



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 17th February 2015
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
DIRECTOR: Steven Boyes

N/2014/1269: Reserved matters application for the approval of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of four academic buildings; two multi use games areas and a flood lit sports pitch; café/bars and associated landscaping/public realm works pursuant to Outline Planning Permission N/2013/0912, University Site, Nunn Mills Road

and

N/2014/1331: Reserved matters application for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Beckett's Park with the new University Campus pursuant to Outline Planning Permission N/2013/0912, University Site, Nunn Mills Road

WARD: Delapre and Briar Hill

APPLICANT: University of Northampton
AGENT: Savills

REFERRED BY: Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

REASON: Major applications relating to a key development site

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION N/2014/1269
subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The submitted details demonstrate that the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of this phase of development are acceptable and in conformity with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework; Policies BN1, BN8, E6, N1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policies 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 28 and 29 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

1.2 APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION N/2014/1331
subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The submitted details demonstrate that the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the proposed footbridge are acceptable and in conformity with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework; Policies E6, N1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policies 1, 3 and 29 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 This report covers two separate applications for the approval of reserved matters following the approval of Outline Planning Permission in 2014 for the development of a new university campus. By reason of these two applications being intrinsically linked, one report has been prepared although two separate decisions will need to be taken.

2.2 The first application (reference: N/2014/1269) seeks permission for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the four academic buildings. These buildings have been termed the Creative Hub, which is located to the north west of the site; the Learning Hub, which is located adjacent to the river and next to the existing Avon building; the Research and Enterprise Hub, which would be situated to the south of the Avon building; and the Sports Hub, which is proposed to be adjacent to the Research and Enterprise Hub but separated by the site's access road.

2.3 The proposed outdoors sports facilities comprising multi use games areas and a flood lit sports pitch would be located to the east and south east of the Sports Hub building. The outline planning permission included the provision of commercial buildings, which would be located in the north eastern section of the site. At this point, a developer for the commercial buildings has yet to be identified and therefore, landscaping is proposed for this section of the site pending the construction of the commercial buildings.

2.4 The remainder of the areas covered by this landscaping would be a combination of landscaping, pathways and some car parking. Separate applications will come forward in the future to address the other elements of the scheme.

- 2.5 The second application (reference: N/2014/1331) is for the installation of a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Nene. This would run from Beckett's Park to the campus site adjacent to the aforementioned Creative Hub building. The principle of constructing a bridge in this location was deemed appropriate during the outline approval and therefore consideration of the proposal is limited to its appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The wider site is approximately 25 hectares in area and is located on the south eastern edge of Northampton town centre, on the south side of the River Nene and opposite Beckett's Park. Midsummer Meadow, Nene Meadows and Barnes Meadow form areas of largely green open space and are located in reasonably close proximity to the application site. The site is level in nature.
- 3.2 The majority of the previous uses of the site were predominantly industrial in nature and included now demolished manufacturing facilities for Avon; a power station (of which only the northern façade remains, although this is to be demolished to enable the construction of the new university) and various railway lines.
- 3.3 The site includes a Grade II Listed former railway engine shed with separate associated office building. This is excluded from the current application; however, separate proposals for these buildings are currently under consideration by the Council.
- 3.4 The southern boundaries of the site are adjacent to the disused Northampton-Bedford railway line. Beyond this is the Ransome Road site, where redevelopment for residential accommodation is envisaged.
- 3.5 Midsummer Meadow, Nene Meadows and Barnes Meadow form areas of largely open space and are located to the north across the site over the River Nene. Nene Meadows is also located within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA). The NIA is an interconnected network of wildlife habits intended to re-establish thriving wildlife populations and to help species respond to climate change

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 N/2013/0912 - Outline planning permission for redevelopment of the site as a new campus for the University of Northampton, including site clearance and enabling works comprising remediation and re-leveling of the site, demolition of all buildings on the site (except the Grade II listed structures). The proposal includes up to 40,000m² university floorspace (all floorspace is GEA); up to 15,000m² university expansion floorspace; up to 35,000m² commercial (B1) floorspace; up to 3,550m² of retail floorspace (up to 1800m² of A1, up to 150m² of A2, and up to 1600m² A3/A4); up to 1,500 beds of student accommodation; up to 760

car parking spaces for University use; up to 1,100 car parking spaces for commercial / leisure use; a hotel of up to 7,000m² (up to 150 bedrooms); floodlit sports facilities; reuse of listed locomotive shed (520m²) and curtilage listed office building; an energy centre of up to 600m²; a new road bridge and junction on to Bedford Road including reconfiguration of Midsummer Meadow car park; a new pedestrian foot bridge connecting the site to Becket's Park; a new secondary substation (adjacent to existing substation); and retention of the existing access via Nunn Mills Road – Approved.

