

Planning Department
Oxford City Council
St Aldates Chambers
109 St Aldates
Oxford
OX1 1DS

Date: 12 March 2021

Our ref: 63065/01/DL/NWh/19493722v2

Your ref: PP-09517267

Dear Sir/Madam

Trinity House, John Smith Drive, Oxford Business Park, OX4 2WB

Full Planning Application for works to refurbish the existing office building including double storey glazed extension, hard and soft landscaping, cycle storage and shower pods, new plant area and other associated works and Advertisement Consent for building façade signage and totem signage.

On behalf of our client, Devonshire Commercial Property, we enclose an application for full planning permission and advertisement consent for the following proposed works at Trinity House, John Smith Drive, Oxford Business Park, OX4 2WB:

“Works to refurbish the existing office building including double storey glazed extension, hard and soft landscaping, cycle storage and shower pods, new plant area and other associated works”

and

“Building façade signage and 2 no. totem signage”.

Application Submission

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-09517267). In addition to this cover letter, the application is accompanied by the following information:

- 1 Completed application form;
- 2 Completed CIL Additional Information Form;
- 3 Application Drawings, prepared by Spratley & Partners (listed at Annex 1 of this letter); and
- 4 Design and Access Statement, prepared by Spratley & Partners.

These details are considered sufficient to explain this proposal and allow an informed determination of this application.

The requisite application fee of £1,518.00 has been paid via the Planning Portal.

The application fee has been calculated by taking the gross external floorspace created by the development which includes 137.3 sqm of Class E floorspace, a 27.3 sqm shower block and a 36 sqm cycle store. The advertisement consent fee is also included.

The Planning Portal requests that a Daylight or Sunlight assessment be provided in order to submit the application. Having reviewed the Oxford City Council's ('OCC') Application Validation Requirements (2019) and given the minor external works proposed in a Business Park setting, we do not consider it necessary to submit a Daylight or Sunlight assessment with this application.

Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is approximately 0.7 ha in size and comprises Trinity House, a substantial modern office block situated in the Oxford Business Park, west of the eastern bypass road and south of Cowley. Oxford Business Park is approximately 2 miles from the City Centre and is home to world-leading research hospitals and businesses at the forefront of technological innovation. The site is well connected to both London, by train and Heathrow Airport by road.

Figure 1 Trinity House Site



Source: Spratley & Partners

The existing building is a three-storey self-contained building within its own site on the southern side of the business park, benefitting from its own car park and building forecourt with 142 parking spaces (see Figure 1

above). Existing landscaping and greenery border the site. Vehicular access to the site is from the southern corner from John Smith Drive.

The surrounding area is characterised by similar office buildings, a Premier Inn hotel and a David Lloyd Gym. The nearest residential properties are around 100 metres to the west.

Planning History

Based on a review of OCC's planning records, the following planning decisions for the site are relevant to the proposals:

Table 1 Planning History for Trinity House

Ref no.	Proposal	Decision	Date
NO/1301/91	Demolition of all buildings on the site. Outline application (including means of access) for the construction of buildings for B1 business use (125, 023 sqm) & a hotel (10,451 sqm) including new roads, car parking, infrastructure and landscaping.	Approved	27/11/92
93/00708/NR	Erection of 3 storey building for business purposes (2815 sq m), 137 parking spaces, access, electricity substation, bin store and landscaping (reserved matters approval).	Approved	07/02/94
97/01220/NR	Erection of 3 storey building for business purposes (details of siting, design, external appearance & landscaping reserved as part of the site granted outline permission ref. NO/1301/91 including car parking (144 spaces), cycle parking, refuse store (reserved matters approval – revised from 93/00708/NR).	Approved	11/09/97
98/00974/A	3 Directional/location signage	Approved	20/08/98
09/02524/FUL	Installation of 26 louvers. Erection of store for bicycles and air conditioning units.	Approved	09/02/10

Source: OCC Planning Register

Proposed Development

The proposals seek to refurbish the existing office accommodation by improving the external landscaping and the building's façade to create a more prominent and attractive building within the Oxford Business Park and increase the quality of office accommodation for future tenants. Internally, the office will be refurbished to CAT A fit-out standard and will provide flexibility in terms of zoning and splitting of the floor plates to accommodate future tenants.

Planning permission is sought for the external works; and advertisement consent is sought for the new signage.

