

06/01961/REM

**ERECTION OF 95 RESIDENTIAL UNITS, 3 OFFICE UNITS, ASSOCIATED PARKING, OPEN SPACE AND PLAY AREA (APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS FOR 02/01857/OUT) - DUPLICATE APPLICATION AT Former EMEB Offices, Old Wolverton Road, Old Wolverton
FOR KingsOak (Milton Keynes) Ltd
(as amended by drawings received 24.01.2007)**

INTRODUCTION

The 13 week target date for this major planning application expires on 2 March 2007. The former EMEB (East Midlands Electricity Board) site is located to the south of Old Wolverton Road and the north of the Grand Union canal. The site is triangular in shape and is currently vacant following the demolition of the single storey flat roofed office buildings. There are a number of trees along the southern boundary adjacent to the canal and to the west of the site. The site is flat and there is a substantial drop down the embankment to the canal.

Opposite the site is open countryside and a number of Grade II listed buildings including Manor Cottages and Manor Farm (with converted outbuildings). The buildings are all sited within a Scheduled Ancient Monument, an extensive site comprising a deserted village, monastic grange and castle. To the east of the application site is an industrial and employment site (which includes a bad neighbour designation in the Local Plan). Immediately adjacent is a bus depot which has a vehicle wash located adjacent to the south east corner of the application site. To the south of the canal is a 1960's and 1970's residential area, comprising mainly detached and semi-detached houses. Wolverton Conservation Area abuts part of the south boundary of the site. A public bridleway crosses the site.

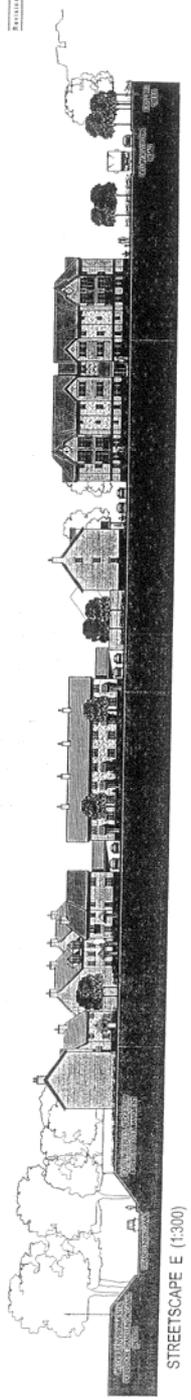
CURRENT APPLICATION

The current application was a duplicate application to application 06/01016/REM when originally submitted. It has now been revised through the submission of amended plans and the two applications whilst similar are no longer identical.

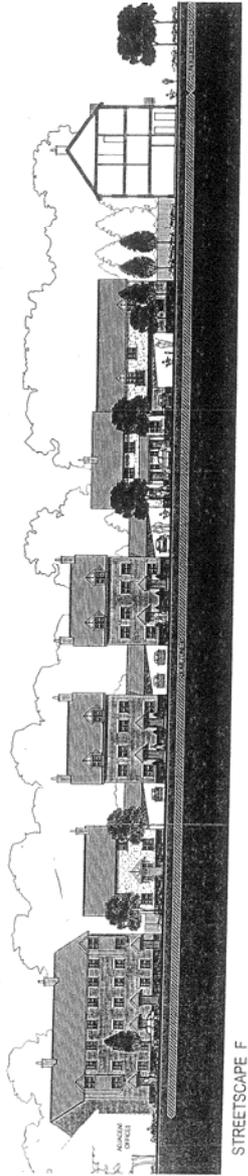
The site has outline planning permission for a mix of residential units and live/work units.

The current application, whilst a reserved matters application pursuant to outline permission 02/01857/OUT, no longer contains any live/work element. The owner of the site had difficulty in disposing the site for live/work purposes. As a result the proposal is for 95 residential units and office development (2607m²).

