

# BEGBROKE SCIENCE PARK

WHERE SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY MEET



UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD



## Design and Access Statement

Begbroke Science Park, Begbroke  
Outline Planning Application

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1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by David Lock Associates (DLA) on behalf of the University of Oxford and relates to an outline planning application for further research and related development at Begbroke Science Park (BSP), which lies to the east of the A44, to the north-west of Oxford but within Cherwell District Council's administrative area. The location of the site is shown in Figure 1.

Structure of the DAS

1.2 The DAS explains how the development proposals have emerged, taking account of site background, an analysis of the site and its context and responding to the site constraints and opportunities. It is structured by the following chapters:

- Assessment
- Evaluation
- Design
- Conclusion

1.3

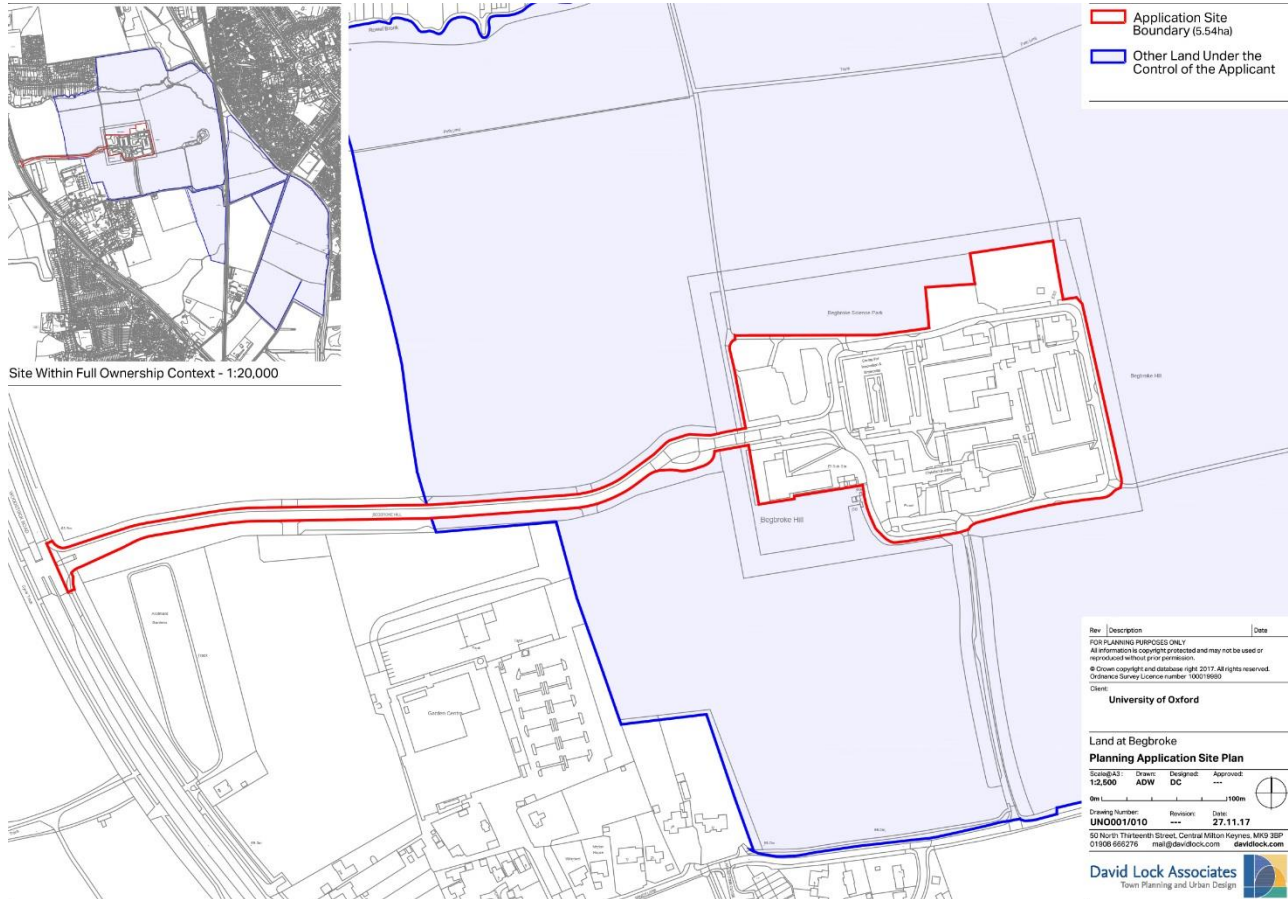


Figure 1: Site Location

The Application Proposal

The application proposal supported by this DAS is essentially a “renewal” of a previous outline planning permission. The site benefited from outline permission under Application No.

15/00309/OUT in May 2015. This permission followed an earlier permission granted in April 2014 (01/00662/OUT). The previous outline permission lapsed on 1 May 2017 as not all the reserved matters were submitted within the

prescribed time period. In renewing the time-expired permission, the proposed development relates primarily to the parts of the established red-lined site and floorspace quantum that remained to be implemented under the previous outline permission. This will enable further research and development floorspace with associated facilities to be accommodated at the site to meet current demand. This would help address a chronic space shortage which is inhibiting the further growth and extent of academic and technical research at BSP, which has been shown to be of regional, national and international importance.

