

Application Number: DM/2018/02040

Proposal: Demolition of M block, green building and selected tree removal, to accommodate extension of existing car park, to provide additional parking spaces of 178. NB row 168-178 formed within existing parking spaces allocation.

Address: County Hall, The Rhadyr, Llanbadoc, Usk

Applicant: Monmouthshire County Council

Plans: Location Plan - , Site Layout 721 - T3, Drainage 500 - T1, Drainage 723 - T3, Site Layout 700 - T1, General 550 - T1, All Proposed Plans Grounds Access Plan -

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Ms Kate Bingham
Date Valid: 04.01.2019

This application is presented to Planning Committee due to Monmouthshire County Council being the applicant

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 It is proposed to extend the existing car park serving the MCC headquarters at County Hall. The existing car park provides 135 spaces. This was designed for the staff and Members using County Hall only. Subsequently, more staff have been relocated to the site. Furthermore, Block J of Coleg Gwent is to be utilised by additional MCC staff. As such it is proposed to provide an additional 173 spaces.

1.2 It is proposed to extend the car park by demolishing two existing sheds on the site and also utilising the existing bus parking area which it is understood will be moved to Raglan.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (if any)

Reference Number	Description	Decision	Decision Date
DM/2018/01959	The proposed works will involve the following; 1 - Internal alterations to both floors to accommodate staff relocated from Innovation House. 2 - Link access facility from J Block and County Hall 3 - Inclusion of a lift 4 - Inclusion of external escape stairs 5 - Thermal upgrade to walls and ceiling void 6 - Replacement of windows and doors.	Approved	05.02.2019
DM/2019/00215	Discharge of condition 3 (bat mitigation) from previous application DM/2018/01959 - Internal alterations to both floors to accommodate staff.	Pending Consideration	

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S12 LDP Efficient Resource Use and Flood Risk
S13 LDP Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
S16 LDP Transport

Development Management Policies

LC1 LDP New Built Development in the Open Countryside
LC5 LDP Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character
MV1 LDP Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations
DES1 LDP General Design Considerations
NE1 LDP Nature Conservation and Development
EP1 LDP Amenity and Environmental Protection
EP3 LDP Lighting
SD3 LDP Flood Risk
SD4 LDP Sustainable Drainage

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultation Replies

Llanbadoc Community Council - No comments received to date.

NRW - Holding objection pending a revised FCA utilising the most up to date Usk River hydraulic model. Note that an EPS licence will be required in respect of bats in M block.

MCC Highways - No objection to the extension to the car park in principle. The increase in car parking spaces acknowledges the reliance on the private car and no measures or improvements have been proposed to encourage and promote sustainable transport provision to and from the office nor to the local amenities situated in Usk.

Therefore the highway Authority do not object to the increase in parking provision but would request that the applicant consider the following and review their proposals and re-submit for further consideration:

1. The layouts of the existing and proposed car parks should be reviewed.
2. Funding for additional bus frequency and/or routes - following a detailed review of all employee home locations;
3. Operation of a work mini bus for a minimum period of time;
4. Details of how visitor parking will be managed and if there will be specific space allocation for visitors.
5. How will current indiscriminate parking, particularly along the access road between the car and main building as well as on the access road to the car park, be managed and controlled to ensure emergency vehicles have ease of access.
6. The access / egress arrangements at the barrier to accommodate the increase in demand in a more conventional manner should be considered.
7. Provision of 22 cycle stands and 18 motorcycles in accordance with Monmouthshire County Council Parking Standards;
8. Active provision of Electrical Vehicle Charging Points at 10% of all spaces and passive provision at a further 10%;
9. Funding for some or all of the proposed active travel routes MCC-INM-U1 / MCC-INM-U9; and
10. Provision of sufficient shower and locker facilities for staff for changing and storing their weather gear, to encourage cycling. Numbers to be linked to the 22 stands specified by MCC Parking Standards.

Condition: Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

MCC Landscape and Urban Design Officer - No objection subject to condition requiring landscaping plan to be agreed to include:

a . planting of additional trees within the car park, avoiding proposed services using tried and tested planting techniques in car park environments. For guidance on tree planting within hard landscaped areas ref: Trees in Hard Landscape: A Guide for Delivery (TDAG) and the new SUDS Manual (C753)

b. a reduction in amenity planting species to be replaced with higher pollinator value species such as lavender, rosemary, marjoram, herbaceous geranium varieties including that specified, Salvia and wildflower grass areas at easily accessible areas to maintain. Subject to location and agreement with the MCC grounds maintenance teams and MCC Ecology team. To improve and seek to maintain pollinator capacity and habitat variety within the car park environs

MCC Biodiversity Officer - Consideration of the application is given with regard to:

- o The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- o Sections 6 & 7 Environment Wales Act 2016
- o Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015
- o PPW 10 & TAN5
- o LDP Policies S13, NE1, GI1, EP3

Appropriate Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment has been prepared which considers the Conservation Objectives of the protected site for the interest features identified above. Additional mitigation measures are proposed during the construction phase including a construction method statement (to include ecological method statement). With this measure in place, controlled by a planning condition, it is considered that there will not be an adverse impact on the integrity of the site.