N/2014/1072 - Reserved matters application pursuant to application ref N/2013/0912 - details of the appearance, layout and scale of the southern section of the North-South access road on the new Waterside University Campus – Approved.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the Central Area Action Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (hereafter referred to as the NPPF) should be read as single document; however, the following sections are of particular relevance.
- 5.3 Paragraph 17 states that planning decisions should seek to secure high quality decisions and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupiers. Planning decisions should also take into account the differing roles of spaces. The same paragraph states that planning should contribute towards the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, whilst ensuring that brownfield sites are effectively developed.
- 5.4 The requirement to secure good design is strengthened by paragraph 56, which confirms that design is a key aspect of sustainable development, which is indivisible from good planning. It is therefore important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality individual buildings as well as public and private spaces. Separate to this requirement, paragraph 60 states that planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes.
- 5.5 A further consideration is that paragraph 61 requires that planning decisions address the connections between people and places and the integration of new developments with the environment.

- 5.6 It is incumbent upon planning decisions (as identified in paragraphs 100 and 103) to ensure that development is not sited in areas that would increase the flood risk for future occupiers of the site or in other areas.
- 5.7 Paragraph 118 states that when determining planning applications, decisions should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the application of adequate mitigation or through encouraging the incorporation of biodiversity into new developments.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

- 5.8 Policy E6 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) states that the educational role of the University of Northampton should be supported through planning decisions. In addition, Policy S10 establishes a framework for the provision of sustainable development; which includes the provision of a strong sense of place, promoting walking and cycling and promoting the creation of green infrastructure.
- 5.9 The importance of green infrastructure is elaborated within Policy BN1, which states new developments should incorporate existing and future networks and be designed sensitively to ensure a good appearance, access provision and biodiversity enhancement and protections. The importance of biodiversity is strengthened through Policy BN8, which states that new developments should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the River Nene within and beyond the plan area.
- 5.10 Policy N1 is also material to this application for it seeks to develop Northampton's Central Area providing high quality design and public realm works, whilst protecting the heritage assets through managed change.

Northampton Central Area Action Plan

- 5.11 Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) requires that new developments positively contribute to an area with regards to the existing urban grain, scale, massing, materials and architectural scale of surrounding buildings. In addition, new developments should contribute to the provision of logical and coherent links to and from destinations in order to promote accessibility to and around the Central Area. In achieving these objectives, weight should also be given to Policy 3, which requires improvements to the public realm. The policy requirements to promote green infrastructure as discussed previously are reinforced by Policy 4.
- 5.12 Policy 8 identifies a safeguarded route for public transport along the route of the disused railway line between Castle Station and Brackmills. The need to improve sustainable means of transport is identified in Policy 9.
- 5.13 More specific to this application is Policy 28, which requires the use of the site for educational purposes, with the provision of taller landmark

buildings in key parts of the site in order to create a gateway into Northampton's Central Area. The redevelopment of this site should include a continuous riverside path, which should incorporate new river crossings. Access to Delapre should also be encouraged. In delivering this, schemes should have the flexibility to allow for crossings of the former railway line.

5.13 Beckett's Park, which is to the north of the site should be improved through enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes are required by Policy 29.

5.14 Policy 5 requires that new developments consider that new developments consider the likely impacts, including those arising from climate change, on flood risk.

6. CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

Representations received in respect of N/2014/1269

6.1 **Arboricultural Officer (NBC)** – On the whole selection of tree species is acceptable and will create an appealing and visually attractive landscape particularly during the autumn by the use of some striking species. However, some concerns exist about the use of Aspen to form the single row of trees to form the screen opposite Avon. The main issue is ensuring successful establishment, strong early growth and longevity of the landscaping. This is reliant on providing a suitable rooting environment. Therefore soil types should be given further consideration.

6.2 **Conservation (NBC)** – The wider response to the historic built form that either remains or has been removed is limited; however, this could be overcome through increased linkages with the Grade II Listed Building (NB. Officers notes: this has been achieved through the submission of a revised scheme).

6.3 **Environment Agency** – Request details of the proposed site levels.

6.4 **Environmental Health (NBC)** – It is noted that the specific plant equipment has not yet been selected. The overall strategy and general main plant locations have been identified, but the makes and models of the various items of equipment will not be selected for some time.

6.5 **Highways Agency** – No objections.

6.6 **Highway Authority (NCC)** – Request that details of surface treatments is secured and recommends a Construction Environment Management Plan is devised.

6.7 **Natural England** – The submitted great crested newt survey is acceptable. The additional commentary provided within the revised Ecology Strategy provides a more detailed assessment of the quality of existing and proposed habitats. As a consequence, it can be concluded

that only certain parts of the brownfield site are of significant ecological value. Therefore, it can be concluded that the proposed development will provide an overall benefit to biodiversity.