1.4 The previous outline permission (15/00309/OUT) secured approval in-principle for up to 21,236m<sup>2</sup> of additional floorspace to facilitate the long term aim of developing the existing Science Park further to maximise its potential and its contribution to research, innovation, employment and the economy. It is conservatively estimated that a maximum of approximately 11,336m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace has been implemented at BSP under the long-term and interim phases of development, which

includes one proposal developed following a separate full permission (circa 357m<sup>2</sup>). Therefore, there is residual floorspace at the site that is unimplemented. There is also an ongoing requirement for additional buildings to be provided to meet demand from within the BSP, elsewhere in Oxfordshire and overseas, principally China. The proposed development is therefore intended to be in substantial accordance with the principles established through the 2015 outline permission (15/00309/OUT) and the earlier similar permission (01/00662/OUT).

1.5 As such the proposed development is therefore intended to comprise:

- Retention of existing buildings on site;
- Up to 12,500m<sup>2</sup> of B1a / b / c floorspace and ancillary D1 floorspace. This is largely the 'unimplemented' residual floorspace which previously benefited from outline permission and is to be 'renewed' under the new application. However, a minor increase in floorspace by approximately 2,500m<sup>2</sup> is proposed, which is required to meet current urgent needs for research

and development and prototype manufacture space at BSP.

- Retention of and improvements to the existing vehicular, public transport, pedestrian and cycle access including internal circulation;
- Re-disposition of car parking within the site;
- Associated hard and soft landscape works;
- Any necessary demolition;
- Associated drainage, infrastructure and ground re-modelling works.

1.6 The majority of the proposed floorspace to be developed would be for B1(b) & B1 (c) purposes and would accord with the previous planning restriction for no more than 20% of the floorspace to be used for B1(a) office purposes. The overall type of floorspace to be delivered would be to support the main research and development activities at the BSP along with related uses such as the production of prototypes; this would be defined at the reserved matters stage.

- 1.7 The site area subject to the proposed development covers the existing BSP and is consistent with the previous red line application boundary, identified within the previous planning permission and extending to some 4.8 hectares or 5.54ha including the access road to the A44. However, only a limited area (the residual unimplemented area) will be subject to new development equating to approximately 1.21ha. The layout, design, appearance and siting of future proposed buildings to be constructed as part of this development is to be reserved for consideration and approval at the detailed stage. Only access is to be considered at this stage, using the existing access to the BSP from the A44; all other matters are reserved for further approval by the local planning authority.
- 1.8 This Design and Access Statement therefore includes an up to date assessment of the site and an appraisal of its constraints and opportunities, which underpins the design approach and key design principles. This includes a summary of discussions with Cherwell District Council at pre-application stage and refers to notification of the community on the latest proposals, which inevitably with an outline application are not resolved at this stage.
- 1.9 As an outline application, the key design principles seek to be overarching providing the context for guiding the detailed design of the development as it comes forward. Ultimately it seeks to create and maintain continuity in the quality of development achieved so far at BSP, whilst ensuring that development is well-connected with the University of Oxford's wider estate across Oxford and with the city and immediate surroundings.
- 1.10 The proposal is also presented in the DAS in the context of how the Science Park fits strategically within the Oxford 'Knowledge Spine', the nationally-important Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor, the proposed future expansion of the BSP as a result of 'exceptional circumstances' demonstrated in the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 (2011-2031) and the emerging vision and aspirations for Begbroke to be the focus for sustainable mixed-use new urban neighbourhood or 'innovation district', as proposed in the emerging Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review.

**2. ASSESSMENT**

**Land uses**

- 2.1 The BSP comprises a mix of employment uses developed over time and under the previous planning permissions.
- 2.2 The site at BSP has been occupied since the Iron Age; an Anglo-Saxon settlement is mentioned in the Domesday Book and remains from the site are on view in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. For many centuries the site was used for farming. The 17th century Jacobean farmhouse at Begbroke Hill Farm has been sensitively restored and now houses offices and conference facilities for the BSP.
- 2.3 Research at Begbroke dates from 1960 when Begbroke Hill Farm became the headquarters of the Weed Research Organisation. In the 1980s, the Cookson Group bought the site for its Technology Centre and in 1998 it was acquired by the University of Oxford.
- 2.4 Begbroke’s first Academic Director, Professor Brian Cantor, masterminded the installation of £7.8m of atomic engineering and analysis equipment in early 1999. Following the

Department of Materials’ arrival, the remaining space at BSP attracted local science-based start-up businesses, keen to work more closely with the University.

2.5 BSP today is a cross-departmental research facility and science park with circa 14,2000 m<sup>2</sup> office/laboratory space for research groups and high-tech science-based businesses and spin-outs. It is also a conference venue and business training centre, a technical services provider, an educational establishment and a key employer in the Cherwell district.

2.6 The BSP embodies the University’s commitment to promoting Oxfordshire as a hub for knowledge-intensive activities. Significant improvements were made to the infrastructure in 2012, with a new access and access road from the A44 facilitating further development.

2.7 Much of the floorspace developed is for B1(b) research and development (B1(c) light industrial and ancillary D1 (non-residential institutions). The mix of employment is controlled by planning conditions and this limits office use (Class B1(a)) to 20% of the overall

floorspace. The conditions also require buildings only to be occupied where ‘consultation and liaison with staff of the University of Oxford or another research institution or company within Oxfordshire is an integral part of the research and development process and shall not involve any manufacture other than the manufacture of prototypes’. It is anticipated that additional floorspace will continue to be guided by similar principles and relationships, as existing.

