

POST OFFICE SLINDON STREET PORTSMOUTH PO1 1AB

CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF BUILDING TO FORM HOTEL (CLASS C1); EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO INCLUDE: CONSTRUCTION OF TWO ADDITIONAL STOREYS, REPLACEMENT OF ALL FACADES, FORMATION OF ROOF TERRACES AND DEMOLITION OF EASTERN PART OF THE BUILDING (AMENDED DESCRIPTION AND DRAWINGS)

LINK TO ONLINE DOCUMENTS:

[**20/00152/FUL | CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF BUILDING TO FORM HOTEL \(CLASS C1\); EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO INCLUDE: CONSTRUCTION OF TWO ADDITIONAL STOREYS, REPLACEMENT OF ALL FACADES, FORMATION OF ROOF TERRACES AND DEMOLITION OF EASTERN PART OF THE BUILDING \(AMENDED DESCRIPTION AND DRAWINGS\) | POST OFFICE SLINDON STREET PORTSMOUTH PO1 1AB**](#)

Application Submitted By:

DPP Planning UK Ltd
FAO Mr Tom Wright

On behalf of:

c/o Agent
Slindon Street Portsmouth Limited

RDD: 4th February 2020

LDD: 15th June 2020

EOT: 31st December 2022

This application is brought to Planning Committee, as it is a significant scheme of public interest.

1 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

1.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of the application are as follows:

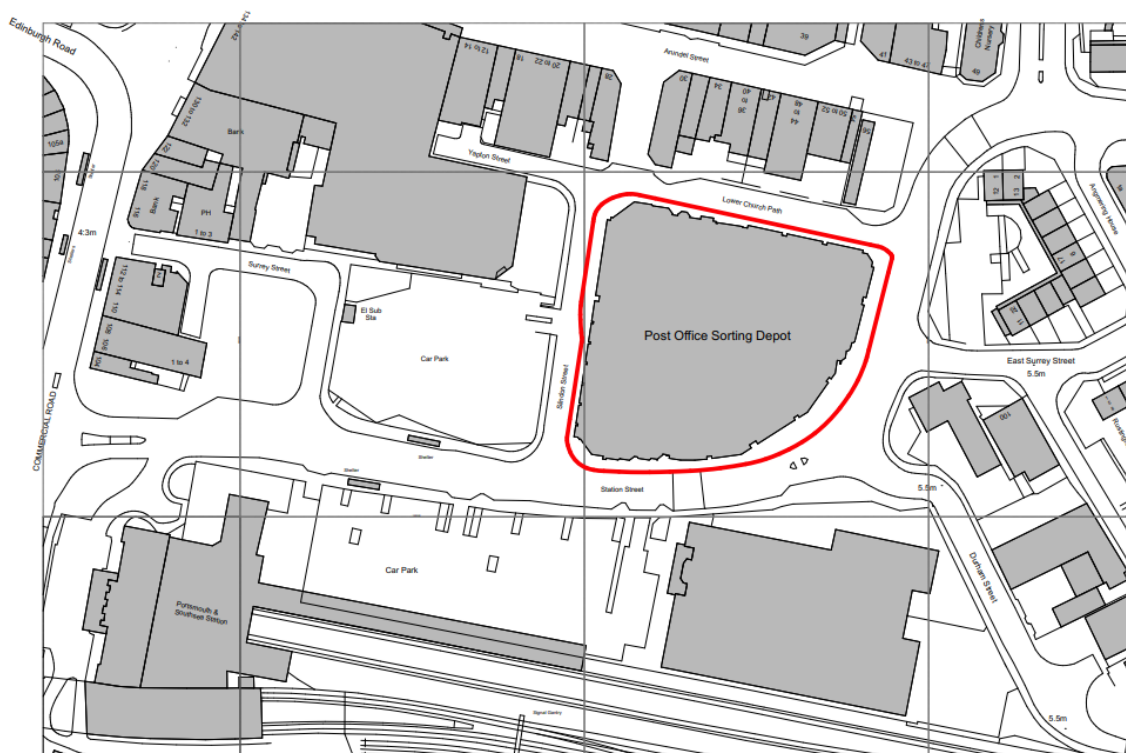
- Principle of Development
- Design - scale and appearance
- Impact on amenity
- Highways Impacts
- Sustainable Design & Construction
- Ecology & Impact on the Solent Special Protection Areas

1.2 Site and Surroundings

1.3 This application site relates to a 5 stories Post Office building which is situated on the main circulatory road within the city centre, situated on the western side of the site. The eastern side of the site forms the parking and plant area. The eastern side contains a vacant two storey (double height) depot (which consists of a loading platform, parking and plant area) to the east which is to be demolished and forms a second application which is under consideration (20/00407/OUT). Which adjoins the eastern side of the site.

1.4 The Post Office building is constructed of red facing brick with pre-cast banding. The site along with the building has a triangular form, with Slindon Street to west, Lower Church Path to the north and Station Road, wrapping round from the south to the east.

- 1.5 At ground floor level, the existing Post Office remains in use, whilst the Post Office sorting Depot remained vacant since 2016. The upper floors contain unoccupied office space.
- 1.6 The site is located on the periphery of Portsmouth's historic core in an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP).
- 1.7 A number of tall buildings have recently been constructed/extended within the site's immediate vicinity, these include:
 - Stanhope House (19-stories) situated on the corner of Stanhope Road and Commercial Road;
 - Crown Plaza (23-stories) located between Station Street and Surrey Street;
 - Catherine House (15-stories) on Stanhope Road and Greetham Street (25-stories, Unite Student block).
- 1.8 Further tall buildings are also being brought forward, immediately adjoining the site to the north-west, 12-18 Arundel Street, was granted in December 2020 for the construction of a 28, part 21 and part 7 storey building.