- 6.8 **Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area** – Broadly satisfied with the submitted (revised) ecology strategy and believes it adds clarity to the ecological plans for the new university site.
- 6.9 **Sport England** – Comments are made in a non-statutory function, but provide guidance for the design and layout of the site's sports facilities.
- 6.10 **Urban Designer (NBC)** - The Research and Enterprise Hub will make a positive contribution to the campus – the design and access statement makes a clear rationale for how it has ended up being designed as it proposed. The Creative Hub building provides an active space fronting the bridge/waterfront at ground level which is positive. The Learning Hub will play a major role in redefining how the university is experienced by students, staff and visitors. The nature of the spaces within the building will encourage the blurring of boundaries between the varying functions. This building provides a positive frontage to the waterside. The Sports Hub has been located to define a key corner on approach into the campus from the new proposed access road at Nunn Mills. Whilst the building use is largely sports facilities which will require a specific architectural design layout and detail, the northern elevation could be enhanced.

It is understood and recognised that in the campus environment that a large emphasis will be placed (as is currently the case at Park Campus) on a high quality landscaped environment. To this end the landscaping and particularly the use of trees has the ability to provide a positive asset to the proposed development. There is scope to create a more appealing environment along the north-south pedestrian routes.

- 6.11 **Wildlife Trusts** – As it is proposed that some parts of the site will be developed as part of the latter phases of the scheme, these cannot be included within any proposed mitigation strategies. The great crested newt survey is acceptable and the species list recorded within the invertebrate has not identifies anything of high interest that would need to be included in any future management plan for the site area.

The brown and green roofs are a useful additional to on-the-ground mitigation measures; but they should not be used in isolation. These need to have variation in topography and aspect where possible.

- 6.12 The above responses highlight some matters that need further consideration by the applicant. In these instances, the applicant has either submitted revised information or is formulating a response. Any further updates will provided to members via the addendum, which will be circulated prior to the committee meeting commencing.

Representations received in respect of N/2014/1331

- 6.13 **Environment Agency** – It is considered that the proposed development would not increase the risk of flooding either within the vicinity of the proposal or other area. The bridge will not impede the movement of boats on the river.
- 6.14 **Highway Authority (NCC)** – Require details of how the development would be constructed in order to ensure the safety of users within Beckett's Park and the likely traffic management plans for Bedford Road.
- 6.15 **Natural England** – No objections.
- 6.16 **Northamptonshire Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – No objections in principle, but would greater details of security bollards should be submitted. It is understood that the lighting and CCTV details will be submitted as part of the wider strategy for the development.
- 6.17 **Urban Designer (NBC)** – The vision is for a vibrant, waterside destination is achieved along a part of the waterfront around the Beckett's bridge area.

7. APPRAISAL

Scope of the applications

- 7.1 As outline permission has been granted for the university development, the principle of the development has been accepted. This application also considered the key access points to the development. As a consequence of this, the application does not need to revisit these matters. Therefore, the appearance, scale and siting of the submitted buildings needs to be assessed, in addition to the proposed landscaping and the details of the proposed sports facilities.
- 7.2 As discussed previously, four separate buildings have been proposed, in addition to the bridge. These items have been assessed separately and cumulatively as discussed below.

Creative Hub

- 7.3 This building is of five storeys in height, although the fourth floor would only be utilised for the installation of plant and equipment. The remainder of the building would contain various academic functions, in addition to a café located on the northern side of the ground floor. This arrangement, combined with the significant amount of glazing and a number of entrances situated on this elevation would ensure a significant amount of activity within proximity to the riverbank, which would create an attractive and functional space. In addition, the presence of this café facility in close proximity to the siting of the new footbridge would assist in attracting users of this facility from a wider area.

- 7.4 The design of the building features a number of curved elevations, apparently to represent the erosion of materials by water. This is an appropriate design response given the proximity of the building to the River Nene. Of greater significance is that this approach has resulted in a building that is of an interesting design and is prominently located to form a gateway feature into the development. In order to ensure a good standard of development and a positive impact on visual amenity, a condition is recommended that would require the submission of details relating to building materials to the Council prior to construction work taking place.
- 7.5 The design of the building also includes substantial areas of glazing, which adds interest to the development through the various activities that would be glimpsed through the fenestration. This is of particular merit on the ground floor of the building, where there would be significant interaction between the building and the riverside walk. Although there are existing residential properties within the general area of this building (such as those within Lion Court, to the west of the site), the overall separation distances are such that there would be no undue detrimental impact upon neighbour amenity as a result of considerations such as light, outlook, privacy and noise.
- 7.6 In order to promote environmentally sustainable forms of development, the building would include a variety of measures including photovoltaic panels and has been designed to minimise energy and heating requirements.

Learning Hub

- 7.7 It is envisaged that this building would be the primary focus of the new campus as it contains the bulk of the academic accommodation. As a consequence of this, the building is of significant proportions of up to six storeys. The height of this building is considered acceptable due to the proximity of this building to the existing Avon building, which has a significant height and the proximity of this particular element of the site to the riverbank, Beckett's Park and Bedford Road.
- 7.8 By reason of this height, in addition to the building's significant footprint, the design approach has been to break down the building into various sections. As a consequence, the building features a variety of architectural detailing including such as by including fenestration arrangement comparable to that used on the Avon building on the eastern elevation, which also enables a reasonable relationship to be formed between the two sites. Other approaches taken on this building include the addition of brise soleils on other elevations, which adds interest and also assists in the creation of a more practical internal environment. Other sections of the buildings (such as those in the southern and western sections) feature a significant amount of glazing that assists in creating a relationship between this building and the surrounding circulation space. It is proposed that the building feature a palette of materials that are of similar colours to local materials. In order

to ensure that the various elements of the building are coherently bought together, the Council will approve building materials prior to commencing construction works.