The minor external works proposed comprise:

- Remodelling of the front entrance with a two storey glazed extension of 137.3 sqm which will provide a more desirable entrance to the building with a reception/seated lobby area at ground floor and additional office floorspace at first floor;
- Respraying of existing window frames, external cladding and underside of building roof soffit;
- Façade cladding treatment to the North and East corner elevations;
- Soft planting and new landscaped paving;

- Bollard and wall lighting;
- South facing external terrace/breakout amenity spaces;
- External cycle storage for x 32 cycles and associated shower pod facilities; and
- Metal mesh open top plant area.

New and refreshed signage is also proposed comprising:

- 4 no. building façade signage; and
- 2 no. tenant signage/building name signage totems.

Further details of the proposals are included in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, prepared by Spratley & Partners and in the application drawings listed at Annex 1 of this letter.

Planning Policy Context

In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), planning applications should be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan for OCC comprises the Oxford Local Plan 2036 (adopted 2020).

Other material considerations include guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2019).

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 sets out that applications for advertisement consent can only be determined on the grounds of public safety and amenity (para. 3). Paragraph 3 also stipulates that the assessment of advertisements should take into account the provisions of the development plan.

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF confirms that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

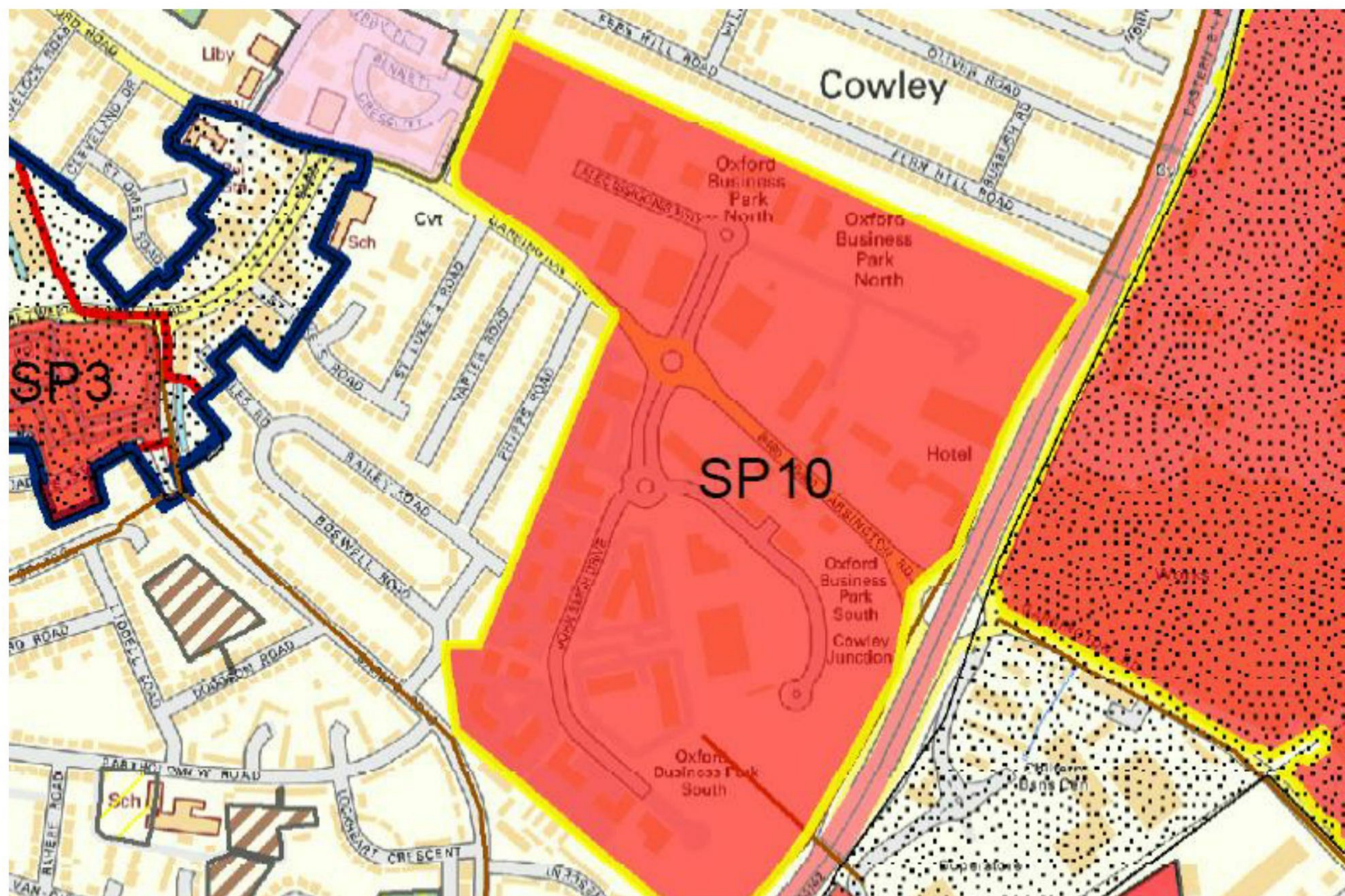
Relevant policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 include:

Policy E1 – 'Employment Sites' states that the Council will support proposals for the intensification, modernisation and regeneration for employment purposes of any employment site if it can be demonstrated that the development makes the best and most efficient use of land. Oxford Business Park, of which the site forms part, is designated a Category 1 Employment Site in the Local Plan (see Figure 2 below).

For Category 1 sites, Policy E1 restricts the loss of employment floorspace.

Policy SP10 – 'Oxford Business Park' encourages proposals for B1 and B2 employment uses within the business park. It also requires developers to seek to enhance and promote more sustainable travel modes to the business park.

Figure 2 Trinity House Site within Oxford Business Park Allocated Employment Site



Source: OCC Local Plan 2036 Policies Map

Policy DH1 – ‘High Quality Design and Placemaking’ which requires proposals to create or enhance local distinctiveness and should be accompanied by a supporting statement which explains their design rationale.

Policy DH6 – ‘Shopfronts and Signage’ states that advertisement consent will only be granted for signage where the design, positioning, materials, colour, proportion and illumination are not detrimental to public safety; respond to and positively contribute to the character and design of existing buildings and surroundings; and avoid visual pollution and clutter.

Policy DH7 – ‘External Servicing Features and Stores’ seeks to ensure bike and bin storage is provided in a way that does not detract from the overall design of the scheme or the surrounding area, whilst meeting practical needs.

Policy M1 – ‘Prioritising Walking, Cycling and Public Transport’ encourages development that is designed in a way that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport.

In terms of cycling, Policy M1 seeks to ensure that development provides for accessible, conveniently located, secure cycle parking facilities and makes provision for high quality on-site facilities that promote cycle usage including changing rooms, showers, dryers and lockers.

Policy M3 – ‘Motor Vehicle Parking’ for non-residential developments, Policy M3 requires vehicle parking to be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure the successful functioning of the development. In the

case of the redevelopment of an existing site, there should be no net increase in parking and the Council will seek a reduction where there is good accessibility to a range of facilities.

Policy M5 – ‘Bicycle Parking’ requires development to comply with or exceed the minimum bicycle parking provision. For new non-residential development, the Council will seek the provision of showers and changing facilities.

Policy RE8 – ‘Noise and Vibration’ states that conditions will be used to secure mitigation measures and operational commitments where required, to ensure an acceptable level of amenity for future end users and to prevent harm to the continued operation of existing users.

Key Planning Issues

Principle

The refurbishment of Trinity House accords with Policy E1 of the Local Plan which encourages the intensification, modernisation and regeneration for employment purposes of any employment site. The proposals seek to refurbish and modernise the existing office accommodation, improving its presence within the Oxford Business Park and creating an attractive and inviting working environment for future tenants.

The proposed double storey extension will provide 137.3 sqm of additional employment floorspace (use Class E) on a Category 1 site in accordance with Policies E1 and SP10 of the Local Plan and increase the occupancy of the building from 298 to 303 employees.

Design

Extension/Materials

The double storey extension comprises of a mid-tone lightweight steel frame with a curtain wall glazing. New matching mid-tone steel cladding is proposed adjacent to the extension and wraps around the buildings corner, tying in the existing brickwork and the proposed extension.

The extension is considered to respect the form, scale and character of the existing building, will enhance the quality of the building’s design and provide a prominent entrance point to the existing building in accordance with Policy DH1 of the Local Plan.