Landscaping scheme

As raised in my interim comments the details that were submitted were not appropriate but I understand that we are now due to develop a landscape scheme following the determination of the application. I refer to my colleague Andrew Nevill's comments on this however, please use a planning condition to secure the submission and implementation of the final scheme.

Protected & Priority Species - Bats

Lighting will be an important additional consideration for bats in particular as many species are light sensitive. It is understood that the car park will need to be illuminated for health and safety reasons however, detailed lighting proposals will need to consider the retention of dark corridors. This will require careful positioning, low columns and cowling. A detailed lighting strategy will be required via planning condition to achieve this.

MCC Flood Risk Team (Drainage) - It would appear that there is unlikely to be a significant increase in runoff, however this should be clearly demonstrated in a detailed drainage strategy document relevant to the proposed car park extension. NRW comments regarding the requirements for an updated FCA should also be noted.

4.2 Neighbour Notification

General observation received: Could MCC / Coleg Gwent commit to s106 agreement to secure improvements to the footpath along the river into Usk town to ensure that there is a wider and safer footpath that could be walked and cycled along. Increasing car parking should be offset by sustainable transport improvements to link with the local community and this will be in line with your local plan, leisure, highways, sustainability and inclusion policies. This will also help rectify the failure of MCC to carry out local access improvements to link with Usk town when the County Hall was originally built.

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 Principle of the proposed development

5.1.1 The principle of extending the existing car park is acceptable and there is clearly a need given the lack of public transport serving the site.

5.2 Design

5.2.1 A balance needs to be found between maximising the amount of parking spaces but also retaining green areas that help the setting of the buildings within wider site. It is noted that some areas of landscaping are proposed at either end of banks of parking spaces, however, on top of this it is suggested that the hedge along the south east boundary is infilled/extended along the new part of the car park and also that two trees (Copper Beach and are retained. This can be achieved by redesigning the configuration of the car park and may not have to result in a net loss of car parking spaces.

5.2.2 Existing smaller trees that were planted on within the car park as part of the first phase of development should be carefully removed and replanted elsewhere.

5.3 Highway Safety

5.3.1 The development proposal will utilise the existing vehicular access to/from A472, an assessment of the existing traffic flows and predicted traffic flows generated by the additional development indicates that the existing simple junction will operate within design capacity and would not be detrimental to highway safety or capacity.

5.3.2 The highway authority offer no objections in principle to the proposed development, the extension of the existing car park to accommodate additional staff and visitors following the renovation and occupation of existing building on the site of the council Offices. Comments made in relation to the functioning of the existing car park whilst useful, are not relevant to the determination of this application. It is understood that work will be undertaken outside of this application process to improve the way that the current car park works.

5.3.3 County Hall currently has a floor space of 2,580 sq.m accommodating 307 employees, 177 workstations and ancillary facilities including a canteen and convenience shop. There is an existing capacity of 200 parking spaces, of which 12 are for the disabled and 10 are for pool vehicles. The observed 24 hour average weekday parking profile, indicates capacity issues between 10:00 and 12:00 hours with accumulation figures of 10am = 198 vehicles, 11am = 201 vehicles and 12pm = 194 vehicles. A review of the automatic traffic count sited between 26/9/18 and 2/10/18 highlights overcapacity on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursday in particular.

5.3.4 An additional 1,041sqm floorspace area is proposed for 102 workstations with a net increase of 164 parking spaces, of which four would have electrical vehicle charging points (EVCPs). This equate to an 82% increase in parking provision, resulting in 364 spaces. The proposed provision is significantly in excess of the previous provision.

5.3.5 Based on a proposed floorspace of 3,621m², then in accordance with the parking standards for offices in excess of 1000m², 1 space per 40m² is required. This results in provision of 91 spaces, of which 26 would be associated with the proposed increase size. The total provision would be four times greater than the maximum provision identified within the Monmouthshire County Council Parking Standards. The existing parking disabled person provision of 12 spaces for the disabled also meets Monmouthshire County Council Parking Standards.