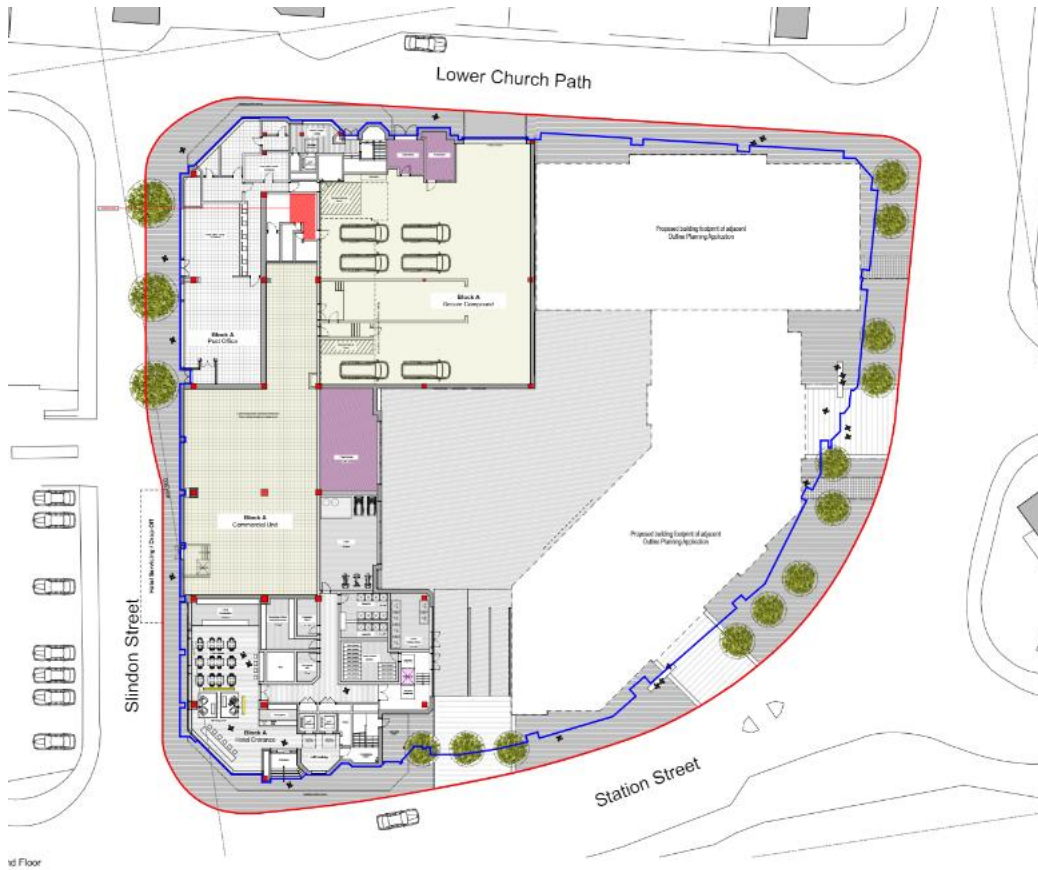


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2 Development Proposal

- 2.1 The development proposal itself relates to the western side of the post office building, which fronts Slindon Street to the west, running parallel north to south. The development would consist of the provision of 200 hotel suites. The development proposal would include three different suite types, 142 Type A, 49 Type B and 9 type UA. The public Post Office and the associated use at ground floor level will be retained, as it cannot be removed and thus has been incorporated into the development proposal.
- 2.2 The building is split into two sections, the main 6 storey office which fronts onto Slindon Street, and the two storey carpark/ sorting-depot to the west, which is to be considered separately as part of the Outline scheme.

- 2.3 The development proposal would be contained within the footprint of the existing office block and would involve the demolition of the 2 storey depot which is located to the east of the site. The north eastern corner of the building would retain the existing Post Office use.
- 2.4 The new hotel would be accessed via the western corner of the building at ground floor level. The ground floor would contain a hotel entrance lobby, main reception area meeting area, seated food area and food preparation area, reception office, luggage store, laundry room, refuse and cycle store. A gym is also to be provided centrally within the building. The lift and stairwell access to upper floors would be provided to the south east.
- 2.5 The development proposal would provide 2 further additional floors, over the existing building, which are proposed to sit between the two existing circulation cores and would be blended into the existing massing.
- 2.6 Each floor will be serviced by two cores each with designated lift and stair access. The main access core is located on the southern-most wing and leads directly down to the hotel reception. Each and every hotel bedroom will have access to a window offering the occupant an adequate provision of daylight. Also, each bedroom will also have access to an en-suite bathroom. The access points to the development have been maintained in their existing locations with their proximity close to the lift cores.
- 2.7 The Commercial aspect of the site will maintain the bin storage and collection facilities from Lower Church Path whilst the Hotel will introduce a new bin store. This store is limited in its location and has been integrated into the building footprint will allow direct access out for collection from Station Street. Plant access is either from Lower Church Path or via the internal court. Cycles A total of 2 cycle hoops are proposed to be integrated into the public realm to allow those using the hotel with somewhere to temporarily secure their bike. Internally, on the southern wing, a secure bike store is proposed with level access and provision for 26 cycles based on a two tier cycle rack system
- 2.8 The application asserts that with this in place the building will receive an exciting new facade design, enhancing the current streetscape bringing this once tired looking building back to life. The proposed change of use would involve the stripping back of the building to the structure and re-cladding of the building to modernise and lift its appearance. The two additional storeys on top. In keeping with the context a crisp and subtle material palette is proposed, using the buildings form and introduction of feature details used to enhance the building even further.
- 2.9 It is proposed that brick is the prime facing material, chosen for its quality and longevity, making certain that the building appearance is befitting of its prominent location over its lifetime. This material choice will also provide this location with a contrast in texture from all the newly constructed panellised buildings. Using layers and given the existing buildings form it is proposed that various shades of brick are used to help break down the overall mass, using a dark base rising to a light cap.
- 2.10 The building would have three main levels of detailing, dark raising to the light at the top the base level of the building (0 to 2) would incorporate a dark brickwork dark grey brick, splayed with white brick detail around windows. The middle of the building (3 to 5) would be grey multi stock brick while the top of the building (6 & 7) would be finished in a white brick cap. The first floor level: multi-functional space at first floor which provides access onto the terrace area.