2.8 The site is otherwise surrounded by agricultural land that is generally in arable use. Other adjacent land uses in the wider context include:

- Yarnton Nurseries to the south west.
- Residential development defining the edges of Yarnton to the south-west, Begbroke to the north-west and Kidlington to the east.
- Commercial and employment development further to the north, adjacent to London Oxford Airport and along Langford Lane.



2.9 Other features include the A44 to the west, the Oxford to Banbury railway line to the east and the Oxford Canal which also lies to the east. Agricultural fields between these features and between Kidlington, Yanton and Begbroke is subject to a proposed allocation for residential and associated development in the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review 2011-2031 – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need.

**Socio Economic**

2.10 BSP is a vital research centre for the University as a technological application and research hub and campus. It is universally recognised as a facility of international significance and of great importance to the local, regional and national economies. The Science Park is at the core of the county’s innovation ecosystem, which falls within Oxfordshire’s ‘Knowledge Spine’ and the nationally-important Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor, the subject of recent scrutiny by the National Infrastructure Commission and Growth Deal funding by HM Treasury.

2.11 It has also been established (through the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part

1) that ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist to justify a small-scale local review of the Green Belt to meet employment and expansion needs at Begbroke Science Park. In the longer term the area around the site will be the subject of mixed use development envisaged to accommodate further expansion of BSP, residential development, community facilities and a local centre, potentially with a new Railway Halt/Station on the Oxford to Banbury railway line. With the BSP at its heart, it will become a key focus of this new community.

2.12 In the meantime, this application is proposed in respect of the current context, the previous planning permission, the existing red-line site and established planning policy principles but paying regard to the potential for development in the future.



Figure 2: Centre for Innovation & Enterprise Extension

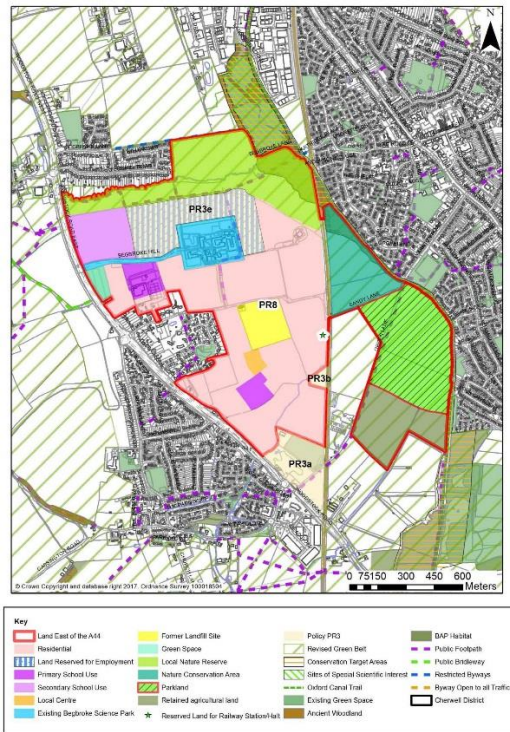


Figure 3: Proposed mixed use expansion around BSP in the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review

**Planning Context and Policy**

2.13 A detailed assessment of relevant policies and guidance and how they relate to wider strategies for nationally significant economic development and growth are provided in the Planning Statement that accompanies this application.

**Planning context**

2.14 A key planning constraint affecting development at BSP is its location in the Oxford Green Belt. However, development of BSP has previously been facilitated and justified by ‘very special circumstances’. Planning policy has also established ‘exceptional circumstances’ for BSP to grow.

2.15 The site was allocated as a ‘Major Developed Site’ (MDS) in the *Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011*. However, this Local Plan was not adopted and has now been superseded by the adopted *Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031*. It was established through the adopted *Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031* that ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist to justify a small-scale local review of the Green Belt to meet employment and expansion needs at Begbroke Science Park. This is being progressed by the Council through the *Cherwell Local Plan Part 2*. In addition, BSP has been identified in the emerging *Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 Partial Review - Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need* as part of a new urban neighbourhood at Begbroke, which helps meet Oxford City’s unmet housing need

and becomes the connecting centrepiece of the Plan’s vision for the area.

2.16 The site of the proposed development is shown in the adopted *Cherwell Local Plan 2011- 2031 Part 1* as being located entirely within land earmarked for employment development by virtue of Policy Kidlington 1B: Accommodating High Value Employment Needs – Begbroke Science Park.

2.17 The adopted *Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011- 2031* identifies that high value employment needs will necessitate growth at Begbroke Science Park, and as such a Green Belt Review will be undertaken as part of Local Plan Part 2. This position is further enhanced by proposed Policy PR8 included within the *Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need*, which includes as part of a wider development, 14.7ha of expansion land to support future growth of the Science Park. Various technical assessments have been undertaken by and on behalf of the Council as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan, which have included a *Green Belt Study (April 2017)* and a



	<p>2.19 In design terms the relevant policies and guidance at national, sub-regional and local levels, can be summarised below.</p>	<p>sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of the developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;</p>
<p>2.18 This wider development, however, is <u>not</u> subject to this proposed development, which relates solely to the established red-lined site at the BSP and the short-term needs of the BSP, which can be accommodated by a renewal of the previous outline permission that became time-expired less than 12 months ago. However, the wider emerging planning policy situation provides an important broader context for this proposal. Development sought through this application aligns with the wider growth proposals, which focusses on BSP as the key research and development hub.</p>	<p><b>National</b></p> <p>2.20 The <i>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</i> published in March 2012, stresses the importance of good design in paragraphs 56 and 57.</p> <p>2.21 Section 7 of the Framework relates to design and sets out under Paragraph 58 a series of ‘design-related’ objectives which development should seek to achieve. It states that:</p> <p>“Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:</p> <p>Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;</p> <p>Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;</p> <p>Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and</p>	<p>Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identify of local surroundings and material, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;</p> <p>Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and</p> <p>Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.”</p> <p>2.22 It is considered that these Government design objectives would be achieved as set out in this DAS. It is considered that not only would the visual appearance and architecture of the future buildings be of high quality - respecting the overall scale, density, massing, height, layout and materials found in buildings on the site – they would also raise the standard of design in accordance with Paragraph 63 of the NPPF.</p>