5.3.6 A Framework Travel Plan which seeks to reduce the amount of car borne traffic to County Hall has been submitted and is being considered by consultees. It offers practical ways of providing sustainable travel to reduce car usage by a single person e.g. agile working including use of Skype, car sharing and identifying improvements to encourage cycling and walking. Late correspondence will consider the appropriateness of securing the actions in the Travel Plan via a condition.

5.4 Residential Amenity

5.4.1 There are no private residential dwellings within close proximity of the site of the proposed new part of the car park.

5.5 Flooding

5.5.1 The planning application proposes less vulnerable development (car park). The Flood Risk Map, which is updated on a quarterly basis, confirms the site to be within Zone C2 of the Development Advice Map (DAM) contained in TAN15 and the 0.1% (1 in 1000 year) annual probability fluvial flood outlines.

5.5.2 Section 6 of TAN15 requires the Local Planning Authority to determine whether the development at this location is justified. In this respect it is necessary to consider criteria (i) to (iii) of TAN15 which requires that development, will only be justified if it can be demonstrated that:

- (ii) Its location in zone C is necessary to contribute to key employment objectives supported by the local authority, and other key partners, to sustain an existing settlement or region.
- (iii) It concurs with the aims of PPW and meets the definition of previously developed land.

In these respects, the car park is required to support an existing employment site and the site uses land previously developed as the bus park and an existing building (M block).

5.5.3 The final test (iv) is for the applicant to demonstrate through the submission of an FCA that the potential consequences of flooding can be managed to an acceptable level. In this case NRW have reviewed the FCA undertaken by Atkins, dated 2010 submitted in support of the application and their advice to is that the FCA fails to demonstrate that the risks and consequences of flooding can be managed to an acceptable level. This is because the data used to inform the submitted FCA is based on historic flood information from the Environment Agency and previous hydraulic modelling studies. Therefore, the information used to inform the previous FCA is out of date. In addition, it is noted by NRW that the submitted FCA is for a previous planning application (development of a County Hall for Monmouth County Council) and is therefore not site specific enough for NRW to determine the flood risk to the new car park extension.

5.5.3 Although it is considered unlikely that the risks of flooding in the area of the proposed car park will have increased based on more up to date modelling, this work is being undertaken at the time of preparing this report.

5.6 Ecology

5.6.1 The site is less than 100m from the Berthin Brook which is a SINC quality watercourse and tributary of the River Usk SSSI and SAC. A Habitats Regulations Assessment is being prepared but I am waiting for confirmation of some details relating to drainage. As such a Test of Likely Significant Effect (TOLSE) has been undertaken and it is considered possible that there could be a significant effect on Interest Features of the River Usk SAC in the absence of mitigation. Matters relating to changes in water chemistry (during operation), habitat fragmentation, competition from non-native species, disturbance (lighting), disturbance (physical activity, noise), surface water flooding have been screened out of the assessment as unlikely to cause a significant effect on the interest features of the SAC.

5.6.2 An Appropriate Assessment has been prepared which considers the Conservation Objectives of the protected site for the interest features identified above. Additional mitigation measures are proposed during the construction phase including a construction method statement (to include ecological method statement). With this measure in place, controlled by a planning condition, it is considered that there will not be an adverse impact on the integrity of the site.

5.6.3 An area of grassland in front of the M block has established since the site was developed and includes native seed imported from local meadow sites. The area could now be identified as priority habitat under Section 7 the Environment Wales Act 2016. This area will be lost as the result of the development. This was raised during the pre-application stage of the scheme. To seek to compensate for this loss, a larger area of grassland which is currently poorly managed to

the rear of the car park will be restored. A scheme for the management and implementation of the management shall be secured via planning condition.

5.6.4 A small roost of common species has been identified using the M block. Please see NRW Comment in relation to the requirements relating to bats and bat licensing. Lighting will be an important additional consideration for bats in particular as many species are light sensitive. It is understood that the car park will need to be illuminated for health and safety reasons however, detailed lighting proposals will need to consider the retention of dark corridors. This will require careful positioning, low columns and cowling. A detailed lighting strategy will be required via planning condition to achieve this.

5.6.5 The large trees on site to be removed and the small area of scrub to the south of M block could be habitat for nesting birds. The methods for removal of these will need to be covered by the construction method statement (see condition recommendation below).

5.6.6 Grass snake have been recorded at the site and habitats that are used by reptiles will be lost including a 'rockery' area at the end of M block. This will need to be cleared under ecological method statement and compensatory habitat (relocated rockery) to be established elsewhere in the non-developed area. Detail of this shall be included in the ecological compensation plan.

