



## Chichester City Council

### PLANNING ADVISER'S REPORT FOR THE PLANNING AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 4PM

#### Week 40

**CC/23/02116/FUL** - Case Officer: Jeremy Bushell

Land At Havenstoke Close Bishop Otter Campus College Lane Chichester

Student accommodation (349 no. beds) with associated amenity areas, access, hard and soft landscaping and ancillary facilities.

[https://publicaccess.chichester.gov.uk/online-](https://publicaccess.chichester.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S0VM5YER14300)

[applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S0VM5YER14300](https://publicaccess.chichester.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S0VM5YER14300)

#### Key issues:

- The 0.8ha site currently accommodates 40 student rooms, ancillary facilities and 20 car parking spaces. The proposal is for 349 student rooms, ancillary facilities (break out areas, bin storage), and 176 cycle spaces.

#### Planning Policy

- The site is within the settlement boundary, wherein development is acceptable in principle.
- The site has existing university student accommodation use. No change of use is proposed, but the intensity of use would be significantly increased, with consequent potential to impact a number of material considerations (e.g. residential amenity, highways).
- The site would provide 349 student rooms on a 0.8ha site. Student accommodation counts towards housing delivery at a ratio of 2.5 student rooms = 1 dwelling (as set out within the Housing Delivery Test). Therefore the proposal would represent a significant housing delivery of 140 dwellings (124 net). This is a benefit which must be taken into account.
- Chichester District currently has a housing land supply of under 5 years (currently 4.74 - as of 31st March 2023). This means that a "tilted balance" applies to planning applications for housing which should only be refused if areas of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusal (such as designated heritage assets, or designated landscapes) or the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

#### Impact on Heritage Assets

- LPAs have a duty, under sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to consider the desirability of preserving the significance of heritage assets. The NPPF sets out that any harm to heritage assets, even less than substantial harm, must be outweighed by the benefits of the development, if the development is to be permitted.
- A number of heritage assets are potentially affected by the proposal. The site appears to be partially within the Conservation Area and is surrounded by it to the west, north and east; it is to the south of the Graylingwell Hospital Grade II Registered Park and Garden. Chichester Dyke, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), runs along the eastern boundary of the site.
- Historic England note that the proposal would harm the significance of the SAM. With a large 4 storey building running closely alongside the Dyke, which would typically have an open landscape setting, more similar to its existing setting.

- Five blocks are proposed, one along each boundary and a central building with a shared surface between. The building along Connelly Way would have three storeys, the third within the roof space. The remaining buildings would be four storeys in height with a flat roof. All the buildings would be constructed and finished in brick. The design is formal with strong rhythm and a vertical emphasis to the windows.
- The eastern side of the site is undeveloped and contributes to an open, verdant character in this tranquil part of the conservation area, and provides an open, green corridor between Havenstoke Park and the university playing fields. The height, mass and scale and position of the proposed development, would have a significantly urbanising effect, detrimental to the character of this part of the conservation area.

#### Highways

- New access onto Conolly Way, no objection from WSCC Highways.
- In accordance with university policy, the development is car-free except for two universal car parking spaces, with electric vehicle charging provision, for disabled staff or residents only.
- Almost half of student trips from site are by foot and almost half by public transport. The remaining approx. 5% are made by cycle (0.4%) and car (4.7%). This would not result in significant highways impact, though there may be local impact upon parking on public roads.
- If the accommodation is to be put to alternative use (summer school, conferences etc) during the summer break, parking elsewhere on the university site is likely to be required. If this is the case, given the scale of the proposal, a whole university-wide year-round parking management scheme would be useful.

#### Impact on Residential Amenity

- To the west of the site is a NHS site and to the south and north are open space. There are dwellings in Martins Farm Close, approximately 40m to the east of the site, beyond the Dyke and its significant tree screening.
- There may be some harm to the amenity of the residents overlooked by the four storey block along the site's eastern boundary.
- The existing residential development in this area of Martins Farm Close is particularly low density. The contrast in scale, mass, height, and intensity of use of the extremely high density student accommodation on the site may result in some issues with community cohesion, particularly where the needs of the 349 occupants, their visitors and any staff are not adequately provided for on site, and there are consequent impacts for the local community, for example, parking in nearby streets.