- 7.9 The building would maintain the principle of sustainable development through the use of combined heat and power generation and the installation of photovoltaic cells, in addition to two sections of green roofs.

Research and Enterprise Hub

- 7.10 The building is of five storeys in height and as with other building maintains the commitment towards sustainable development through the roof mounted photovoltaic cells. By reason of the positioning of the building, the eastern elevation would be of particular prominence by reason of the availability of views from Bedford Road and the adjacent areas of open space. As a consequence of this, the varied roof form of the building adds interests to the development and promotes a good sense of visual amenity.

- 7.11 Legibility has been added to the building through the introduction of a 6m high colonnade that clearly marks the positioning of the building's entrance and creates a suitable feature in close proximity to the site's main entrance. In addition, the building has been orientated in such a way that the entrances are located on the eastern and western elevations, which ensures that the building satisfactorily relates to the main pedestrian route across the campus as well as the other proposed academic buildings.

- 7.12 The approach to building materials differs from the aforementioned buildings is that the primary building material would be the use of precast stone cladding, the colour of which would replicate the tone and appearance of those used on historic buildings within the locality. This approach assists in creating a building that is of a distinctive nature, which is considered to be of importance due to the proximity of the siting to the new road bridge from Bedford Road, which is likely to serve as the main entrance to the development.

Sports Hub

- 7.13 Buildings of this type can be of a functional appearance; however, the applicant has counteracted this through the enhancement of the western elevation, which features a significant amount of glazing that enables views to and from indoors sports facilities, the gymnasium and academic features. This arrangement, combined with the entrance being located on the western elevation ensures that there is a strong relationship between this building and the Research and Enterprise Hub, which is in close proximity to this building and the main pedestrian route across the site.

- 7.14 The northern elevation of the building is somewhat unembellished, which is of concern due to the prominence of this elevation when

viewed from the access road or Beckett's Park. It is appreciated that the situation is somewhat temporary as there is outline approval for the erection of commercial buildings on the area to the south of the River Nene; however, this is unlikely to come forward at the same time as the University campus. Officers have held a number of discussions with the applicant regarding possible enhancements to this elevation and it is understood that there are limitations regarding the form of this elevation due to the presence of significant fenestration on the western elevation in order to create a relationship with the Research and Enterprise Hub. As a consequence, it has been agreed that the applicant will provide feature lighting and further decoration to the northern elevation, which would be secured by condition.

- 7.15 The building is to be constructed from a combination of brick work, cladding and aluminium panels, which ensures that the uniform proportions of the building would be suitably mitigated.

Assessment of general approach to buildings

- 7.16 It is acknowledged that the approach taken by the developer has been to give each of the buildings a distinct identity rather than seek a homogenous design solution for the entirety of the development. This is considered an appropriate design solution due to the large quantum of the development that would take place on this site that is outside of the scope of the current application, but has outline planning permission arising from the 2014 decision. The details relating to the submitted development are broadly in conformity with the indicative parameters submitted with the outline application.
- 7.17 The wider development will also include a variety of functions including student residences, commercial buildings and a hotel. This variety of uses will naturally result in buildings of varying form rendering differing design approaches acceptable. This approach can be further justified by the presence of existing buildings within the site and its environs, which are of varied and distinct forms of architecture. This includes such varied building as the modern Avon building and the Grade II Listed engine shed, which dates from the 1870s.
- 7.18 The design of the buildings, which in particular feature a number of active frontages at ground floor level, ensures a good level of natural surveillance of public and communal areas which promotes a strong sense of place and safety. This is in addition to strategies relating to the provision of CCTV and lighting that were secured as part of the approval of the outline application.
- 7.19 The varied design approach also enables notable and distinctive buildings to be created at this key gateway site, which serves to enhance the visual amenity of the locality.
- 7.20 By reason of the prominence and importance of the site, it is considered that consideration should be given to the appearance of the development at night. In order to give full consideration to this matter, a

condition is recommended that would ensure the submission of a lighting strategy for the development. It is anticipated that the approach taken across the development would vary in that there is likely to be a different response to the predominantly glazed Creative Hub when compared to the very different Sports Hub; however, such a condition would assist in the creation of a distinctive development.

- 7.21 Comments have been received from the Council's Environmental Health section, which comment upon the need to see details relating to flues and extraction equipment by reason of the mixture of uses proposed within this application and the future proximity of student residences. In response, it should be noted that a condition of the outline approval was that a strategy for these works should be submitted prior to development coming into use. This condition therefore gives the Council adequate opportunity to confirm that these works are of the required standard to mitigate the impacts of the development in addition to ensure that the design ethos of the entire development is not compromised.