(Church Path)





3 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 In addition to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, the relevant adopted Local Plan policies are

- PCS4 (Portsmouth City Centre)
- PCS13 (A Greener Portsmouth)
- PCS15 (Sustainable Design and Construction)
- PCS16 (Infrastructure and Community Benefit)
- PCS17 (Transport)
- PCS19 (Housing Mix, Size and Affordable Homes)
- PCS23 (Design and Conservation)
- PCS24 (Tall buildings)

3.2 Portsmouth City Local Plan (2001 - 2011) - Retained policy January 2012:

3.3 Saved policy DC21 (Contaminated Land) of the Portsmouth City Local Plan.

3.4 Other guidance:

- The Parking Standards SPD
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- National Design Guide (2019);
- The Housing standards SPD and the Technical Housing Standards - nationally described space standards
- The City Centre Masterplan (2013)
- Tall Buildings SPD (2012);

- Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (January 2013);
- Reducing Crime Through Design SPD (March 2006);
- Achieving Employment and Skills Plans (July 2013);
- The Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (December 2017)

3.5 Saved Policy DC21 (Contaminated Land) of the Portsmouth City Local Plan would also be a material consideration.

3.6 National Planning Policy Framework

Still at the heart of the revised NPPF (July 2021) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means approving development proposals that accord with development plan policies without delay (para 11). However, the presumption in favour of development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being determined (para 177).

3.7 The NPPF describes the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the three dimensions to achieving it: economic, social and environmental. The proposal should be assessed against development management policies in the NPPF.

4 Representations:

4.1 Following the display of several site notices and public notification including 97 letters sent to neighbouring properties, a single (1) letter of representation has been received, the comments raised, related to parking being at a premium around the area and that there have been a number of hotels and tower blocks built in the vicinity in the last few of years.

4.2 Site Notice Displayed 25th June 2020.

4.3 Press Notice Published 28th January 2022.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Regulatory Services** - No objection raised, suggested a condition be imposed requiring details of noise emissions from any fixed plant material.

5.2 **Coastal And Drainage** - No objection raised

5.3 **Archaeology Advisor** - No objection raised

5.4 **Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service** - No objection raised

5.5 **Ecology** - No objection raised

5.6 **Contaminated Land Team** - No objection raised subject to conditions

5.7 **Natural England** - No objection raised

5.8 **Environmental Health** - No objection raised subject to condition ensuring construction noise id controlled in the interest of neighbour amenity

5.9 **Crime Prevention Design Advisor**- No objection raised, advisory comments provided, to reduce the opportunities for crime Closed Circuit Television cameras should be fitted within the cycle store.

5.10 An escape lobby is shown giving access on to Lower Church Path, is the intension to allow staff or 'checked in' guests to access and exit the building using these doors. If this

is the case appropriate security systems will have to be put in place to prevent people 'tailgating' into the hotel.

- 5.11 **Highways Engineer** - No objection raised, We have received the attached drawings from the applicant which indicate an amended highway arrangement which would resolve the fundamental highway safety concern regarding accessibility for coaches; They indicate the reversal of the one way system in Slindon Street / Lower Church Path which would allow both service vehicles and coaches to utilise the proposed loading bay and critically allow passengers to board coaches from the footway on the nearside. This arrangement does require modifications of the junctions with Station Street and minor adjustment to the position of parking bays in Slindon Street, but if implemented would resolve the fundamental highway safety concern and the risk of coaches obstructing the bus stops established for timetabled services. However would require formal modification of the existing traffic regulation order which is subject to a separate statutory process

Subject to the highway arrangements proposed reflecting these new drawings and a Grampian condition requiring that such a TRO modification to reverse the one way system on Slindon Street and amend the on street parking bay positions was secured prior to the commencement of the development I would not wish to raise a highway objection to the proposal on safety grounds.

- 5.12 **Drainage** - No objection raised
- 5.13 **Arboricultural Officer** - No objection raised
- 5.14 **Archaeology Advisor** - No objection raised

6 Planning Assessment

- 6.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of the application are as follows:

- Principle of Development;
- Design and character
- Impact amenity;
- Highways Impacts;
- Ecology & Impact on the Solent Special Protection Areas

6.2 Principle of Development

- 6.3 The application site is located principally within the 'Station Square & Station Street' locality of the City Centre as defined by Policy PCS4 of the Portsmouth Plan. The policy as a whole encourages development that will transform the city centre into the economic, social and cultural focus of south east Hampshire by providing a wide range of uses (such as retail, employment, and cultural facilities) that add to the vitality and vibrancy of the city and support economic growth. In addition, the policy also states that given the high level of accessibility by public transport, the city centre is ideally suited to provide a substantial number of new homes, which could include specific forms of residential accommodation such as hotels.

- 6.4 The City Centre Masterplan SPD (January 2013) expands upon this policy and sets a vision 'to transform the city centre into the economic, social and cultural focus of southeast Hampshire and to create a prominent and welcoming city centre identifying this should be a place for people to work, shop, live and visit. The unadopted City Centre Development Strategy recently produced to review the Masterplan SPD similarly focusses economic activity and growth in this part of the City Centre

- 6.5 Policy PCS10 outlines the strategy for the delivery of housing within the city over the plan period, stating that new housing will be promoted through conversions,

redevelopment of previously developed land and higher densities in defined areas. This is supported by para 61 of the revised NPPF which states that "...the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people [etc]...)".