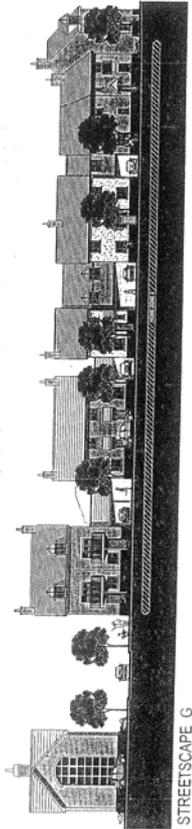
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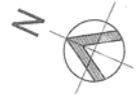
STREETSCAPE E (1:300)



STREETSCAPE F



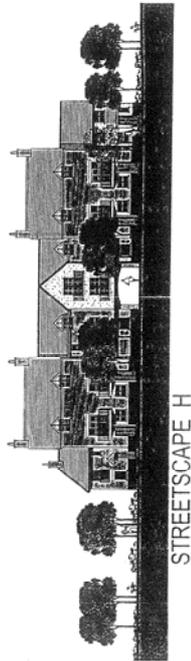
STREETSCAPE G



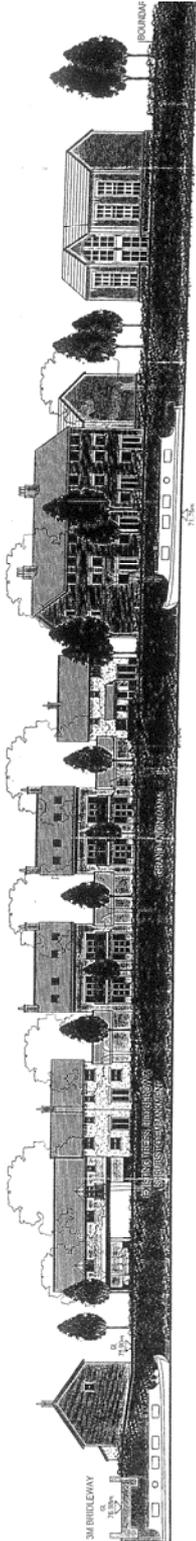
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PROJECT: MANOR GARDENS
 ARCHITECT: MULLIN
 ADDRESS: 1000
 DATE: 06/19/06



STREETSCAPE H



STREETSCAPE J



PROJECT: MANOR GARDENS
 ARCHITECT: MULLIN
 ADDRESS: 1000
 DATE: 06/19/06

06/19/06/REM
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The residential dwellings are a mix of tenure and type. There are a total of 4 one bedroom flats, 39 two bed flats, 2 two bed houses, 32 three bed houses + 18 four bed houses (of which 17 two bed flats, 7 three bed houses + 4 four bed houses will be affordable (28)). They are located in the western and central part of the site. The development has two 'themes' or character areas, the 'industrial edge' and 'canal side'. A four storey block of 7 flats is proposed in the north western corner of the site fronting onto Old Wolverton Road. Three other groups of dwellings are proposed with a mix of dwelling types rising up to three storeys in height. There is an emphasis on perimeter blocks with a mix of roof heights, designs and use of materials. There is frontage development onto Old Wolverton Road, set back from the highway by two access roads.

There are two access points to serve the development, the main access is located in the centre of the site, the other to the east serving the offices and houses in the eastern area. An area of open space is provided together with a play area within the centre of the site adjacent to canal. A red way and bridle path cross the site. A total of 170 car parking spaces are proposed as part of the residential element of the scheme.

The office development is located on the eastern boundary of the site next to existing industrial buildings. A three storey detached building is located at the front of the site, set back from the highway by a minimum of 18m with a landscaped area to front. A line of two storey offices front the secondary access to the site. Parking is provided within a large parking area to the rear of the two buildings abutting the flank boundary. And a third building is sited immediately adjacent to the boundary with the bus depot. A total of 87 parking spaces to serve the office element are proposed.

