

Our ref: RB/1544 & 1789

6 April 2016

Mr A Banting
Development Management Team Leader
Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Guildhall Walk
Portsmouth
PO1 2AL



Dear Alan

**10 ST JAMES STREET, PORTSMOUTH - 15/00788/PAMOD
61 EARLSDON STREET, PORTSMOUTH – 15/00787/PAMOD**

You will recall that these applications to modify existing legal agreements were considered by the Planning Committee last year. The applicant is Big Sur Properties and the full justification in support of the applications was explained in our letters dated 8 May 2015.

In essence it is to allow temporary non-student occupation of the applicant's 'Unilife' student accommodation at St James Street and Earlsdon Street out of term time. This would be to support events such as conferences, seminars and a whole range of cultural attractions that contribute to the wider local economy of the City and business community, including leisure and tourism (e.g. through investment and spend). It could also include events hosted or operated by the University. It would help to raise the profile of the City. These are acknowledged cross-cutting corporate interests of the Council, including in its capacity as the local planning authority and as reflected in the Council's adopted and emerging development plan policies.

The Council has previously agreed to allow Unilife to use some of its other buildings in this way elsewhere in the City and seeks the same flexibility at St James Street and Earlsdon Street.

St James Street

The Committee Resolved to defer this application for the applicant to investigate potential use of the University of Portsmouth's (UoP) car parks during the (student) vacation period.¹ The Member's apparent concern was that non-student use of this Unilife building would cause additional pressure on local public car parking facilities, including on-street parking.

You have recently met with a representative of the applicant, Adrian Parnell. Mr Parnell has investigated the use of the UoP car parks. The UoP has a car park ('Portland') situated next to the Unilife building at 10 St James Street. It has spaces to park 46 cars plus 4 disabled spaces, making a total capacity for 50 spaces all off-street.

During UoP term time, weekday use of this car park is for UoP permit holders only between 8.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. However, during the student vacation period when this car park would have little or no UoP use, the car park would be available to occupiers of the Unilife building, including weekends. The Unilife building has 36 single study bedrooms.

¹ As confirmed by the minutes of the meeting.

Earlsdon Street

The Committee also Resolved to defer this application, including for the same reason as St James Street.²

The UoP has a car park ('Uni House') situated 250 metres walking distance from the Unilife building at 61 Earlsdon Street. It has spaces to park 54 cars plus 2 disabled spaces, making a total capacity for 56 spaces all off-street.

As at St James Street during UoP term time, weekday use of this car park is for UoP permit holders only between 8.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. However, during the student vacation period when this car park would have little or no UoP use, the car park would be available to occupiers of the Unilife building, including weekends. This Unilife building has 35 single study bedrooms.

At Earlsdon Street the Committee was also uncertain if there was satisfactory provision of cycle parking spaces at the Unilife building; thus whether travel to the building by cycle during out-of-term time use was a realistic, attractive proposition and alternative to using a car.

You met Mr Parnell at the Earlsdon Street Unilife building and inspected the cycle parking. This comprises 10 industry standard secure cycle lockers and 15 secure cycle racks, 25 cycle parking spaces in total offering flexibility and choice (locker or rack). These are all located within the ground floor of the building with level access via a secure door (key fob entry system). The cycle store is monitored 24 hours a day by 5 security cameras. While this is less than 1 cycle space per study bedroom it is almost 75% provision.

Mr Parnell explained to you that Unilife acknowledges that an adjoining landowner has a right of way across the Unilife site (i.e. which is now provided for through the ground floor of the building), but the adjoining owner has not been able to reasonably agree with Unilife the precise extent of the right of way. At present Unilife could provide 5 more internal cycle spaces (making 30 secure, covered internal spaces in total) without interfering with the right of way. Unilife could also provide racks for 6 external cycle parking spaces within a small enclosed 'courtyard' area of land that it owns next to the building and the main entrance, though Unilife confirmed to you that the existing provision has been more than adequate to serve the demand for cycle storage.

Conclusion

The Council has previously supported and agreed to the use of Unilife student accommodation out of term time elsewhere in the City at Middle Street with no need to consider alternate car parking arrangements (in that case for 124 study bedrooms).

The Portland and Uni House UoP car parks are conveniently located to these Unilife buildings and have capacity to serve the proposed out of term time use.³ Both Unilife buildings also have secure on-site cycle parking. Surrounding on-street parking is either prohibited (e.g. by yellow lines) or is short stay and/or resident permit parking only and thus unavailable to serve the proposed out of term time use that is sought (so there would be no additional pressure on local resident on-

² As confirmed by the minutes of the meeting.

³ Even assuming all visitors travelled in their own car which is considered to be unlikely given the highly sustainable location of the buildings.

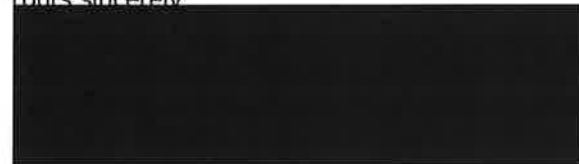
street parking). In transport terms both locations encourage and facilitate easy and convenient access by alternative (to the car) transport including walking, cycling, bus/coach, train, taxi and ferry. The applicant considers that these arrangements are a reasonable and proportionate response in both cases and for a smaller number of units of accommodation to be used in this way than previously supported by the Council.

I hope that this information allows you to take a report back to the next available Planning Committee meeting, which may be 27th April, but I would be pleased to discuss this further meantime if you wish and/or to provide any further relevant information.

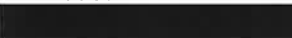
Many thanks.

Regards,

Yours sincerely



ROBIN BUCHANAN MRTPI
DIRECTOR



cc Big Sur Properties