- 6.6 Having regard to the sustainable town centre location of the site in close proximity to the railway station, it is considered that the proposed provision for additional hotel accommodation would be acceptable in principle. The retention of the existing Post Office facility is also noted, which provides a benefit to the local community.
- 6.7 The main issues for consideration are the design, highways implications, impact on residential amenity, standard of accommodation for future occupiers, and any impact on the Solent Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
- 6.8 The design of the proposal and its impact on the character of the area
- 6.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places an emphasis on achieving sustainable development, for which good design is a fundamental element, creating better places in which to live and work and helping to make development acceptable to communities. The recently updated NPPF (2021) states at paragraph 126: "The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve."
- 6.10 The NPPF in paragraphs 124 and 127 state that development should "add to the overall quality of the area" and "respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings". The NPPF also requires that developments be visually attractive as a result of good architecture. It also emphasises that "permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions".
- 6.11 Paragraph 130 sets out that developments should: ensure that they function well and add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history, while not discouraging appropriate innovation or change; establish or maintain a strong sense of place and should optimise the potential of a site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate mix of development; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 6.12 Policies PCS23 (Design & Conservation) and PCS24 (Tall Buildings) echo the principles of good design set out within the NPPF requiring all new development to be well designed, seeking excellent architectural quality; public and private spaces that are clearly defined, as well as being safe, vibrant and attractive; relate to the geography and history of Portsmouth; is of an appropriate scale, density, layout, appearance and materials in relation to the particular context; provides protection of important views and provides active street frontages in town centre locations. PCS4 states: 'The buildings in the city centre will be the architecture that defines the city and should be of exceptional quality...Collectively they should create a city centre of which Portsmouth can be proud. The city centre is the ideal place for extraordinary designs for ordinary buildings such as offices and housing as well as key landmarks such as new shopping facilities and public art. In addition, the public realm and landscaping of new developments should also be of an exceptional quality.'
- 6.13 The City Centre Masterplan SPD (January 2013), expands upon these policies and sets a vision for the redevelopment of the city centre: 'The Vision: to create a vibrant and successful city centre that is the beating heart of our great waterfront city. This centre will include welcoming gateways, beautiful streets, lively and distinctive spaces and delightful

buildings, whilst enhancing the city's heritage assets. The area will be transformed into a quality place where people choose to live, work, study, visit and invest'.

- 6.14 The applicant has worked pro-actively with the LPA both through the course of the application discussions and the life of the planning application undertaking design and layout changes in order to address the challenges and obstacles that have arisen along the way, in order to address specific issues raised by the LPA and its consultees to ensure that the development would meet the requirements of the policies set out above.
- 6.15 The development proposal would see the creation of an additional two stories above the existing 6 storey element of the building. The proposal would also see significant modifications and alterations to the building's façade. The proposal which would stand at 8 stories, would not appear overly dominant and would satisfactorily integrate within the sites context.
- 6.16 The alterations of the building would enhance the elevations with the introduction of large format glazing we are proposing to uplift these entrances and make them clearly identifiable from the rest of the elevation by way of partially re-sculpting the ground floor footprint.
- 6.17 The design proposal has incorporated on a three tier layer approach, using a classical strategy to help proportion the building and provide variety. At the base, and to relate to the human scale, a dark plinth is proposed. Into this plinth at ground floor will sit, amongst other things, the hotel entrance, clearly defined with its large sections of glazing.
- 6.18 The design statement advises that this design ethos will not only provide those occupying the space with adequate daylight but it will also give some natural surveillance to the street outside. Restricting this plinth to 3 storeys helps improve upon the buildings relationship to the human scale, so to not make the area feel too oppressive. By way of grouping windows at the lower level this also helps to reduce the perceived scale and therefore impact of this plinth. Given the nature of the building being a hotel with its repeating room layout feature details such as angled brick panels and pulled bricks have been introduced to the elevations to provide variety and interest. To add a vertical rhythm to an otherwise horizontal building vertical bays, defined with channels, have been introduced to the mid-section, capped with either a metal railing or a brick parapet, all the time moving this building away from its previous life as an office to a softer more inviting aesthetic.
- 6.19 The uppermost levels (the capital of the building) has been designed to blend in with that of the existing form, extruding up in places the 5th floor to mask the additional storeys. Behind these extrusions the new additional levels can be seen albeit in a subtle manner, maintaining interest at the lower, more visible levels. This element has been designed to be simple yet crisp in its appearance, using a white brick and large windows to make this element feel lightweight in contrast to the heavy dark plinth.
- 6.20 The resultant design is considered by Officers to be of an appropriate design and scale, which has been a result of negotiations with Officers and the applicant. Whilst the submitted drawings are detailed, a condition requiring the submission of architectural detailing at a much higher scale is recommended in order to ensure greater control and flexibility over the final appearance and to provide a solution to any issues which may arise once the building's façade is stripped back.
- 6.21 As part of the revised proposal, the first floor of the hotel incorporates a flexible space opening out onto an external terrace. We may want to consider the management of this space and future proofing on the assumption the outline residential scheme comes forward, potential noise and disturbance etc. In addition, if the residential scheme and amenity deck does come forward, there will be opportunities to have access to and from the hotel terrace onto the deck and then down to street level which could help enliven

this space and assist with ongoing management. The movement plan submitted with the outline scheme shows steps between the public amenity deck and the hotel terrace although this is currently omitted from the first floor plans and may need adding in for clarity;

- 6.22 The resultant building, is considered to be of high quality architectural standard enhanced by a robust and durable palette of materials. Large window openings, expressed columns and deep window reveals contribute to the sense of quality and robustness providing interesting and distinctive architectural features which also break some large facades and visually reduce the bulk of the building/s by providing a greater vertical emphasis.
- 6.23 Overall, the proposed development is considered to be of high quality architectural standard in line with aims set out in the updated NPPF. It would contribute to the evolving skyline within the city centre, would optimise the use of a city centre brownfield site and would respond positively at street level with opportunities for greater activity and integration with adjoining sites as part of a wider regeneration project.
- 6.24 In reaching this conclusion significant weight has been placed on the specific design concept, the architectural detailing and high quality materials and finishes indicated within the application drawings and supporting information. Deviation from these particulars could compromise the overall design concept resulting in a materially different proposal for which a separate judgement of acceptability would need to be made.
- 6.25 Impact on residential amenity and standard of accommodation
- 6.26 Policy PCS23 lists a number of criteria against which development proposals will be assessed, including the need to protect amenity and the provision of a good standard of living environment for neighbouring and local occupiers, as well as future residents and users of the development. In terms of residential amenity, there are two elements for consideration, these being the impact of the development on existing neighbouring residents and secondly, the impact on future occupiers of the development.
- 6.27 Overall it is considered that the development would provide an acceptable standard of living environment for future occupiers of the hotel. The rooms within the apartments would all provide a good standard of accommodation. The proposed floorplans show that the units would all have a good standard of light and outlook from windows to habitable rooms. The additional two stories are not considered to result in an unacceptable degree of overshadowing or light loss to the occupiers of neighbouring properties. I do not consider the proposal would unduly impact upon surrounding residential amenity.
- 6.28 The City Council's Crime Prevention Design Advisor has provided guidance and recommendations in order to ensure that the safety of both the hotel staff as well as the guests are maintained. These measures will be controlled by a suitably worded condition.
- 6.29 Overall it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant adverse impacts on the amenity of adjoining occupiers, and the wider benefits of redevelopment and the introduction of residents to the area as part of a wider redevelopment opportunity would outweigh any minor impacts.
- 6.30 Highways and parking
- 6.31 The application site is located within a highly accessible City Centre location a short walk from a wide range of shops, services, recreational facilities, University facilities and transport connections including Portsmouth and Southsea railway station.