- 2.23 The *Draft Revised NPPF* published in March 2018 underlines the Government’s commitment to creating great places and emphasises design quality and a sustainable legacy from new building. The important message is that design is not a ‘bolt-on’ aspect of town planning and development delivery. Chapter 11 requires greater density of development in key locations, primarily by making optimum use of land, with higher building forms and more intense site developments, whilst respecting place and context. This is particularly relevant at BSP and will be satisfied by the design approach set out in this DAS.
- 2.24 *National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)* contains key principles for the design of new development, elaborating on the content of the NPPF.
- 2.25 The NPPG sets out the importance of good design of new buildings and developments in Reference: 26-001-20140306 and states that achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well, and will adapt to the needs of future generations.
- Adopted Development Plan**
- 2.26 Relevant parts of the adopted Development Plan comprise the *Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2013 Part 1*, adopted in July 2015 and the earlier *Cherwell Local Plan*, adopted in 1996.
- 2.27 In the more recently adopted Local Plan Part 1, key design principles are promoted in Policy ESD15: The Character of the Built Environment, which sets out very detailed and comprehensive design principles which are related to those widely held in promoting good design.
- 2.28 In Policy ESD15, the Council also refers to The *Cherwell Local Plan Part 2* for more detailed design and historic environment policies. As Part 2 of the Plan remains at an early stage of preparation, detailed district-wide policies remain in the Adopted Local Plan 1996, including those that consider developments that:
- affect the setting of Listed Buildings (Policy C20);
  - affect the context and character of surrounding areas (Policy C28);
  - provide disabled access (Policy C32);
- 2.29 More spatially focussed and design relevant requirements for Begbroke is set out in the Adopted Part 1 Local Plan, in Policy Kidlington 1B: “Accommodating High Value Employment Needs”. The policy sets out site specific requirements for Begbroke Science Park including design requirements for:
- A well-designed approach to the urban edge
  - Respecting landscape setting
  - Creating a comprehensive landscape scheme that is to enhance the setting of buildings on site and limit visual intrusion into the wider landscape
  - Providing public art
  - Biodiversity and wildlife
  - Sustainable drainage
  - Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- 2.30 Further design guidance is being prepared in the form of the *Cherwell Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)*.

This document reached a draft consultation stage in November 2017. Whilst this SPD is focussed on residential development it provides a useful context in terms of setting out key design principles to consider during the design process and good practice in the design of streets and spaces orientated towards place-making.

2.31 The design requirements set out in this policy context have already had an influence on development at Begbroke Science Park, and this is reflected in the design quality and how development has been integrated successfully through the management of building heights, good quality landscaping and fully exploiting opportunities to create sustainable connections. These principles have also informed the key design parameters of this outline proposal and will guide subsequent reserved matters applications.

**Ecology**

2.32 The site is not considered to include any protected species or habitats. A Conservation Target Area is designated for restoring biodiversity through the maintenance and

creation of UK BAP Priority Habitats to the north of the site. Part of this area also includes the Rushy Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest, which lies adjacent to existing commercial development at the western edge of Kidlington. Protected and notable species have been recorded, mainly to the south of the site. For full details see the Ecology Report produced by BSG that accompanies the application.

2.33 Habitat features within the site to consider include:

- Amenity grassland at the verges of the access roads, on the landscaping perimeter of the site and in spaces between existing buildings
- Broadleaved plantation woodland forms the landscaped perimeter of the site. Individual mature broadleaved trees on the original access road to Begbroke Hill Farmhouse and within the campus area.
- Hedges define the primary access and exist within the landscaped areas of the site

**Landscape, Topography and Features**

2.34 Full details with regard to landscape, topography and views are provided in the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA), prepared by FPCR, that accompanies this application.

2.35 The site is well developed and visually enclosed, and the existing buildings strongly influence its character. Conifer and shrub planting and mature trees relate to the grounds associated with the Begbroke Hill Farm which is a Grade II Listed Building and therefore provide a positive setting at the southern edge of BSP. Landscape features elsewhere within the site are limited to a small number of trees towards the south and west and a hedgerow with establishing trees along the eastern boundary. The wider setting around the site is characterised as agricultural land with tree lines and field hedgerows delineating field boundaries. The topography is level, so the visual impact is limited to mainly short-distance views from public footpaths across the agricultural land surrounding the BSP.

2.36 Views of existing development at BSP are obscured, mainly by existing broadleaved woodland planting forming the perimeter around the site. Views of buildings are therefore filtered by the broadleaved trees. Existing substantial hedgerows provide further enclosure within the wider agricultural setting filtering views from corridors such as Sandy Lane and the A44 Woodstock Road.