New bridge

- 7.22 As discussed previously, a separate phase of the development seeks permission for the installation of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Nene running from Beckett's Park to the new campus. The span of the bridge would feature two gentle curves, which would be somewhat unusual and distinctive. This would add interest for users of both the new campus and Beckett's Park.
- 7.23 The principle of a bridge in this location is established within the CAAP and the outline planning permission and as consequence; it is considered that there would be no undue detrimental impact on the amenities of this location. Whilst it is accepted that this would necessitate the removal of some trees within Beckett's Park, this would be offset by the significant planting that would take place within the new campus. No objections have been received from the Council's Arboricultural Officer with regards to this matter.
- 7.24 In terms of the appearance of the bridge, the applicant has assessed a variety of proposed materials against the need to provide an attractive structure that can be readily maintained, is durable and is practical to construct. As a consequence, the bridge would be constructed from weathering steel. This ensures that the above issues are addressed, whilst the colour of the bridge would be comparable to the palate of materials used within some of the campus buildings thereby ensuring a satisfactory relationship between the built structures.
- 7.25 It is accepted that the bridge would not benefit from a significant amount of a natural surveillance by reason of the necessary span; however, the proposal would include some lighting (which would be designed so as not to cause disturbance to wildlife). In addition, the bridge would be covered by CCTV. These are matters that are subject to conditions of the outline planning permission. As a consequence of

this, it is considered that the bridge would be safe for users and anti-social behaviour would be deterred. The application specifies that bollards are proposed to prevent unauthorised use of the bridge by motorcyclists and a condition is recommended to ensure their provision.

- 7.26 The new bridge has been assessed by the Environment Agency, which has confirmed that the structure would not increase flood risk at the site or elsewhere. Furthermore, the bridge has been designed in such a manner so as not to impede the passage of boats along the River Nene.
- 7.27 By reason of the position of this section of the development, there would be some challenges in its construction as access would need to be made through the park from Bedford Road. As a consequence, it is likely that there would need to be some careful traffic management to facilitate this. This is in addition to a need to ensuring the users of Beckett's Park are not unreasonably disadvantaged during the construction process. Therefore, and in response to the comments of the Highway Authority, a condition is recommended that would require the submission of and adherence to a construction management plan.

Landscaping and ecology

- 7.28 Whilst the site has previously featured a variety of commercial and industrial uses, it should be recognised that the site has been colonised by a number of species, which therefore contribute to the level of biodiversity within the locality. A number of these habitats would be lost as a result of the redevelopment of the site, although the relative value of these spaces is comparatively low as a consequence of the general proliferation of buddleia and scrub. Notwithstanding this approach, the applicant has prepared a mitigation strategy to counteract this and whilst it is accepted that the overall potential for mitigation is somewhat compromised by the quantum of development that is to be carried out on this site (and which benefits from outline planning permission), the submitted strategy details a number of approaches that are to be incorporated into the wider development.
- 7.29 In particular, the areas adjacent to the riverbank will include the removal of redundant physical structures adjacent to the riverbank, the planting of meadow grassland (which would be attractive to bats and foraging birds) and the installation of artificial otter holts and passes.
- 7.30 The areas to the west of the site and the surroundings of car parks would contribute towards this strategy through the retention of any unaffected grasslands, the removal of some inappropriate, low value hedges, the seeding of these areas with native grass and flower mixes and the planting of new native trees, including birch, alder and oak. In addition to these measures, the existing orchid colony has been relocated to the nearby Beckett's Park Island.

- 7.31 There is limited scope to retain any existing vegetation adjacent to the southern boundary of the site on account of the amount of land remediation works that need to be carried out in these areas; however, it has been possible to secure the retention of an ivy clad ash tree adjacent to the disused engine shed. In addition to the ecological benefits of this, this retention also serves to enhance of the setting of the Grade II Listed Building. In addition to this, these areas will include planting of native grasses and flowers and some birch.
- 7.32 The eastern boundary of the site, in addition to those areas adjacent to the main entrance from Bedford Road, will feature the planting of new trees comprising a variety of native species. This will assist in creating a strong sense of place in addition to providing a habitat for common invertebrates and birds.
- 7.33 The scheme includes the provision of a meandering swale that would run along alongside the length of the main pedestrian route running from the pedestrian bridge to the southern boundary. This would offer some drainage of the site; however, the design of the swale is such that it would offer some potential biodiversity gains through the planting of meadow mixes, damp grass mixes and willow planting. A further benefit of this is that it would create an attractive environment for pedestrians and therefore encourage the usage of this route in line with the requirements of the CAAP policy.
- 7.34 Areas on the eastern part of the site would be made available for mitigation, which would also enable research to be carried out regarding the colonisation of such features by plants and invertebrates, which feeds into the wider function of the function of the University, which in turn enhances the reputation of Northampton. It is noted that the southern sections of these works would require some re-levelling of the site and therefore a condition is recommended that would enable the Council to approve the details of the extent and appearance of these works. The outline planning permission makes provision for the installation of interpretation boards on the site and it is anticipated that some of these will be utilised in this location to provide information for visitors.
- 7.35 It should be recognised that some of the areas as described in paragraph 7.34 benefits from outline permission for the erection of commercial buildings; and therefore some of these works would not be available on a permanent basis; however, due to the scope of works provided elsewhere on the site these areas are not key in rendering the wider scheme acceptable.
- 7.36 The applicant has made reasonable attempts to include green and brown roofs within the development. Whilst these areas are limited due to the presence of competing priorities for roofs (such as the installation of roof lights and photovoltaic cells), they will provide mitigation through the provision of meadow and sedum mixes and