- 6.32 In terms of parking, the Portsmouth City Council parking standards are set out in the 'Parking Standards and Transport Assessments' Supplementary Planning Document (SPC), and are as follows: - 1-bed - 1 parking space plus 1 cycle space; - 2 or 3-bed - 1.5 parking spaces plus 2 cycle spaces. The plans propose a car free development, which would be below the policy requirement. A relaxation in the parking standards is normally only considered appropriate for highly accessible locations and the onus is on the applicant to justify any reduction.
- 6.33 The limited parking provision albeit being not being policy compliant with the adopted parking standards the city centre location together with the highly sustainable location would render the proposal acceptable in principle. Portsmouth City Council have made the decision to introduce a Clean Air Zone for the City, which is now in force, the aim of which is to actively trying to reduce vehicle traffic.
- 6.34 Discussions have been ongoing between the Council's Officers and the Applicant to overcome a number of considerations. The laundry and waste collection arrangement was improved by revising the internal ground floor arrangement, which now allows for direct access to the layby on Slindon Street, as supposed to originally from being undertaken from Station Street.
- 6.35 The development would include coach parking provisions for hotel visitors. It was not reasonable to rely on the availability of local bus stops operating for very frequently scheduled services to provide for coach parking which will require relatively lengthy stays to set down and collect visitors and their luggage. On this basis an alternative resolution was sought.
- 6.36 Revised plans were received which indicate an amended highway arrangement which would resolve the fundamental highway safety concern which was previously raised regarding site accessibility for coaches. The revised plans indicate the reversal of the one way system in Slindon Street / Lower Church Path which would allow both service vehicles and coaches to utilise the proposed loading bay and critically allow passengers to board coaches from the footway on the nearside. This arrangement does require modifications of the junctions with Station Street and minor adjustment to the position of parking bays in Slindon Street, but if implemented would resolve the fundamental highway safety concern and the risk of coaches obstructing the bus stops established for timetabled services.
- 6.37 Based on the revised plans, the Council's Highways Consultant advised that subject to the highway arrangements proposed reflecting these new drawings and the imposition of a Grampian condition requiring that such a TRO modification to reverse the one way system on Slindon Street and amend the on street parking bay positions was secured prior to the commencement of the development, no highway objection to the proposal on safety grounds is raised.
- 6.38 Owing to the highly sustainable city centre location of the site within 300m of a railway station and bus interchange, the provision of a good standard of bicycle storage facilities and good pedestrian and cycle routes to a wide range of shops, service, recreational facilities and employment opportunities, it is reasonable to assume that residents could reside comfortably within the development without the need to own a private vehicle.
- 6.39 Portsmouth City Council have made the decision to introduce a Clean Air Zone for the City, and this has recently come into force. This application Site on Slindon Street falls within the clean air zone where Portsmouth is actively trying to reduce vehicle traffic.
- 6.40 Sustainable Design & Construction
- 6.41 All new development in the city must comply with the relevant sustainable design and construction standards as set out in Policy PCS15 and the 'Sustainable design and construction' SPD. Both the policy and SPD require that non-residential developments

which involve the construction of more than 500sq.m. of new floorspace must achieve a BREEAM level of 'excellent' from 2013 onwards.

6.42 The application has been accompanied by an Energy Statement which outlines the development's proposed energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies. It highlights that energy demand reductions are to be realised throughout the scheme via the specification of an optimised building fabric and the inclusion of energy efficient building services systems. High efficiency Air Source Heat Pumps are proposed to contribute to meeting the space heating and domestic hot water load of the hotel.

6.43 The drainage Strategy has also been considered by the Lead Local Flood Authority, and advised that there are no major concerns and the overall Drainage Strategy appears in good order and subject to a planning condition requiring the development be carried out in accordance with the Drainage Strategy, no further planning conditions in respect of drainage are requested.

6.44 Archaeological considerations

6.45 The site is located on the periphery of Portsmouth's historic core in an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP). The Council consulted the Archaeological Advisor who advised that, having reviewed the proposed development's location it is clear that any sub-surface deposits will have been heavily impacted by the modern building that currently occupies the site. Therefore it would be very unlikely for groundworks associated with the proposed ground floor extensions to expose any hitherto unrecorded archaeological features and/or deposits. As a result, no issues were raised in this particular instance.

6.46 Environmental considerations

6.47 However it is in the interest of the developer to ensure they provide appropriate comfort of their guests to which end they have submitted an acoustic report specifying sound insulation measures to ensure acceptable internal noise levels within bedrooms. As this is a commercial use my primary consideration is whether the proposed development is suitable for the locality and the potential impact upon the amenity of any nearby sensitive development.

6.48 The Council's Officers having reviewed the submitted acoustic report have suggested that the development is appropriate for this location and should not have any detrimental impacts upon the nearby residential dwellings in Arundel Street. As no mention was made of the potential impact upon the locality from the operation of any associated fixed plant and machinery, this includes any impacts upon both the existing residential dwellings and any adjacent permissions on the development site, a condition is to be imposed ensuring an assessment be made prior to the installation of any fixed plant or equipment.

6.49 Prior to demolition the Contaminated Land Team requires the presence of asbestos, within the building (and also within the ground) to be considered in the preliminary risk assessment for the proposed development. The potential presence of asbestos must be investigated prior to demolition/refurbishment as this may compound land contamination issues.

6.50 Nitrates

6.51 The applicant has advised that with regards the Nitrates mitigation, it is their intention to enter into a S106 but to use the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) credits to offset this which can be purchased by developers.