MAIN ISSUES

1. Principle of development of the site
2. Whether the layout, siting and design of the dwellings and office development will be acceptable.
3. Relationship between the dwellings and office development.
4. Car parking provision and highway issues
5. Landscaping and open space.
6. Impact on the adjacent Conservation Area and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
7. S.106 contributions.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy
PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Communities
Draft PPS3 - Housing
PPG13 - Transport
PPG 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment

Milton Keynes Local Plan
D1 Impact of Development Proposals on Locality
D2A Urban Design Aspects of New Developments
D3 Canalside Development
D4 Sustainable Construction
NE2 Protected Species
NE3 Biodiversity and Geological Enhancement
E7 Sites for Bad Neighbours
T10 Traffic
T15 Parking Provision
H1 Land Allocated for Housing
H2- H5 Affordable Housing
H8 Housing Density
H9 Housing Mix
L3 Open Space Standards of Provision
P01 & P02 Planning Obligations
P04 Percent for Art

Supplementary Planning Guidance
Former EMEB site Old Wolverton Development Brief 2003
Milton Keynes Parking Standards 2005

PLANNING HISTORY

00/1738/FUL - the erection of a building for general industrial use (class B2) with associated car parking, landscaping and access. The scheme was recommended for refusal and an appeal lodged against non determination of the application. The appeal was withdrawn before determination by the Planning Inspectorate.

01/01076/FUL - 7 storage and distribution units with ancillary sales (trade counters) was submitted in November 2001, withdrawn.

02/01064/FUL - mixed use application for residential and commercial units, this application was not proceeded with.

02/01857/OUT - residential development (approx 43 units) and live/work units (approx 43 units) (outline application), permitted.

05/00508/FUL - erection of 142 dwellings including 48 live work units, access road, associated parking, open space and play area, withdrawn.

06/01016/REM - erection of 94 residential units, 3 office units, associated parking, open space and play area (approval of reserved matters for 02/01857/OUT). No decision has been made on the application to date, the application has been amended to 95 dwellings.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Senior Engineer Highways Development Control has no objection in principle to the scheme but requires a number of small alterations to widen and lengthen some car parking spaces and provide a waiting space adjacent to plots 33-39

Urban Design - overall the amendments have resulted in a more acceptable scheme. But further changes are required:

- * Relationship between units 82-85 and the adjacent office building is unacceptable.
- * A design feature needs to be introduced into the side of units 60 & 61.
- * The landscaped area to the front of the main office block should include a more interesting planting scheme.
- * Residential block F1 and F2 should include a more animated frontage to Old Wolverton Road.
- * Consideration needs to be given to the relationship between the bridleway and redway.
- * The relationship between units 71-73 and 74 is unacceptable.
- * A more positive elevation to unit 73 should be introduced.

Design and Conservation - comments that the revised application addresses a number of the previous concerns, but notes that there are still areas which should be improved. Namely, the relationship between unit 73 and the entrance to the conservation area, there are also criticisms of the quality of the scheme, the lack of respect for the historic character of the area and insensitive treatment of elevations and facades. It is recommended that the application be approved subject to the receipt of satisfactory amended plans and suitable conditions.

Landscape Officer - has raised objections to the division of the public open space by the bridleway and redway, and safety fencing between the two. This greatly reduces the usability of the open space, and also results in the central access being dominated by highway elements. He also raises objections to the loss of a good quality ash tree, and the relationship between a good quality oak tree and the adjacent path and flats.

Chief Environmental Health Officer - comments awaited

Development Plans (sustainability) - the application is accompanied by a sustainable construction statement, but there is a lot of information missing and at present the scheme does not comply with Policy D4. The applicants have been asked to supply additional information.

Waste and Energy Division would like to see more energy saving/energy generation measures in the residential areas. A number of comments were made about the narrowness of roads and potential problems with refuse and recycling collection. There also does not appear to be a plan for waste management in either the residential or office areas.

Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council acknowledge that the current scheme is far improved from the original application, but there are still some outstanding matters that should be addressed: There are no details of materials; the location of chimney pots needs to be further considered; the office complex has been well received, but there is an unnecessary chimney pot which should be removed and replaced with a clock tower and the building should be of a red brick construction; there is a strong desire for retail space

to be included within the office complex; the proposed redway should be extended along the length of the site; have not seen any sustainability details; should be s.106 contribution towards improvements to the canal towpath.

Environment Agency - No objection in principle, but make the following comments: the layout is appropriate and is responsive to adjacent land uses; the access road and rear gardens fronting the canal are not appropriate and do not make the most of the canal environment; the proposed landscape layout is also supported but needs a management plan; a S.106 contribution should be sought for works to canal paths as a result of increased use from the development.

Buckingham and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board requires the imposition of conditions to ensure that the storm water design and construction details are acceptable.

1 third party letter of representation has been received raising concerns about the potential loss of trees along the canal boundary and a resulting loss of privacy.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development of the site

The principle of residential development on the site was carefully considered at outline planning stage. It was considered that the introduction of live/work units together with more traditional residential properties could provide an attractive environment within close proximity of the canal and the open countryside. However, the establishment of a significant number of live/work units (43) proved problematic when trying to dispose of the site, there was a level of uncertainty about the proposed use and whether it would be successful on such a large scale in Wolverton. As a result, the two current applications were submitted with a similar number of properties (within 10%) and the introduction of B1 office use to compensate for the loss of the live/work units. Whilst the live/work element may have been an exciting concept, it is considered that the introduction of offices provides more practical and deliverable employment opportunities. Furthermore the location of the office development along the eastern boundary of the site provides a buffer between the more noisy employment uses on adjacent sites and the proposed residential development.

Whether the layout, siting and design of the dwellings and office development will be acceptable.

The adopted development brief contains substantial detail and guidance on the type, form and design of potential development of the site. An emphasis was placed on contemporary architecture with the use of high quality materials. The submitted application is a more standard large house builder form of development, typical of many areas across Milton Keynes. The opportunity to introduce innovative and exciting architecture on the site has

been lost, but as the development has moved away from the brief in terms of the use (i.e. no live/work units) and is next to standard housing along Old Wolverton Road, then there is an argument for accepting more traditional forms of dwellings.

The two perimeter blocks fronting Old Wolverton Road are robust and will provide a varied and attractive edge to Old Wolverton Road. A strong entrance to the site is provided by the non symmetrical gateway formed by three storey flats, The access is wide to provide an adequate easement and access to underground services. The third block of dwellings is less cohesive, but does provide a frontage overlooking the open space.

The office element of the scheme has been designed to reflect canalside buildings and the more traditional railway works buildings in Wolverton. The pitched roofs, brick elevations and glazing patterns provide interesting elevational features.

Although the dwellings are standard developer house types, and some of the dwellings may be too deep, or too tall, and some of the details could be improved, on balance the scheme has improved with continued dialogue with the developers and it is considered that the scheme meets the requirements of Policies D1 and D2A.

Relationship between the dwellings and offices

The size, bulk and scale of the office units are acceptable within close proximity of residential dwellings. The height of the units and their linear location along the boundary ensures that they do not dominate the houses. The office units also provide a buffer between the more noisy activities that occur at the industrial units and the proposed residential dwellings. In particular a vehicle wash on the adjoining site has been the subject of concerns from residents in Longville, and the erection of linear buildings along the boundary should help to reduce the noise levels. The office development also provides a transition from the large scale bulky industrial buildings to the smaller scale residential properties.

Car parking provision and highway issues

The proposed development has adequate off street parking to serve both the office and residential elements of the scheme. Parking is provided to the rear of dwellings wherever possible with the use of relatively small courtyard car parks. As with a lot of new developments, spaces are provided under flying freeholds. Provision has also been made for on street parking where appropriate to provide visitor parking. Parking for the offices is provided within a long linear parking area adjacent to the boundary. Whilst this is not a particularly attractive parking area, it does help to provide a buffer from the industrial units and the parking will not be visible to any significant degree from the public realm.