**Figure 4: Begbroke Hill Farmhouse set within mature broadleaved and conifer trees**

2.37 The LVA considers the site and immediate landscape to be of low to medium landscape value. Whilst development would result in some adverse landscape and visual effects on completion, the LVA considers that the effects

would be localised and limited in extent. It concludes that the development would be appropriate within its landscape context. This is consistent with the impact of existing development at the BSP, which sits comfortably into its rural surroundings. Any effects resulting from the development would not give rise to any unacceptable landscape and visual harm. The design features focus on the scale and height of new development, guided by the existing built form to minimise any additional impacts on the surrounding landscape and views towards the site.

**Arboriculture**

2.38 An arboricultural survey has been carried out by FPCR. Most of the trees surveyed within the site are located on the perimeter landscaped edge and are classified as Category B (moderate) or C (low) with Category A limited to three trees within the site.

2.39 The trees surveyed pose a minimal constraint to development. The areas for development identified within the site will affect only trees classified as Category B or C.

**Access and Movement**

2.40 In 2012, vehicular access to the site was formalised via a direct signal-controlled junction onto the dual-carriageway at the A44 Woodstock Road, which leads from Oxford and the A34 towards Worcester. The access was formed in 2012 to support the development of BSP and allow the more historic lane access from Sandy Lane to be restricted to emergency vehicles and for cyclists and pedestrians. The new vehicular access road is designed to be able to accommodate the level of development consented in the 2015 outline application and was predicted to operate with a significant degree of spare capacity and will therefore be able to accommodate additional traffic generated by the proposed expansion.

2.41 In terms of public transport, the nearest bus stops are located on the A44 Woodstock Road close to the A44 roundabout with Sandy Lane. Access to the bus stops via Begbroke Hill access road is approximately 930m, equivalent to a 12-minute walk from the site. The stops serve the S3 Oxford-Chipping Norton/Charlbury bus route which is operated by Stagecoach with a 20-minute frequency.

2.42 The Science Park also operates a regular shuttle minibus service to provide connections for employees and visitors with Oxford city centre and the University Science Area.

2.43 In terms of cycling, National Cycle Route 5 provides a connection from Oxford via the A44. National Cycle Route 51 provides an alternative route from Oxford to Kidlington. There is an additional unsigned cycle route to Oxford via the Oxford Canal which is understood to be popular with cyclists.

2.44 Access into the site is available via two points. The original access to Begbroke Hall Farm, now restricted to pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles, is available from Sandy Lane which links to the two national cycle routes and the Oxford Canal. The second access comprises a dedicated link along the verge of the primary access road from the A44 Woodstock Road. Cycle parking provision is available on site with approximately 40 stands providing 73 cycle parking spaces at present. Shower facilities are also provided. BSP is also a destination on the “Oxonbike” electric

bike network with a docking station for electric bikes.

2.45 A Public Right of Way connects to the site from Sandy lane via the original access lane and is routed around the eastern landscaped edge of the site and continues north along the edge of agricultural fields to intersect with other Public Rights of Way connecting to Begbroke the Oxford Canal and Kidlington.

**Car Parking**

2.46 Car parking occurs in three main areas of the site, with a total capacity of about 260 spaces. Provision includes a formal car park of 76 spaces (including 4 disabled spaces) and two informal unmade car parking areas. The two unmade car parking areas are to be redeveloped as part of the outline application with parking provided in a variety of possible ways to be addressed at the detailed stage.

2.47 As a result of additional development, the accompanying Transport Assessment considers that car parking at BSP will need to increase up to around 414 spaces to accommodate demand based on current

conditions. This equates to 1 space per 65.4sqm, which is considered to be lower than the standards allowed by Cherwell District Council’s maximum car parking standards (set at 1 space per 30 sqm). There is potential to offset this demand through further modal shift. The University has operated a full Travel Plan for Begbroke Science Park since 2004, which has been very successful in reducing the percentage of commuting trips to the site made by car, from 76% in 2006 to 57% in 2015. The University will continue to operate and update the Travel Plan, and all new developments at Begbroke will be subject to it. The scope for further modal shift could also be realised with further expansion around BSP as proposed in the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review, which will support further investment in public transport provision and cycle infrastructure.

2.48 With the two unmade car parking areas proposed to accommodate development, displaced car parking will need to be redistributed across the site and additional capacity will need to accommodate demand from new development. In the context of Travel Plan objectives and further modal shift



potential, a flexible and adaptable response for car parking provision would be appropriate. According to the Transport Assessment produced by IMA, which accompanies the application, options such as decked and undercroft car parking will need to be considered alongside surface car parking.

**Flood Risk & Drainage**

2.49 The site lies outside areas considered to be at risk of flooding. Adequate surface water attenuation measures will be required to ensure that surface water generated by new development does not exceed green field run-off rates. See Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy produced by Jubb, which also accompanies the application.

**Heritage**

2.50 The Heritage Collective has undertaken a Heritage Assessment to fully understand the extent of heritage assets at BSP and the potential impact of development.

2.51 The BSP site has been occupied since the Iron Age. An Anglo-Saxon settlement is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Through the centuries

the site was used for farming until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

2.52 Begbroke Hill Farmhouse is a 17th Century Grade II Listed Building which is located within the site. The building is a Jacobean farmhouse which has been sensitively restored, and now houses offices and conference facilities for the Science Park. Much of its immediate setting is defined with a front lawned area enclosed with larger broadleaved and conifer trees, opposite the original access road to the Farmhouse from Sandy Lane. Linked to the building are a series of outbuilding extensions.

2.53 Since the 1960s the Farm became the HQ of the Weed Research Organisation. In the 1980s, the Cookson Group bought the site for its Technology Centre and in 1998 it was acquired by the University of Oxford. BSP has therefore become part of the setting of Farmhouse.