6.52 Special Protection Areas (SPA) mitigation

6.53 The application site is within 5.6km of the Portsmouth Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) and would lead to a net increase in residential accommodation. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [as amended] and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 place duties on the Council to ensure that the proposed development would not have a significant likely effect on the interest features of the Solent Special Protection Areas, or otherwise affect protected habitats or species. The Portsmouth Plan's Greener Portsmouth policy (PCS13) sets out how the Council will ensure that the European designated nature conservation sites along the Solent coast will continue to be protected. There are two potential impacts resulting from this development, the first being potential recreational disturbance around the shoreline of the harbours and the second from increased levels of nitrogen and phosphorus entering the Solent water environment.

6.54 Sections 6.10 and 6.11 of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy:

"that new hotels and other holiday/tourist accommodation- defined as both wholly new establishments and extensions of existing ones – is a residential-related use with the potential to generate additional recreational visits to the SPA(s). The need for mitigation for new hotel accommodation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the local planning authority in relation to the 'tests' set out in the paragraph above. Mitigation is unlikely to be required for new hotel accommodation in a city centre for example, if the guests will predominantly be business people or those visiting the built heritage rather than the coast.

On the other hand, mitigation is more likely to be required for new hotel accommodation close to a SPA where guests will probably spend more time walking or pursuing other recreational activities at the coast. Where mitigation is deemed to be necessary for new hotel and other holiday/tourist accommodation, the mitigation may take the form of a developer contribution calculated on the basis of the number of new bedrooms and the monetary contributions (or a proportion thereof) in paragraph 6.1 above. Such contributions will be pooled and spent on mitigation measures in the same way as developer contributions from new dwellings."

6.55 Natural England were consulted on the development proposal and have advised that the council, as competent authority, should examine the issue of recreational disturbance via an appropriate assessment to ensure there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the Solent SPA(s) in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The council should consider occupancy rates and types of visitors the hotel is likely to attract. It may be the case that the application will be required to comply with the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) Definitive Strategy and pay appropriate contributions. Provided there is commitment to this mitigation early in the process and an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any forthcoming planning permission to secure this measure, this will ensure this potential effect has been appropriately addressed.

6.56 Ecology

6.57 The application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey Report dated January 2020). As the applications have been amended so has the advice received. International sites - Recreational Impacts This development is located within 1.1 km of the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA at its closest point and within 2 km of the Portsmouth Harbour SPA. With respect to the potential in-combination impacts on the nearby European designated sites, the ecology report identifies that impacts would be addressed through contributions to the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP). Natural England has drawn the applicant's attention to Natural England's July 2020 response to the hotel application which recommends consideration of the occupancy rates and type of visitors that the hotel is likely to attract, in order to consider potential recreational issues arising from hotel use and resulting contributions.

- 6.58 Natural England were consulted on the development proposal and have advised that any financial contribution to address the adverse in-combination effects of increased recreational pressure on the SPAs arising from the entire combined scheme will be secured at the appropriate stage, to ensure no likely significant effect on the integrity of the designated sites. Considering the proximity of the European sites and the easy footpath links between the application site and the SPAs, the applicant should also consider potential likely significant effect on the SPA from this development on its own, as well as in combination with other developments - bespoke measures may be required to address this direct impact pathway. I would recommend that the applicant consults once again with Natural England (NE) on the direct effects point, through their Discretionary Advice Service.

International Sites – Nutrients The site is within the Solent Nutrient Impact Area and new development with overnight accommodation falls under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as confirmed by Natural England's advice dated 28th July 2020. The applicant has provided Nitrate Neutrality Reports for each application (Omnia, August and September 2021) in line with PCC's Nitrate Mitigation Strategy' which calculates Nitrate Budget of 165.4kg/N/year (20/00407/OUT) and 35.2kg/N/year (20/00152/FUL) as a result of the combined scheme and states that mitigation will therefore be required.

The reports indicate that the applicant has arranged to offset the nitrogen for the scheme by securing credits from HIWWT and that this has been agreed in principle and the LPA are aware. This should be secured via a suitable mechanism prior to approval, to ensure certainty that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the Solent's European designated sites as a result of the scheme. **International and National Sites – Qualifying Features, Overwintering Geese and Waders** As the new buildings are above 5 storeys and over 20m in height this proposal triggers the Tall Buildings SPD and the potential requirement for an Appropriate Assessment (Paragraph 4.2) – this is due to potential for collision risk during both construction and operation of new tall buildings in close proximity to the Portsmouth Harbour SPA and its functionally linked habitats which could lead to significant effects on the qualifying species of this site. The Southampton Wetland Bird Flight Path Study (Geodata Institute, 2009) demonstrated that the majority of flights by waterfowl occurred over the water and as a result collision risk with tall structures was not predicted to pose a significant threat to qualifying species from the designated sites covered by that study. Although the proposed site is located between coastal and inland/harbour Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy Sites (land functionally linked to the Portsmouth Harbour SPA), the post office site is already surrounded by existing taller buildings in a built up urban area and it is not therefore likely that the presence of the new structures proposed by this application would lead to a likely significant effect on the SPA bird populations. No further information is considered to be required on this point.

Protected Species – Bats A single daytime site visit was carried out on 7th September 2018, followed by a bat emergence survey (by 4 surveyors) on 18th September 2018, outwith the optimum period for bat emergence/re-entry surveys of built structures. Bat survey data typically remains valid for 12-18 months and the survey data provided with these applications is therefore out of date. The LPA therefore cannot be certain that the status of the buildings has not changed in the period since the survey was carried out and consequently an updated daytime survey and dusk/dawn bat activity survey is required, in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines for Professional Bat Surveys (BCT, 2016). This should also include an assessment of the potential of the existing buildings to support hibernating bats, due to the stated presence of suitable access to cavity wall features, and the potential for any expansion gaps (or similar) in the building framework to support roosting bats, including during transitional periods. Unfortunately it is not appropriate to defer this further survey requirement – the NPPF, Circular 06/2005 and Natural England Standing Advice on Protected Species require that planning decisions are based on full, up-to-date ecological information and it is essential that all necessary survey, assessment and mitigation information is available to the LPA