lichen reclaimed from elsewhere on the site. The proposed green roofs will also include discretely located log piles to encourage invertebrates.

- 7.37 The remainder of the site will comprise areas of open lawns. The approach taken to these is something of a compromise between biodiversity gains and providing a resilient landscape that is attractive and can withstand use for informal meeting places and the erection of occasional marquees (such as on graduation ceremonies and open days). Nonetheless, the seed mixes will include a mixture of native species.
- 7.38 As part of the outline permission, a condition was included which enables the Council to approve the precise location and plant type in order to secure a satisfactory standard of development.
- 7.39 The applicant has carried out further surveys into the presence of invertebrates and great crested newts on the site, which have revealed that the development would not adversely impact on these protected species.
- 7.40 For the above reasons it is considered that the sufficient measures have been taken by the developer to ensure that the proposed development ensures the provision of suitable mitigation and habitats in line with the requirements of national and local planning policies, whilst ensuring that an attractive campus is provided at the key site as well as providing a series of green walks as required by the CAAP. In reaching this position, the applicant has made a number of revisions to the scheme. These have been assessed by Natural England, which has concluded that the development would provide an overall benefit to biodiversity and supports the assessment provided above. At the time of preparing this report the response from the Wildlife Trusts in respect of this revised documentation was awaited. Any updates in respect of this matter will be reported to Committee via means of the addendum.
- 7.41 As highlighted previously, a significant number of new trees are proposed within the new campus, which assists in the creation of a strong sense of place and environment. The applicant has submitted revised information relating to the planting of these trees in order to address the comments from the Council's Arboricultural Officer and a further update will be provided at the committee meeting.

Highways and linkages

- 7.42 The submitted application includes a number of car parking areas of which the scale and position is in conformity with the parameters deemed acceptable at the outline stage. As a consequence, it is therefore considered that this element of the proposal is acceptable. No objections have been received from the Highway Authority with regards to the layout and operation of these spaces.

- 7.43 The Highway Authority have requested that a Construction Environment Management Plan be submitted in order to monitor the impacts of the construction process on the surrounding network; however, it should be noted that such a document was secured as part of the outline approval and as consequence, there is no need to replicate this process.
- 7.44 In order to secure good standard of development in terms of public safety and visual amenity, a condition is recommended that would secure the submission of a details relating to all proposed surface treatments.
- 7.45 The application has been revised to lengthen the pedestrian routes on north-south alignments so that they reach the southern boundary of the site. It is considered that this is beneficial to ensure that the new campus has the potential to be fully integrated with the potential sustainable transport corridor along the disused railway line and the Ransome Road redevelopment when these come forward.

Sports facilities

- 7.46 This application is part of a number of proposals relating to the establishment of a new campus and the redevelopment of the university's existing facilities. Currently, the university's sports facilities are located at Park Campus, which is to the north of the town. In order to mitigate the redevelopment of Park Campus a condition was included within the Outline permission pertinent to the new campus to include a minimum 6,400m² of sports facilities.
- 7.47 In response to this condition, the applicant has proposed internal sports pitches within the Sports Hub that would have dimensions of 34.7m by 20.4m and exceeds the relevant standards of Sport England. In addition to teaching facilities, the building would include a fitness centre and a studio (for use for group exercise classes or dance activity). Outside facilities include the provision of two floodlit multiuse games areas with a combined area of 1,369m² and a full size, all weather pitch of 8,030m², which has been designed to meet the relevant standards of FIFA and the IRB. These facilities would also be available for greater public use than what is currently the case on Park Campus.
- 7.48 For these reasons, combined with the minimum threshold of sport facilities as identified within the outline planning permission being substantially exceeded, it is considered that adequate provision has been made. It is recognised that floodlights to the outdoors facilities can have an impact upon amenity and wildlife and as a consequence, a condition is recommended that would enable the Council to approve details of these prior to works being carried out.

Impact upon heritage assets

- 7.49 As discussed previously, the site contains a Grade II Listed Building comprising a former engine shed and a curtilage listed small office

building. Non-designated heritage assets include the presence of a pill box on the banks of the River Nene.