2.54 The Heritage Assessment considers that there is no reason to believe that either the setting or significance of this building will be harmed as a result of the proposal.



Figure 5: Begbroke Hill Farmhouse

**Archaeology**

2.55 The BSP site has been subject to previous detailed archaeological assessment with intrusive trial trenching in 2001 in the undeveloped parts of the site. A desk-based assessment prepared by the Archaeology Collective, reviews the previous work and considers this site in the context of up to date national and local policies. This is submitted with the application.

2.56 Because of previous work, the assessment considers that the development will not affect any identified designated archaeological assets. The assessment, in reviewing Historic Environment Records and historic mapping also considers that there is negligible potential

for archaeological deposits of significance to be encountered across the site.

### Public Engagement on the Proposals

2.57 The nature of public engagement in the proposals has been limited to publicity, by way of a notification leaflet sent to stakeholders and residents in areas adjacent to the BSP site. The notification sets out the details of the proposal with a Development Framework Plan and invites responses to be submitted to Cherwell District Council.

2.58 In view of the previous outline planning permissions this level of publicity is considered to be appropriate and proportionate by way of effectively updating residents and stakeholders on the revised proposals based on the previous outline permissions, that have not generated significant public interest.

2.59 The notification makes it clear that, at this stage, there are no detailed proposals to review and consider. However, local residents and stakeholders will be notified further and have the opportunity to comment on specific proposals on the site, submitted pursuant to

the outline planning permission [if granted] once reserved matters applications come forward.

2.60 Pre-application discussions were also held with Cherwell District Council at meetings on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The key outcomes from the meetings were as follows:

- Supportive in principle;
- Recognise the importance of the BSP to the district and wider area along with its contribution to R&D, innovation, employment and the economy;
- Justification (in a statement from the University) required in terms of market demand and to also set out the proposed floorspace requirements;
- There was flexibility around the wording of conditions;
- On heights these were to be around the height of the tallest building (just over 12.5m);

- Heights to be a 'defensible envelope' and recognised that floor to ceiling heights in such buildings were higher than normal ceiling heights (in offices for example);
- To submit EIA screening request (subsequently submitted by DLA and Council determined that no Environmental Impact Assessment required).

3. EVALUATION

3.1 A number of opportunities and constraints have been identified and have informed the proposed development.

Constraints – summary

- The site lies in the Oxford Green Belt, but development has been facilitated through ‘very special circumstances’ justifying development and via the Local Plan.
- Begbroke Hill Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed heritage asset, that forms part of the BSP complex and enjoys a positive setting. Further development at the site must be designed to ensure that this asset remains protected and its setting preserved or enhanced
- Set within an open agricultural landscape, the existing landscape features including the broadleaved trees, provide good visual protection. Whilst the Local Plan Partial Review and Local Plan Part 2 seek to promote and facilitate further employment and other development around BSP, these landscape features will be valuable for providing amenity and reinforcing the

setting of the Grade II Listed Begbroke Farmhouse and rural setting of the BSP.

Opportunities – summary

- The Review of the Part 1 Local Plan includes proposals for Begbroke Science

Park to be the focus for a new urban neighbourhood. The value of development here is seen in the strategic context that the site will play a key role in not only helping to meet Oxford’s needs but also as



Figure 6: Opportunities and Constraints

key location in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor and as part of the Oxford 'Knowledge Spine'

- The site has already benefited from earlier permissions for development at BSP and this proposal effectively seeks to renew that permission, albeit with a modest increase in floorspace capacity
- The site already benefits from a new access delivered in 2012, which is capable of supporting the level of development proposed
- Development will maximise the employment potential of the Science Park and make full use of the optimum capacity for development in line with the draft revised NPPF
- Over time the modal share of travel to and from the site by non-car modes can be increased, particularly with additional proposed growth and linked improvements to public transport, reducing the demand for car parking on site

- The design policy context provides a clear steer in terms of creating high quality design. Existing development provides a positive context, particularly in terms of development scale and height, to integrate development into the surrounding built environment and to respect the setting of Begbroke Hill Farmhouse.

### Key Design Objectives

3.2 The following key design objectives are a result of the assessment and evaluation of the site, its existing context and with regard to relevant design policies at national and local level:

- Promote high quality sustainable design in accordance with Development Plan policies and best practice design guidance
- Make the most effective and efficient use of development parcels for development
- Refer to the high quality of the built form and the historic values of Begbroke Hill Farmhouse to inform the design of new development, using 21st Century complementary design and methods of

construction in keeping with sustainable design objectives

- Ensure that additional development positively relates to existing development, in terms of building frontages, orientation of entrances, service yards, connections and circulation spaces
- Contribute positively to the network of well-landscaped public spaces throughout the site with an attractive public realm and hard and soft landscape features
- Carefully integrate car parking and consider provision appropriate to residual demand that is likely to arise with increasing levels of modal shift towards walking, cycling and public transport



Figure 7: Centre for Innovation and Enterprise



4. DESIGN

Parameters/Development Framework Plan

4.1 Following the assessment of the site and its surroundings and establishment of the constraints and opportunities, a Development Framework Plan has been prepared to show the proposed land uses with the movement network and proposed access. See Figure 8.

Use and Amount

4.2 The site covers a total area of 5.54ha including the access road (4.8ha without). Of this 2.85ha has been developed. The proposed development will occupy about 1.21ha. Of this, two areas in Zone B and C will provide 0.47ha and 0.52ha respectively for new employment accommodation. An additional area in Zone D will provide 0.22ha for car parking.