prior to determination, particularly in the case of protected species, which are a material planning consideration. This will enable the LPA to determine the application on the basis of full knowledge about the ecological impacts of the proposal and to ensure that any impacts can and will be mitigated, and are acceptable. Breeding birds The existing structures and trees along Slindon Street are suitable to support breeding birds. I would recommend use of a pre-commencement condition to ensure breeding birds are protected through the development process. Suitable wording would be "Development shall proceed in accordance with the measures set out in Paragraphs 4.0.16 to 4.0.19 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey Report (Clayton, A., January 2020), which sets out mitigation measures for breeding birds. Reason: to protect breeding birds in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)." Biodiversity Enhancements The vegetation within the application site is considered to have very limited ecological value and is limited to three semi-mature maple (Acer sp.) trees, which would be removed as a result of the scheme. I would suggest that a condition be added to any planning permission requiring the applicant to plant at least 3x replacement trees (maple or other suitable native species) to ensure no net loss, and to incorporate features into the development that would contribute to biodiversity, including new native planting and integration of bat and swift bricks into the new structure. These measures should be set out within a Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (or similar) and secured via pre-commencement condition.

6.59 CIL

6.60 Portsmouth City Council introduced its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule in April 2012 with a basic CIL rate of £105/sqm. The CIL regulations require indexation to be applied to this rate annually using the RICS CIL Index and the 2022 basic rate is £156.32/sqm. Most new development which creates over 99sqm of gross internal area or creates a new dwelling is potentially liable for the levy. However, exclusions, exemptions and reliefs from the levy may be available.

6.61 Human Rights and the Public Sector Equality Duty ("PSED")

6.62 The Council is required by the Human Rights Act 1998 to act in a way that is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. Virtually all planning applications engage the right to the enjoyment of property and the right to a fair hearing. Indeed, many applications engage the right to respect for private and family life where residential property is affected. Other convention rights may also be engaged. It is important to note that many convention rights are qualified rights, meaning that they are not absolute rights and must be balanced against competing interests as permitted by law. This report seeks such a balance.

6.63 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of persons by reason of their protected characteristics. Further the Council must advance equality of opportunity and foster good relation between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Having had due regard to the public sector equality duty as it applies to those with protected characteristics in the context of this application, it is not considered that the officer's recommendation would breach the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

7 Conclusion and Planning Balance

7.1 Having regard to all of the material planning matters, it is considered that the proposed development for the partial retention of the Post office and conversions and extension of the existing building to form a hotel would be appropriate in this location. The redevelopment would optimise this brownfield site, introducing a range of uses that would generate greater activity contributing towards the vitality and vibrancy of the city centre and supporting economic growth within the area.

- 7.2 The overall scale of the proposed development is considered to make effective use of this site. The resultant building is considered to be of good architectural merit, incorporating a number of interesting design elements that would make a positive and distinctive contribution the character of the site, which is in much need of enhancement.
- 7.3 Subject to a series of planning conditions which are set out below, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any significant adverse impacts on the amenity of existing adjoining occupiers and would provide a good standard of hotel accommodation. In light of the detailed assessment above, it is considered that the proposal would comply with the aims and objectives of the Portsmouth Plan Policies and supporting Supplementary Planning Documents, and would meet the definition of sustainable development as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
8. **RECOMMENDATION:** That delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Planning & Economic Growth to Grant Conditional Permission within 9 months in order to allow for the completion of legal agreements to secure the following:
- Provision to secure mitigation in respect of the net increase in Nitrate load (TBCkg/TN/yr) resulting from the proposed development in line with the City Council's Interim Nutrient Neutral Mitigation Strategy. Mitigation to be calculated by the number of hotel bedrooms ((currently 218-beds) x £903.82) - Total £197,032.76;
 - Provision to secure a contribution towards setup/monitoring of Travel Management Plan £5,500. The Travel Plan itself to be secured by Planning Condition;
 - Provision to secure the agreement and implementation of an Employment & Skills Plan;
 - Project Management/Auditing Fee £620 (Employment and Skills Plan). To be controlled by condition.

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this planning permission.

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

2. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the permission hereby granted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings numbers:

17.032 CNV 100 SITE LOCATION PLAN
17.032 CNV 101 BLOCK PLAN
17.032 CNV 200 PROPOSED DEMOLITION PLAN
17.032 CNV 201 PROPOSED DEMOLITION ELEVATION
17.032 CNV_210 A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_220 A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_221 Proposed First Floor Plan A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_222 Proposed Second Floor Plan A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_223 Proposed Third Floor Plan A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_224 Proposed Fourth Floor Plan A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_225 Proposed Fifth Floor Plan A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_226 Proposed Sixth Floor Plan A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_227 Proposed Seventh Floor Plan A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_228 Proposed Roof Plan A1 1:200 P3
17.032 CNV_240 Proposed North & East Elevation A1 1:200 P5
17.032 CNV_241 Proposed South & West Elevation A1 1:200 P4
17.032 CNV_260 Proposed Station Street looking North & East A1 1:500 P4

17.032 CNV_270 Proposed Bay Study A1 1:100 P3
17.032 CNV_280 Proposed Bay Section
5004906-RDG-XX-XX-PL-C-2208
5004906-RDG-XX-XX-PL-C-2207
5004906-RDG-XX-XX-PL-C-2202

Reason: To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the permission granted.

3. (a) Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development works other than those of demolition, and construction of the building's foundations shall take place until: i) a full and detailed schedule of all materials and finishes (including a samples board) to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and ii) a sample panel (minimum 2 metres square) for each of the proposed masonry types to demonstrate: colour; texture; bedding and bonding pattern; mortar colour and finish has been installed at the application site and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and (b) The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the schedule of materials and finishes agreed pursuant to part (a)i) of this Condition; and the sample panels approved pursuant to part (a)ii) of this Condition retained on site for verification purposes until completion of the construction works.

