mess (BC0027A) and the accommodation block (BC1001) which are characterised by a uniformity of a 3 storey brick built functional style. Some breaks in the visual appearance can be achieved by the use of different brick colours and window arrangements but essentially in seeking to achieve a building which needs to serve a specific purpose such an arrangement is accepted.
- 5.6 Impact on the character and appearance of the rural landscape
The site is within the countryside and its present character and appearance is greatly valued. PPS7 advises that the countryside be protected for its own sake and current policies in the local plan (Policies C7 and C8) seek to retain tight control over all development proposals in the countryside. This site is, however, only visible from the public domain of Arcott Wood Road which is owned by the MoD but public access is normally not restricted. Furthermore, the chosen site is considered not to be visually prominent due to its low lying position at the base of Arcott Hill and the existing boundary vegetation to the south and west and the existing Barracks to the east.
- 5.7 In consultation with the landscape officer, having assessed the impact of the development from key viewpoints towards the site the overall impact on the landscape setting is not so great provided a landscaping scheme to further soften the development can be agreed. The landscape proposal as submitted is considered acceptable as a balance needs to be struck between ensuring an appropriate level of screening and softening against the military constraints and requirements to ensure that there would be no increase in the vulnerability of the building to terrorist attack. The planting scheme as submitted is designed to allow clear visibility to and from areas accessible to the public to deter an attack.
- 5.8 Ecology
The application is supported by an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey which was carried out in April this year. It supplements other works undertaken as part of the 2007 consent and further surveys of identified European Protected Species as well as other birds and reptiles. The Council's ecologist is satisfied that the recommendations in the submission are appropriate and the ecological enhancements will be beneficial in this location and in line with government guidance in PPS9. These are recommended as conditions of the granting of planning permission.

5.9 Effect on the Heritage Assets

PPS5 advises on how applications, that would affect heritage assets, should be considered. It should be noted that the overarching aim is that the 'historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved'. A key objective is 'to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past'. In this case, there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks & Gardens, no Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings. The Desk Based Assessment submitted with the application revealed that whilst there are some historic archaeological remains within the wider study area, none are within the proposed development area. A watching brief is recommended and agreed with the applicant.

5.10 Highway Safety

The Barracks is accessed by car predominantly from the A41 to/from the north west in the direction of Bicester and through the villages of Ambrosden and Lower and Upper Arncott. Public transport is available to the site by bus and to Bicester by rail. The applicants have previously recognised a need to contribute towards traffic calming and improvements which has been provided under the 2007 consent. However, they make the case, through the Framework Travel Plan which accompanies the application, that any there would only be a minimal further impact which would not justify further junction improvements.

5.11 The County Council, as highway authority, is satisfied that the application represents a safe and sustainable development, subject to standard conditions. However, the view is also held that the submitted Travel Plan is not considered to be as full and detailed as expected so it is further recommended that a Travel Plan for this development is conditioned and the required monitoring fee (£900) can be secured via a Unilateral Undertaking. The applicant has confirmed agreement to this request.

5.12 Other matters

During the course of the application, comments were received from the Developer Funding Team at Oxfordshire County Council. The latest position held by them is that contributions should be made towards libraries because it has been found that students use County libraries as well as their own facilities and similar results were found at Sheltered Housing. In house facilities are helpful but do not fully mitigate the impact and this has been accepted at West Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. However, the proposed barracks are to provide specialist army training for single living accommodation for Officers and soldiers, not students which is considered not to be an appropriate comparable. The Officers and soldiers are unlikely to travel outside the garrison to the public libraries given the facilities provided on site. It is for these reasons that it is recommended that contributions for this need should not be sought from the applicant.

6. Recommendation

Approval, subject to:

- a) the applicant providing a unilateral undertaking relating to the monitoring fee to secure the recommendations of the agreed Travel Plan, and
- b) the following conditions:
 1. SC1.4 (RC2)
 2. Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the

development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents listed below:

Planning, Design and Access Statement dated May 2011 by Atkins, and dwg nos.

ATK/DR/LS/BC/1002/0001

ATK/DR/LS/BC/1002/0002

ATK/DR/CI/BC/1002/9501

CBS-DR-AR-MO-BC1002-101-10 Rev 02

CBS-DR-AR-MO-BC1002-101-20 Rev 03

CBS-DR-AR-MO-BC1002-101-30 Rev 03

CBS-DR-AR-MO-BC1002-120-00 Rev 04

CBS-DR-AR-MO-BC1002-120-01 Rev 03

Reason – For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and comply with Government guidance contained within PPS 1.