- 7.50 In terms of the impact upon the Listed Building, it should be noted that the proposed buildings are some distance from this particular part of the site and therefore the impacts of the building's setting would be neutral. The Council is in receipt of separate applications relating to the reuse of the Listed Building, which would also include landscaping within its immediate vicinity.
- 7.51 The applicant has revised the scheme to improve the landscaping of the north-south pedestrian routes, which is considered to be of benefit as a more attractive route would increase footfall within the vicinity of the Listed Building. As it is currently proposed that this building will be used as part of the student's union facilities, it is considered that this higher footfall would be of benefit in securing users for the buildings, which would, in turn, assist in securing the building's long term future.
- 7.52 It is proposed that the pill box be retained, with its setting being enhanced through the improved landscaping as discussed previously. Access to the vicinity of the site would be possible through the circular path that is proposed for the site's perimeter. It should also be noted that a condition was included within the Outline Permission, which secured the provision of a number of interpretation boards. It is envisaged that one would be utilised within this area in order to set out the history of this particular structure.
- 7.53 The applicant has considered the possibility of using bricks reclaimed from the façade of the former Nunn Mills power station within the development; however, it is unlikely that this can be achieved due to the general condition of the bricks. In any event, it is considered that this does not erode the satisfactory design ethos as discussed previously.

Boundary treatments

- 7.54 The proposed layout has been designed to ensure an open space with the maximum level of public access. As a consequence of this, the amount of boundary treatments has been kept to a relatively low level. It is envisaged that security would be provided through a combination of natural surveillance in addition to strategies regarding the provision of lighting and CCTV. This therefore results in a comparatively low amount of boundary treatments.
- 7.55 The development would include section of weldmesh fences to the rear of the Creative Hub, which would screen the service areas of this building from the car park. On account of this arrangement, it is anticipated that there would be no significant impact on visual amenity. Further screen walls are provided to the south of the service arrangements for the Learning Hub. A condition is recommended regarding the submission of further details in respect of this screen wall.

- 7.56 It is noted that some boundary treatments are of a tall nature; such as those surrounding the outdoors sports pitch and chiller units; however, due to the operational needs of such boundary treatments (such as the need to contain sporting activity within the designated areas or to provide screening), it is considered that these approaches are acceptable.

Linkages with other areas

- 7.57 The matter of access was considered during the outline stage and as a consequence, this matter could not be revisited as part of the current application. Nonetheless, officers have held discussions with the applicant regarding increasing the number of access points to the development on an east-west alignment. As a consequence of these discussions, it has been agreed that the development would include an additional pedestrian route to the western boundary to provide a potential link to the existing residential accommodation. This measures, in addition to the linkages approved within the outline application are sufficient to ensure that a development will be provided that it well integrated with the surrounding area and would promote more sustainable means of travel.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal details the creation of four new buildings and a bridge that are of a good standard of design that would also result in a safe and distinctive development. The proposed buildings would also have a neutral impact upon the amenities of surrounding properties, whilst demonstrating a neutral impact upon biodiversity. Whilst further amendments to the scheme are expected, it is considered that the application is in conformity with national and local planning policies.

9. CONDITIONS

9.1 Conditions for N/2014/1269

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the attached schedule of approved plans.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to conform with the planning application.

2. Prior to the commencement of the development, a scheme shall be submitted detailing the phasing of the construction of the development. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to the commencement of each phase, details and/or samples of all proposed external facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development will harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

4. Prior to the commencement of each phase, details and/or samples of all proposed surface treatments shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development will harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

5. Prior to the commencement of each phase, a decorative lighting strategy, including details of light levels and hours of use shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, and shall be fully implemented prior to the first bringing into use of each phase and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

6. Notwithstanding the details submitted, full details of the new landforms, including details of the height and shape to be sited on Area E3 as identified within Figure 4 of the submitted Ecology Strategy (reference: C236-LUC-A00-XX-R3-0003-S2-P2, dated January 2015) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Notwithstanding the details submitted and prior to the commencement of construction works of the Sports Hub; a strategy for the decoration of the northern elevation of the Sports Hub shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

8. Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the installation of the proposed green roofs a scheme which details the full specification

of these roofs including plant types shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, shall be fully installed prior to the first use of the building hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: In order to secure a good standard of development in respect of biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the installation of the proposed brown roof a scheme which details the full specification of this roof including plant types shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, shall be fully installed prior to the first use of the building hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: In order to secure a good standard of development in respect of biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Notwithstanding the details submitted, full details of the appearance of the proposed screening wall as described on page 58 of the Design and Access Statement dated October 2014 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

11. Notwithstanding the details submitted, full details of the proposed lighting to the outdoors sports areas including their appearance, light levels and hours of use shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, be fully implemented prior to the first use of the outdoors sports facilities and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of securing a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. Notwithstanding the details submitted; full details of a path, including a timetable for delivery, to the development's western boundary in proximity to the river shall be submitted to and approved in writing. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved timetable for delivery and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of promoting more sustainable means of travel in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

9.2 Conditions for N/2014/1331

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the attached schedule of approved plans.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to conform with the planning application.

