



SCREENING OPINION

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND & WALES) REGULATIONS 1999.

Site: Land at and to the East of Walsgrave Hospital and Walsgrave Hill Farm.

Description of Development: Distributor road/blue light route from the B4082 linking to the hospital and site for the erection of 600 free market and 150 key worker dwelling units and 1350 space car park and 450 space car park, with compensatory flood storage, noise mitigation measures, community facilities, public open space and landscaping.

The proposal falls within paragraph 10 (b) of schedule 2 of the above Regulations ('Urban Development Project 'of over 0.5ha). No planning application has been submitted. The City Council has been requested to adopt a screening opinion in accordance with Regulation 5 of Part II of the Regulations as to whether the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment such that an Environmental Impact Assessment should be carried out and an Environmental Statement be submitted by the developer containing the information required by Parts I and II of Schedule 4 of the Regulations.

This screening opinion takes into account the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 to the Regulations and is based on the Draft Environmental Statement Scoping Plan of August 2007 reference number UHC001/042/d.

A screening opinion was on 29 January 2007 given for a *similar but substantively different development*.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT

The development is for a total of 750 dwelling units and 1350 space car park to the east of the new acute hospital building. The proposed surface car park lies to the immediate east of the Acute Hospital and Clinical Service Support Department, extending from the footpath R75. The housing land is indicated as two parcels on either side of the River Sowe corridor to the rear of the acute hospital, extending south as far as the Green Belt boundary to the south on the western side of the River and a parallel southern line on the eastern side. A strip of land between the housing site and A46 is allocated for possible noise attenuation. The smaller parcel of land, adjoining the Farber Road residential area, measures about 2.3 hectares and is designated for key worker housing (150 units). The larger area of land, adjoining the A46 measures about 20 hectares, including the noise attenuation area, and is designated for 600 market units.

A distributor road runs through the site. It connects from a new junction with the B4082, north past Hungerley Hall Farm, through an alignment close to the A46 to an indicative roundabout within the main housing area. The roundabout is by-passed by a blue light link road. From the roundabout the distributor road continues north-west, across the River Sowe, with proposed connections to the proposed housing and the new car park. A blue light ambulance route then links into the hospital site. 2 options are shown for the access link to the key worker housing area: one via Farber Road and from the B4082 via the new distributor road.

To the west of the acute hospital to the immediate south of Hall Lane and Rowcroft Road a 450-space car park is proposed.

The River Sowe and Withy Brook corridors and the area within the Green Belt immediately beyond the housing and car parking land is, with the exception of the distributor road, indicated as 'Final proposed floodplain'.

The Scoping Plan also shows a temporary car park to be reinstated to a football pitch to the south of the hospital buildings (as a condition of a previous permission) and a car park to the west of the hospital site, which is to revert to open space within the floodplain.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The site lies on the north eastern side of the City of Coventry, within Walsgrave on Sowe in the Henley administrative ward.

The site comprises of the existing hospital campus, plus a roughly rectangular shaped parcel of land extending from the Walsgrave Triangle Industrial Estate to the east of the Mount Pleasant estate, across footpath R75 and south to the B4082. The land is bounded by the A46 to the east and runs on the southern and western side of the River Sowe as far as the B4082.

The Mount Pleasant Housing estate lies to the west of the site (to the north of the hospital) and Dorchester Way Housing estate to the west of the site (beyond the River Sowe) to the south of the hospital. A Tesco supermarket lies immediately south of the Dorchester Way housing.

The A46 forms the administrative boundary between Coventry City Council within which all of the site is situated and Warwickshire County Council/Rugby Borough Council.

The Withy Brook Tributary intersects the site connecting into the River Sowe. The site lies within the flood plain of both. There is a separate pond within the northeast corner of the site.

The area of land to the east of the hospital campus is mainly agricultural land with hedgerow field boundaries.

Hungerley Hall Farm, which includes a Grade II listed farmhouse and separately listed Grade II listed farm buildings lies within the site to the immediate east of the proposed distributor road.

There are no specifically known archaeological sites within the area affected by the proposals, but there is potential for remains to be found.

The area to the immediate east of the acute hospital proposed for 1350 staff car parking spaces has in part been cleared of vegetation and used as a compound and parking area during the construction of the new hospital.

The site indicated to revert to (450) car parking spaces was formerly occupied by redundant hospital buildings, service yards, roads and car parking.

The area includes a green field housing site (Walsgrave Hill Farm) allocated under policy H8 (Principle Housing Sites) of the Coventry Development Plan 2001 (CDP) for 500 dwellings, plus about 9.3 hectares of additional green field land to the south, between the A46 and the River Sowe. To the immediate north-west is the Mount Pleasant Principle Housing Site, also allocated for housing under policy H8 of the CDP.

The River Sowe river corridor within the site is identified within the CDP as a Coventry Nature Conservation Site.

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (Coombe Pool) lies approximately 60 metres to the south west of the site, beyond the A46/B4082 roundabout. Coombe Pool lies within a Grade II* listed Coombe Abbey Park.

SENSITIVE AREA

The site is not situated within a Sensitive Area as defined by Regulation 2(1).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT

Given the scale of the new development proposed and the associated transport implications it is highly probable that the proposals will give rise to significant environmental effects.

The proposal has the potential of having a significant effect on the floodplain locally and the potential to increase the risk of flooding on site and in the immediate locality.

The proposal will have an impact on traffic flows on the local highway network, including on the B4082 the roundabout junction close to this as well as on the A46 and on Clifford Bridge Road, Ansty Road and adjoining road junctions.

The proposal will have an impact on traffic movements to and within the hospital site, including the bus road and pedestrian hierarchy on site and how linkages to and within and Green Travel measures are to operate.

The proposal may involve the partial diversion of footpath R75.

The direct traffic impact on the Mount Pleasant housing estate is likely to be limited by design.

There may be additional noise for residents on the Dorchester Way estate as a result of traffic on the new distributor road.

The housing proposed will have an impact on local services, community facilities and recreational opportunities as well as on access to and the availability of new free market and key worker housing in the locality.

There will be noise implications for the proposed housing as a result of the A46 running to the east and hospital traffic passing through the site and they may experience problems with air quality due to traffic on the A46.

The proposals will result in the loss of agricultural land, albeit that much of the land is already allocated for long-term housing development under policy H8 of the CDP.

There may be contaminated land within the site.

The proposal will have an impact on the hedgerow and wet ditch network within the site, which may include hedgerows that qualify as important under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

The proposal may have an impact on protected species, as well as the ecology of the watercourses running through the site.

The proposal will have an impact upon the setting of the grade II listed Hungerley Hall Farm and its separately listed farm buildings, particularly if the distributor road abuts the curtilage of these buildings as indicated on the Plan.

The proposal may have an impact on potential archaeological remains within the site.

The proposal may have an impact upon the SSSI Coombe Pool and Coombe Park Historic Garden.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposal will impact on the local highway network and circulation and transport movements within and to the hospital site. There will be impacts on the River Sowe and Withy Brook flood plains. The proposal will impact on the setting of listed buildings on the site. The proposal will impact on the amount and availability of housing within the local area and local services, facilities and recreational opportunities. The proposals will result in the loss of agricultural land and hedgerows and vegetation on site and may have ecological implications as a result. The proposals will increase overall noise levels within the site and for residents living closest to the site on the Mount Pleasant and Dorchester Way estates. Traffic on the A46 may cause air quality issues within the site. For the above reasons and under delegated powers it is determined that an Environmental Statement is required for the above development.

Decision date: 14th February 2008

Signed:



City Planning Manager.