3. That the landscaping scheme shall be carried out strictly in accordance with drawing numbers FIGURE LS BC1002 01, 02 and 03, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (RC10A)
4. SC3.1A (RC10A)
5. That before the development is first occupied the access track shall be constructed, surfaced, laid and marked out, drained and completed in accordance with specification details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development (RC14AA)
6. Full design details of the drainage (SuDs) including calculations and soakage tests shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. (RC67AA)
7. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations made under Chapter 5 'Coordination, Implementation & Monitoring' of the Framework Travel Plan Report by Atkins dated May 2011 and the details of the Final Travel Plan to be formulated and agreed in consultation with the County Council unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (RC13BB)
8. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey by Thomson Ecology dated April 2011 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (RC85A)
9. An archaeological watching brief shall be undertaken to monitor intrusive groundworks associated with the accommodation block's foundations and associated services and access roads.
Reason - In the interests of archaeological investigation or recording and to comply with Government advice in PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment and Policy BE6 of the South East Plan 2009.
10. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations and specifications set out in the Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and/or the Tree Protection Plan (TPP) submitted by Atkins dated 01/03/2011 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason - To ensure that no proposed operations impair the health of any retained trees in the interests of the visual amenity of the area, and to comply with Policy C4 of the South East Plan 2009 and Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.
11. No works or development shall take place until a scheme of supervision for the arboricultural protection measures has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme will be appropriate to the scale and duration of the works and should include details of:

a) induction and personnel awareness of arboricultural matters,

- b) identification of individual responsibilities and key personnel,
- c) timing and methods of scheduled arboricultural site monitoring, record keeping, and the subsequent submission of information to the LPA.
- d) procedures for dealing with variations and incidents.

The Local Planning Authority may require the scheme of supervision to be administered by a qualified arboriculturist approved by the Local Planning Authority but instructed by the applicant.

Reason - To ensure that no proposed operations impair the health of any retained trees in the interests of the visual amenity of the area, to ensure the integration of the development in to the existing landscape and to comply with Policy C4 of the South East Plan 2009 and Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

12. The development hereby permitted shall be used as single living accommodation for military training purposes only and shall not be used for any residential purpose, temporary or permanent.

Reason – For the avoidance of doubt and because the Local Planning Authority would not accept new dwellings on this site due to the open countryside location and to comply with Central Government Guidance in PPS7.

13. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted a desk study and site walk over to identify all potential contaminative uses on site, and to inform the conceptual site model shall be carried out by a competent person and in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11' and shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall take place until the Local Planning Authority has given its written approval that it is satisfied that no potential risk from contamination has been identified.

Reason - To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy ENV12 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control.

14. If a potential risk from contamination is identified as a result of the work carried out under condition 13, prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a comprehensive intrusive investigation in order to characterise the type, nature and extent of contamination present, the risks to receptors and to inform the remediation strategy proposals shall be documented as a report undertaken by a competent person and in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11' and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall take place unless the Local Planning Authority has given its written approval that it is satisfied that the risk from contamination has been adequately characterised as required by this condition.

Reason – as condition 13.

15. If contamination is found by undertaking the work carried out under condition 14, prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a scheme of remediation and/or monitoring to ensure the site is suitable for its proposed use shall be prepared by a competent person and in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11' and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall take place until the Local Planning Authority has given its written approval of the scheme of remediation and/or monitoring required by this condition.

Reason – as condition 13.

16. If remedial works have been identified in condition 15, the remedial works shall be

carried out in accordance with the scheme approved under condition 15. The development shall not be occupied until a verification report (referred to in PPS23 as a validation report), that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason – as condition 13.

Planning Note:

1. Attention is drawn to the legal agreement in the form of a Unilateral Undertaking which has been made pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. The applicant is advised that the erection of flow control structures or any culverting of a watercourse requires the prior written approval of the Environment Agency under s.23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 or s.109 of the Water Resources Act 1991. The Environment Agency resists culverting on nature conservation and other grounds and consent for such works will not normally be granted except for access crossings.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION AND RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The Council, as Local Planning Authority, has determined this application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. The development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits being of a layout, scale and design appropriate in its context. It will not cause harm to the visual amenities of the wider rural landscape, acknowledged archaeological interests, highway safety or ecology. The proposal, therefore, complies with government guidance contained in PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment), PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas), PPS9 (Biodiversity & Geological Conservation) and PPG13 (Transport), PPS23 (Planning and Pollution Control), Policies CC1, CC4, CC6, T1, T4, C4, C6, BE1, BE6 and NRM1 of the South East Plan 2009 and Policies C7, C9, C28, ENV1 and ENV12 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the Council considers that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions, as set out above.

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