Landscaping and open space.

The proposed development has been designed to retain as much of the natural vegetation as possible. As the canalside is outside of the application site, the trees and planting will remain intact in these areas. There are concerns that as some of the dwellings back onto the canal, that there may be shading in some of the gardens and residents may want to remove vegetation at a later stage. Some trees will have to be removed at the front of the site but replacement planting will be introduced. The Landscape Officer has raised objection to the loss of a good quality ash tree, and the shading caused by a good quality oak tree, and further negotiations are taking place. The outline permission had a requirement that an area of open space be provided equivalent to the one that existed within the site previously. This has been provided within the centre of the site adjacent to the canal and adjacent to the red way. This is a logical location and helps to provide a positive entrance to the site. The location of the play area within this area is also welcomed, the exact location of the play area has been the subject of some discussion. As local plan standards require that play areas are located more than 20m from residential properties (in order to protect residential amenity). The proposed location meets this requirement and also a degree of surveillance of the play area is achieved therefore the location is considered acceptable.

One remaining concern is that the bridleway and redway bisect the open space and, as the two paths have to be separated by a fence, they would appear visually dominant and intrusive. However, the relocation of the bridleway (perhaps along the canal) would require a formal diversion which could take a number of months and may not be permitted. Discussions are continuing with the developers and the landscape section to try and ensure the most visually attractive solution whilst meeting the Council's safety obligations.

Impact on the adjacent Conservation Area and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Concerns have been raised by the Conservation Officer regarding the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the conservation area. In particular the wide two storey dwelling, unit 73, is close to the boundary with the canal bridge and would dominate views into and out of the conservation area. The applicants have attempted to amend this element of the scheme, but have failed to improve the bulk of the building and its relationship with the conservation area. The applicants have therefore been requested to amend this part of the scheme further. The remainder of development along the southern boundary of the site is broadly acceptable in terms of the impact on the adjacent conservation area. Therefore the proposal respects the requirements of Policy HE6.

The proposed built development fronting Old Wolverton Road is set back from the highway by 15m, as the scale and form of the development is not

excessively tall or dominant, it is considered that there will not be an undue impact on the setting of the scheduled ancient monument.

S.106 contributions.

The outline application was granted consent subject to a legal agreement requiring financial contributions towards the enhancement of facilities. As the number of proposed residential units on the site has increased by 9, the applicants have agreed to uplift the contributions on a pro-rata basis. Therefore the following contributions are to be made:

- * Canal side improvement works - £54,034 (was £48,900)
- * Education - £237,575 (was £215,000)
- * Open space maintenance - £145,556 (was £131,725)
- * Public transport - £17,680 (was £16,000)
- * Public art, provision of a scheme up to a value of £82,875 (was £75,000).
- * A contribution towards the carbon offset fund (based on £200 per ton of carbon).
- * 30% Affordable housing.

CONCLUSION

Development on this site has been the subject of discussions and negotiations for many years. The current proposal is considered to be a much improved scheme which meets the main requirements of local plan policy. There remain some outstanding matters which need resolution, these are mainly small matters but overall could make a significant difference to the quality of the scheme.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that reserved matters be granted subject to the receipt of satisfactory amended plans and sustainable construction statement and subject to the completion of a supplemental S.106 legal agreement to secure additional financial contributions and affordable housing and vary the live-work element of the 2003 S106 Agreement. And subject to the following conditions: materials, boundary treatment, ground surface areas, removal of PD rights, waste management plan, details of bridleway and redway, landscaping scheme to front of office 1, levels, details of adoptable roads and surface water drainage, parking, landscaping, tree and hedgerow protection, site controls during construction, play area provision, no overhead lines, contamination and sustainable construction.