2. Prior to the commencement of development, details and/or samples of all proposed external facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development will harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

3. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved CEMP. The CEMP shall include, though not necessarily be restricted to the following details:

- a) A Management Plan incorporating the routing of construction traffic, including access from the public highway and any associated traffic management plans;
- b) Measures to avoid disturbance to wildlife and nesting birds;
- c) Measures to minimise and control noise, vibration, dust and fumes during site preparation works and construction, including vehicle reversing alarms;
- d) Details of the siting of all vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- e) The unloading and loading arrangements for heavy plant and machinery;
- g) The location, extent and duration of any temporary stockpiling areas; and
- h) Measures to prevent mud being deposited on the surrounding highway; and
- i) A strategy for ensuring the safety of users of Beckett's Park during construction works.

Reason: To minimise the impact of the development during the construction phase in accordance Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan and with the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Notwithstanding the details submitted, full details of the proposed security bollards shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, be fully implemented prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of creating a safe development in accordance with the requirements of Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

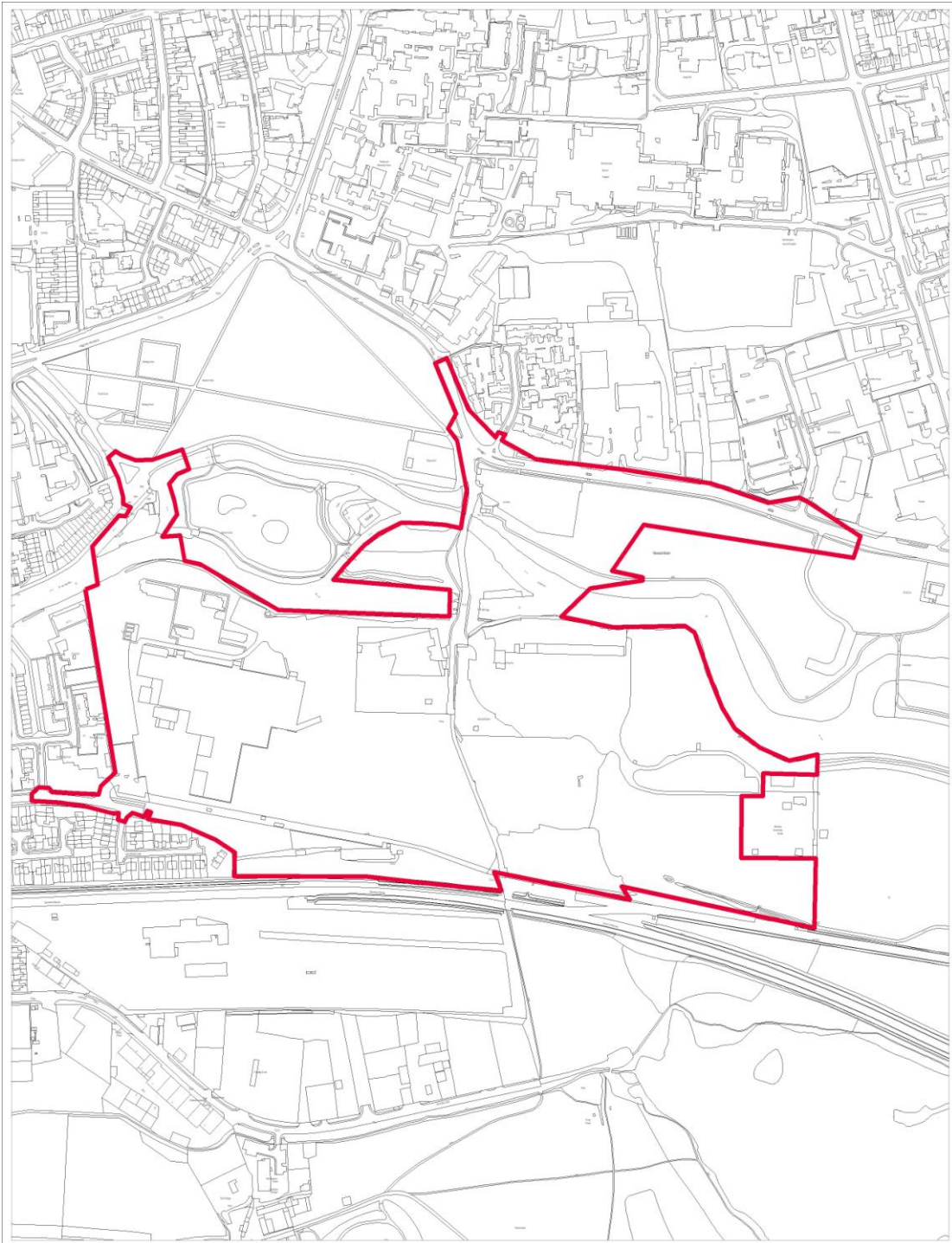
10.1 N/2013/0912; N/2014/1072; N/2014/1269; and N/2014/1331

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Name: **Location Plan**
Date: **4th February 2015**
Scale: **1:5000**
Dept: **Planning**
Project: **Planning Committee**

Title

Reserved Matters - University Site, Nunn Mills Rd

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