#### Ecology and Biodiversity

- Approximately 13 individual trees as well as several small groups of trees or hedges would be removed.
- Replacement planting would be provided. This may not provide the same habitat potential as the established vegetation being removed.
- An ecological report is provided in support of the proposal. It assesses the previously developed site, including the grassland area as having low potential to support wildlife and protected species.

#### **Recommendation:**

The principle of more efficient use of this site for student accommodation is supported. However, objection is raised over the scale, height, mass and layout of the development and its harmful impact upon the Scheduled Ancient Monument along the eastern boundary, as well as on the openness, tranquillity, character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The LPA is reminded of its duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990 to protect the significance of designated heritage assets.

Concern is also raised relating to the amenity of the surrounding residents due to the significant overlooking, as well as likely noise and disturbance, from the four storey building along the eastern boundary of the site. This, together with the extremely high density of occupation on site, in contrast with the very low density surrounding residential development, may lead to a

foreseeable lack of community cohesion, particularly if the needs of the 349 occupants are not adequately provided for on site, leading to knock-on effects for the local community such as parking on the surrounding streets. This appears likely as two, disabled-only, parking spaces may be insufficient to serve 349 occupants, visitors and staff, and no outside amenity space is provided on site.

**Weeks 41-43**

No committee items.

## Motion – Preserving the Priory Park Motte

Committee believes that:

- Preserving and maintaining our green spaces forms a vital part of the City Council's duties.
- Similarly, the City Council is uniquely placed to showcase the City's cultural heritage and its history.

Committee notes that:

- The Motte (otherwise referred to as Chichester Castle or simply the Mound) in Priory Park is owned and maintained by Chichester District Council (CDC).
- The Motte forms part of the remains of a Norman-era 'Motte and Bailey' castle dating back to the 11th Century.
- The Motte was designated as a Scheduled Monument in January 1935, due to the Motte's "important[ce] for the study of Norman Britain".
- Historic England further notes that the Motte forms an "accessible [and] important educational and recreational resource".
- The Motte was landscaped in the late 20th Century in order to provide a safer, more accessible, and more visually appealing presence in the Park.
- However, due to structural and safety issues with the concrete on the site, the landscaping was removed and the Motte was reestablished as an earthwork.
- Despite plans being drawn up for new landscaping on the site, due to the objections of Historic England and CDC, the plans were dropped and the current layout of the Motte remained in place.
- As a result, there have been a number of issues with the Motte, including:
  - o Continual erosion of the Motte, resulting in a cycle of repairs and works;
  - o People and cyclists climbing on and off the Motte, worsening erosion even further;
  - o The erosion of the Motte degrading the visual appearance and historic appeal of the site;
  - o The lack of amenity on the site means that the Motte becomes a 'dead space' that has no draw for visitors or residents.
- CDC are commencing the process of using ground netting to hold the earthwork in place - however, this work is only a temporary measure and the Motte is likely to require further work.
- The City Council already contributes financially to the maintenance and upkeep of the Priory Park public conveniences.

Committee resolves that:

- A long-term settlement for the Motte is required, and that the City Council is the ideal body to facilitate discussions on that settlement.
- The current state of the Motte is unacceptable, and the City Council must play a part in restoring, or preserving, the Motte.
- A Priory Park Motte Working Group (PPMWG) be established, consisting of representatives from Chichester City Council Planning & Conservation Committee, Chichester District Council, the Priory Park Society, and Historic England, to investigate and put a proposal forward for a long term settlement for the Priory Park Motte, including any financial arrangements.
- Draft terms of reference, and election of members to, the Priory Park Motte Working Group be placed on the agenda for the next Committee meeting.
- Cllr Vivian be empowered to send a letter to the Priory Park Society, Chichester District Council, and Historic England, on behalf of the Committee, to request any suitable delegates to sit on the Working Group, and that the letter be subject to the approval of the Chair before being sent.

**Appendix – Preserving the Priory Park Motte**



**Image A - Site Map within Priory Park**



**Images B & C - The Priory Park Motte (pre-2011)**



**Image D & E- The Priory Park Motte (2011-present)**



**Images F & G - Motte Erosion (September 2023)**