4.3 The use and amount proposed in this application is for up to 12,500sqm. This comprises the circa 9,900sqm that remains unimplemented and a small 2,500 sqm increase to meet demand. The minor increase in floorspace proposed is required to meet urgent needs for employment space at BSP. It

will be provided within the areas of the site approved for development in the previous outline permissions and better utilise or optimise the available site area, whilst providing adequate space for landscaping.

4.4 The majority of the proposed floorspace to be developed would be for B1(b) & B1 (c) purposes and would accord with the previous planning restriction for no more than 20% of the floorspace to be used for B1(a) office



Figure 8: Framework Plan



purposes and ancillary D1 accommodation. Overall, the floorspace delivered would be to support the main research and development activities of the BSP along with related uses such as the production of prototypes; this would be defined at the reserved matters stage. See the separate Special Circumstances/Justification Report from the University of Oxford for further information.

#### Access and Layout

- 4.5 The proposed development would utilise the existing vehicular access to the BSP from the signal-controlled junction onto the A44, which is also designed to accommodate public transport with a turning area and lay-by off the access road. Former access via the lane that served Begbroke Hall Farmhouse will continue to function as access for pedestrians and cyclists and for emergency access.
- 4.6 The proposed scheme works adequately within the parameters of the access and circulation delivered through previous permissions, as demonstrated in the Transport Assessment which accompanies this application.

#### Internal circulation

- 4.7 The internal circulation route within the development has already been delivered and will be largely unaffected by the proposed development, although some minor improvement works may be required to facilitate access to the development parcels within BSP. This will be addressed at the reserved matters stage.

#### Car Parking

- 4.8 The requirement for about 414 car parking spaces, as calculated by the Transport Assessment and based on current conditions, must be considered against continued modal shift which will be achieved by continued reviews and updates to the existing Travel Plan and potential investment in public transport and cycle infrastructure linked to future growth around BSP.
- 4.9 Development of Zones B and C which contain unmade informal car parking areas will displace existing car parking provision. Zone D as shown on the Development Framework Plan will therefore play a key role in accommodating displaced car parking.

Options for provision include a formal surface car park, or a suitable, low-key, decked structure. New development also has the potential to provide additional perimeter and undercroft car parking to meet the requirements of new development.

**Building heights and scale**

4.10 The building heights have been informed by and will be in substantial conformity with the maximum heights of the existing buildings that have been delivered through the previous planning permissions.

4.11 The height of the proposed buildings was previously limited in the lapsed outline planning permission to a maximum of two storeys. The recently constructed buildings at BSP are principally two-storey but have taller ceiling heights and also include lift shafts, stairs and other features that effectively create a three-storey element or height. It is therefore proposed to replace the rather ambiguous storey restriction with a more precise “height above existing ground level” limitation of 12.6m. This equates to a minor 100-200mm increase above the maximum heights of buildings on site which is required to allow for new development to accord with current employment development standards in terms of floor/ceiling heights. In contrast to the previous reference to storeys, 12.6 metres is clear, more precise and complies with NPPG guidance on the ‘tests’ for conditions.