5.7 Landscaping and Trees

5.7.1 The site is within grounds shared between MCC and Coleg Gwent and will also have public access. The site is outside Usk urban boundary but sits within the River Usk C2 floodplain designation and is also close to the River Usk (Lower Usk) SSSI. LANDMAP places the hamlet of Rhadyr, Usk and its associated landscape within the Visual and Sensory aspect area of the Upper Usk Valley. LANDMAP evaluates the visual and sensory landscape as High: (An attractive flat open landscape focused on the rivers with an attractive backcloth of hills and scarp slopes... The area is generally in good condition with consistent character throughout, unspoilt generally on the valley floor by intrusive development... The area has a distinct and strong sense of place as an extensive valley floor focused on the sinuous River Usk... Extensive flat valley floor is very rare in Monmouthshire).

5.7.2 It is considered that the proposal is likely to have a limited impact on the wider landscape and visual setting as the expansion of the car park will be confined within the context of the existing car park setting, areas already partially used for transport activity and within the Coleg Gwent / MCC land holding which is partially screened by existing boundary mature trees to the north, east and western boundaries and buildings and trees from the south.

5.7.3 The proposal will remove an area existing grassland, two low buildings outbuilding and associated vegetation. Adjacent to the site is the existing car park facility, a landscaped garden managed by local groups for pollinator benefits and bee keeping, pedestrian access linking to Coleg Gwent and council offices. To the east of the site are agricultural fields. There are opportunities to improve the car park design to provide additional pollinator value through more appropriate landscaping and to improve pedestrian permeability to existing links.

5.7.4 Going forward, it is the intention of the applicant to work in partnership with MCC's Grounds Maintenance team and also Landscape and Biodiversity Officers to agree suitable planting for the proposed extension to the car park as well as to improve the existing car park in this regard. As such a landscaping scheme is to be agreed via condition as the scheme submitted did not meet with the Council's aspirations in terms of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

5.8 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

5.7.1 The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales has been considered, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the WCFG Act). In reaching this recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WCFG Act have been taken into account and it is considered that this recommendation is in accordance with the sustainable

development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WCFG Act.

5.9 Response to Community Council/Third Party Comments

Due to the scale of the proposed development, it is not considered that the provision of a Section 106 agreement to secure a financial contribution towards widening the footpath adjacent to the river between the site and Usk (which may in any case conflict with efforts to maintain and enhance local biodiversity) would be reasonable. A Framework Travel Plan to reduce car borne traffic to County Hall has been submitted which is being assessed and comments will be reported in late correspondence.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Conditions:

1 This development shall be begun within 5 years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the list of approved plans set out in the table below.

REASON: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings, for the avoidance of doubt.

3 Prior to any works commencing on site a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority

REASON: In the interest of highway safety in accordance with LDP Policy MV1.

4 Before any works commence on site, details of earthworks shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform.

REASON: To ensure the provision afforded by appropriate landscape design and Green Infrastructure LC5, DES 1 S13, and GI 1 and NE1

5 No development shall take place until a scheme of surface water drainage has been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: To ensure satisfactory disposal of surface water and to ensure compliance with LDP Policies EP5 and SD4.

6 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development.

REASON: To safeguard the landscape amenities of the area and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy G11.

7 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously

damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

REASON: To safeguard the landscape amenities of the area and to ensure compliance with LDP Policy G11.

8 A schedule of landscape maintenance for a minimum period of five years shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and shall include details of the arrangements for its implementation this shall be integrated into a GI management Plan.

REASON: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by the proper maintenance of existing and / or new landscape features in accordance with LDP Policies LC1, LC5 and G11.

9 (a) Underground services shall be routed clear of the trees to avoid root damage.

(b) Prior to building work commencing on site (including any demolition and refurbishment works), protective fencing shall be erected around each tree at a minimum radius from the trunk of the tree (or outer trees in the case of a group) equal to the canopy spread or half the tree's height, whichever is the greater.

(c) The fencing shall comprise a vertical and horizontal framework of scaffolding supporting a minimum of 20mm exterior ply or other robust man-made boards and shall be maintained for the duration of construction activity on the site. it shall be at least 2.4 metres high and constructed and erected in accordance with the recommendations published in British Standard 5837:1991.

(d) No storage of plant or materials, landfill, excavation, burning of materials cement mix shall be carried out within the protective fencing.

REASON: To protect valuable tree or other landscape features on the site in the interest of preserving the character and appearance of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with LDP Policy G11.