Reason: To secure a high quality finish to a tall building on a prominent and important site within the city centre having regard to the specific weight that has been placed on the need for high quality of design and use of robust materials in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies PCS23 and PCS24 of the Portsmouth Plan (2012), the City Centre Masterplan SPD (2013), the Tall Buildings SPD and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

4. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development works other than those of demolition shall take place until precise details of the proposed means of foul and surface water sewerage disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal is incorporated into the design and the build and that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal and maintained for the lifetime of the proposal, and in accordance with Policy PCS15 of the Portsmouth Plan.

5. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until full detailed specifications of the proposed external materials and finishes, are first submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan.

6. Prior to the installation of any fixed plant or equipment an assessment of noise from the operation of the plant shall be undertaken using the procedures within British Standard BS4142:2014 and a report submitted to the local authority for approval. Upon approval all specified measures to mitigate any identified observed adverse effect levels due to the operation of the plant shall be implemented.

Reason: To ensure that acceptable levels of noise and vibration within habitable rooms are not exceeded in the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan (2012) and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

7. Development shall proceed in accordance with the measures set out in Paragraphs 4.0.16 to 4.0.19 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey Report (Clayton, A., January 3 2020), which sets out mitigation measures for breeding birds. Reason: to protect breeding birds in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Reason: To enhance biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021 and with PCS13 of the Portsmouth Plan.

8. Prior to commencement, a detailed scheme of mitigation planting and biodiversity enhancements to be incorporated into the development shall be submitted for written approval to the Local Planning Authority. Development shall subsequently proceed in accordance with any such approved details, with photographic evidence provided to the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of occupation.

Reason: To enhance biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021 and with PCS13 of the Portsmouth Plan.

9. (i) No demolition works shall occur until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority or within such extended period as may be agreed with the Local Planning Authority:

- a) The developer must pre-screen the building for asbestos and confirm that asbestos is not present. Where one exists, the building's asbestos register must be obtained and unless asbestos is known to not be present an intrusive asbestos refurbishment and demolition survey conducted in accordance with HSG264. The mitigation scheme to control risks to future occupiers must be verified. The scheme must be written by a suitably qualified person and shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to demolition.

- b) A desk study (undertaken following best practice including BS10175:2011+A2:2017 'Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites Code of Practice') documenting all the previous and current land uses of the building(s), land, and wider area. The report shall contain a conceptual model (diagram, plan, and network diagram) showing the potential contaminant linkages (including consideration of asbestos), including proposals for site investigation if required with the sampling rationale for all proposed sample locations and depths being shown in the conceptual model (Phase 1 report).

Reason: To ensure that the risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

10. (ii) No works (referring to ground works and/or amendment to the substructure) pursuant to this permission shall commence until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (or within such extended period as may be agreed with the Local Planning Authority) the following in sequential order:

- a) A site investigation report documenting the ground conditions of the site and incorporating chemical and gas analysis identified as appropriate by the conceptual model in the desk study (to be undertaken in accordance with BS10175:2011+A2:2017 and BS8576:2013 'Guidance on investigations for ground gas - Permanent gases and volatile organic compounds (VOCs)'). The report shall refine the conceptual model of the site and confirm either that the site is currently suitable for the proposed end-use or can be made so by remediation (Phase 2 report).

- b) A remediation method statement report detailing the remedial scheme and measures to be undertaken to avoid risk from contaminants and/or gases when the development hereby authorised is completed, including proposals for future

maintenance and monitoring, as necessary (Phase 3 report). If identified risks relate to bulk gases, this will require the submission of the design report, installation brief, and validation plan as detailed in BS8485:2015+A1:2019 Code of practice for the design of protective measures for methane and carbon dioxide ground gases for new buildings and have consideration of CIRIA 735 Good practice on the testing and verification of protection systems for buildings against hazardous ground gases. The remedial options appraisal shall have due consideration of sustainability as detailed in ISO 18504:2017 Soil quality — Sustainable remediation. It shall include the nomination of a competent person to oversee the implementation of the remedial scheme and detail how the remedial measures will be verified on completion.

Reason: To ensure that the risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

11. (iii) The development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied/brought into use until there has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority a stand-alone verification report by the competent person approved pursuant to condition (i)c above. The report shall demonstrate that the remedial scheme has been implemented fully in accordance with the remediation method statement. For the verification of gas protection schemes the applicant should follow the agreed validation plan. Thereafter the remedial scheme shall be maintained in accordance with the details approved under conditions (ii)b.

Reason: To ensure that the risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

12. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the measures set out within the Travel Plan, which is to be submitted and agreed by the LPA, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure sustainable transport measures in accordance with Policy PCS17 of the Portsmouth Plan.

13. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, no works associated with the construction of the development hereby permitted (including foundations and drainage works) until an Employment & Skills Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall incorporate a package of measures aimed at improving the training, skills and employability of the workforce to be employed for the construction and occupation of the development, and mechanisms to review and report back on progress achieved to the Local Planning Authority; and
(b) The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the Employment & Skills Plan approved pursuant to part (a) of this Condition.

Reason: To contribute towards the provision of training and employment opportunities for local residents during the construction phase of the development in accordance with Policy PCS16 of the Portsmouth Plan and the Achieving Employment and Skills Plans SPD (2013).

14. Prior to the first occupation of the development, details inclusive of location and type of CCTV surveillance and security measures for staff and residents, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. They shall be installed and thereafter be retained as approved unless agreed in writing otherwise.

Reason: In the interest of amenity in accordance with Policy PCS23 of the Portsmouth Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. Bats and their roosts receive strict legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. All work must stop immediately if bats, or evidence of bat presence (e.g. droppings, bat carcasses or insect remains), are encountered at any point during this development. Should this occur, further advice should be sought from Natural England and/or a professional ecologist.
2. Birds' nests, when occupied or being built, receive legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is advisable to undertake demolition and conversion of potential bird nesting habitat (such as flat-roofed buildings) outside the bird nesting season, which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions. If there is no alternative to doing the work during this period then a thorough, careful and quiet examination of the affected area must be carried out before clearance starts. If occupied nests are present then work must stop in that area, a suitable (approximately 5m) stand-off maintained, and clearance can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

PRO-ACTIVITY STATEMENT In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework the City Council has worked positively and pro-actively with the applicant through the application process, and with the submission of amendments an acceptable proposal has been achieved.