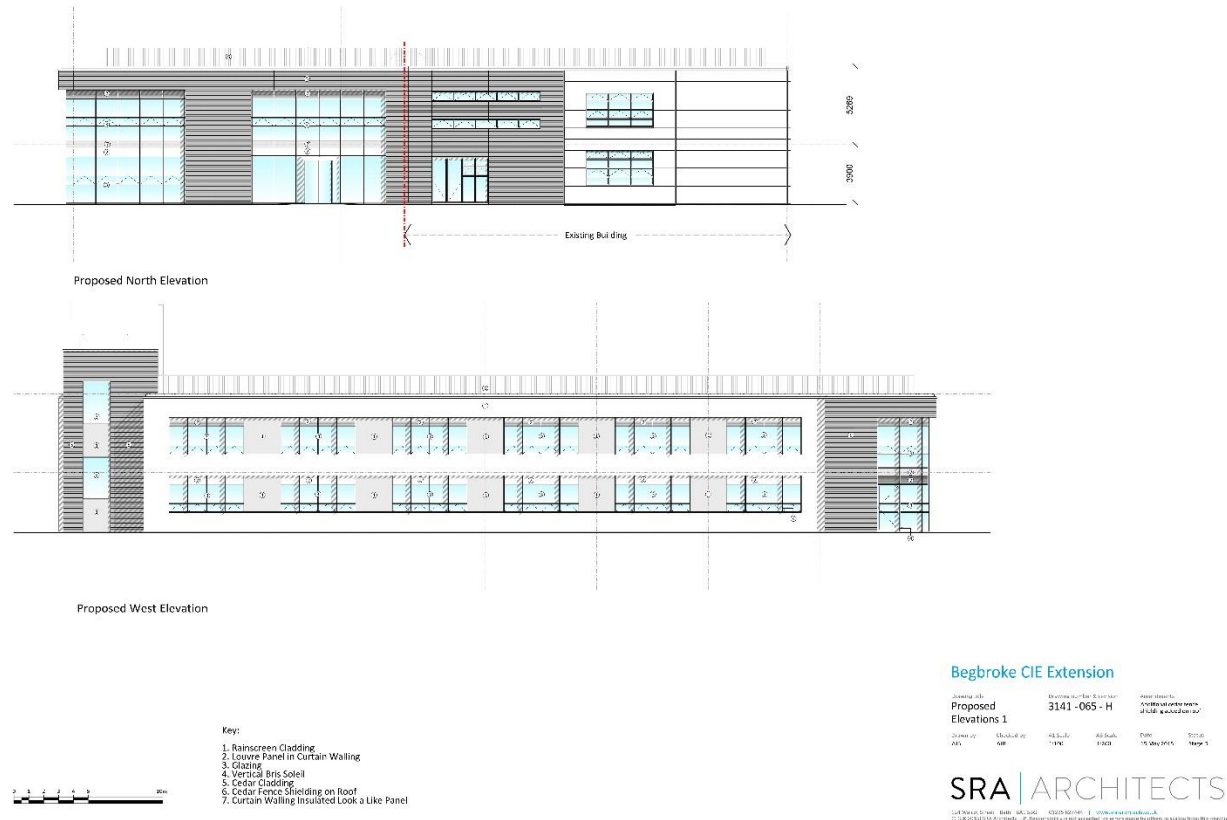


Figure 9: The Centre for Innovation and Enterprise extension built to a total height of 12.4m including main stairwell

**Appearance**

4.12 Due to the outline nature of this planning application there are no detailed proposals for buildings in terms of their architectural appearance or a fixed proposed for a materials palette.

4.13 Principles are set out to guide detailed proposals, which draw on the character and sense of place that has already been established by development at BSP. As such the approach is intended to complement existing buildings, rather than match and create some distinctiveness in showing how the development has evolved. Design features identified from existing development provide a starting point, with key features including:

- Steel framed construction with parapet detailing and roof screening to obscure rooftop plant
- Curtain walling with glazed areas framed by metal rainscreen cladding
- Glazed areas used to integrate functional features such as louvre panels for natural ventilation

- Timber cladding is used to surround entrances and highlight vertical features such as stair cores
- Brise soleil (solar shading) is used to mitigate solar heat gain – appearing in the form of vertical or horizontal ‘fins’ between glazing panels

4.14 To encourage distinctiveness that complements the overall character of the site:

- Paint colours can be varied, which has a practical objective, as the colours used on existing panels will have experienced some fading
- Drawing on the character expressed by the Grade II Listed Begbroke Hall Farmhouse, stone cladding panels could be used to highlight key building features
- Variety of modern materials utilised but in complementary shades and tones

4.15 Overall the design approach will seek to achieve a contemporary style that is reflective of development on the site and to convey a high-quality development.



**Figure 10: Façade treatment for the Centre for Innovation and Enterprise extension provides a useful benchmark**



**Figure 11: Timber cladding highlights vertical features**

**Landscaping**

- 4.16 The site is visually contained by a substantial boundary hedgerow and set well-back from the A44, separate from other built development and the settlements of Begbroke and Yarnton.
  
- 4.17 The proposed development will be contained within the existing, established Science Park site (and previously-approved red-lined area established by the previous planning permission 15/00309/OUT) and will remain situated inside and within an existing substantial hedgerow boundary.
  
- 4.18 Soft landscape features around developed areas of the site include lawned areas, often bounded by block paved areas, shrub planted landscaping strips and tree planting. Hard landscaping includes a variety of concrete block paving materials and gabion bench features in outdoor spaces at the edge of buildings and in courtyards.
  
- 4.19 Hard and soft landscaping around new buildings and spaces within the proposed development parcels will continue this approach and quality. Other features including

street furniture and street lighting will continue the palette of hard landscaping features already used to maintain a sense of cohesiveness throughout the wider campus.



**Figure 12: Existing soft landscaping with lawn treatments and shrub planting**



**Figure 13: Soft landscaping between pavements and building façades**

**5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in line with the Council's requirements. It sets out the rationale for the proposal, relevant policy, how the design approach has evolved and provides detail on layout, scale, access, landscaping and other parameters as far as they are known at this outline stage.

5.2 This Statement demonstrates that the size, scale, density, massing and overall appearance of the development complements existing development and its surroundings, thereby meeting design objectives of national policy guidance and existing and emerging Development Plan policies.

5.3 It also demonstrates that the proposal has carefully considered the site's countryside setting and location within the Green Belt to respect its openness.

5.4 Furthermore, this Statement shows that the Council's pre-application advice has been taken into account.

5.5 It is considered that the proposed design elements and proposals for access fully respond to the opportunities and constraints and key design objectives identified for the site.

5.6 Future expansion in the areas shown on the Development Framework Plan will be designed to relate well to existing development at BSP, including the historic Grade II Listed Begbroke Hill Farmhouse.

5.7 With BSP being developed and surrounded by established, maturing, structural landscaping the impacts of additional development proposed will have a very limited impact on surrounding features, particularly the open agricultural landscape and views towards BSP.

5.8 In the longer term the BSP will become the focus of future growth to expand the international offer of the University of Oxford's BSP and create a dynamic interface with corporate research facilities and creative new businesses. It has potential also to be the focus of a new innovation district or community, and strategically function as a vital part of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford

Corridor. Expansion within the existing BSP is a critical step forward in that regard, which is needed now to accommodate urgent demand from home and overseas. Without an outline permission in place these opportunities would be lost to the University, BSP, Cherwell District and Oxfordshire.

5.9 In conclusion, the proposal will be well-designed, well-landscaped and assimilated into the existing built development at BSP, respecting the Grade II listed building, the character of the countryside and the openness of the surrounding Green Belt.

5.10 Hence, it can be concluded that there are no design or access reasons why the proposed development should not be considered to be acceptable and outline permission granted, with details assessed at the reserved matters stage.