Lighting

The existing building has minimal external bollard lighting and street lighting within the car park. Improved and additional bollard lighting, as well as improvements/replacements to existing street lighting are proposed in order to provide greater coverage of the site. Further details are provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Landscaping and Amenity Space

The existing building provides no external/internal breakout or communal spaces for tenants and therefore it is proposed to utilise the greenery to the south of the site and provide an external terrace. Fixed bench seating is proposed, as well as flexible forms of dining chairs, table, deck chairs and table tennis tables.

The site already benefits from generous amounts of greenery; however the proposals include external pockets of mid and low level planting beds around the perimeter of the south and west facades and will provide some form of natural screening to the ground floor. Further details of the proposed landscaping are provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Access, Parking and Cycling

Policy SP10 encourages development within Oxford Business Park which enhances and promotes more sustainable travel modes. Similarly, Policy M1 supports development that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport.

The proposals will upgrade the existing cycle provision and cycle parking will be provided by semi-vertical double stack racks within a new secure cycle store. A total of 32 spaces are proposed, increasing the cycle parking provision on site by 21 spaces to a policy compliant level (1 space per 90 sqm). Shower pods are proposed, in accordance with Policy M5, providing private gender-divided shower facilities. Wayfinding signage is proposed at the totem signage in the south eastern corner, directing cyclists to the cycle store and shower pods to encourage future tenants to travel to the site by bicycle.

In order for the site to accommodate the cycle store, shower pods and the new entrance, a reduction in vehicle parking spaces, from 142 to 126 spaces, is required. However, reducing the level of parking on sites with non-residential development is encouraged by the Council in accordance with Policy M3, and also accords with the sustainable transport objectives of Policy SP10. Notwithstanding this, the site has a generous car parking arrangement which is over the policy requirement of 80 parking spaces (1 space per 35 sqm). An additional 2 no. disabled parking spaces are provided.

Noise Impacts

Existing VRF plant is located in wooden closures west of the building. A new mesh open top plant area is proposed, detailed in drawing no. 21.863.PL.020, which will be of a similar specification and location to the existing VRF plant, albeit it will include more units to also serve the second floor. At this stage, the landlord plant requirements are known but the future tenant plant requirements are yet to be confirmed.

However, the total output from the plant combined is expected to be approx. 76dBA. The noise will be attenuated by the proposed acoustic screen which will achieve a 10dBA noise reduction.

Given that the specific plant will be subject to the requirements of the future tenants of the building, it is considered that the noise levels of the external plant area and the associated plant could be conditioned should planning permission be granted in accordance with Policy RE8.

Assessment of Proposed Advertisements

Signage

Existing signage is located on the south side of the building, away from the main access roads and hidden amongst overgrown hedging. In order to increase Trinity House's presence within the Oxford Business Park, illuminated building name signage is also proposed on the northern and southern elevations of the building, see drawing no. 21.863.PL.023, and on the eastern and western elevations of the building, see drawings nos. 21.863.PL.024 and 21.863.PL.025. Building name totem signage is proposed on the grass bank towards the site's northern boundary, adjacent to Garsington Road and a further totem sign is proposed within the south eastern corner of the application site advertising the building name and future tenants as well as providing wayfinding to direct users to the cycle storage and shower pods.

Amenity and Public Safety

The Regulations state that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any features of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. Policy DH6 of the

Local Plan confirms adverts will be assessed on the basis of design which responds to and positively contributes to the character of its surroundings.

The proposed signage is designed to a high quality and is considered appropriate within the location of an established business park where existing similar totem signage, advertising other office accommodation within the park, is common.

The totem signage is PPC Aluminium set on a concrete base stand. Illuminated LED signage lettering is proposed advertising the building name. In order to protect amenity, the brightness of the signage will be set at, or below, the guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals' (ILP) Professional Lighting Guide PLG05 – The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (2015). It is proposed that the lettering will have a maximum brightness of 600 cd/sqm. This is compliant with ILP recommendations and of a level that is considered will not prejudice public safety or cause visual pollution in accordance with Policy DH6 of the Local Plan.

The site is not within an Area of Special Advertisement Control or a Conservation Area, nor is it in close proximity to any statutorily or locally listed buildings.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed signage would not have a harmful effect on visual amenity. The conclusions reflect the modern and commercial character of the Oxford Business Park where it is considered the signage would be an appropriate addition in terms of its location, scale, commercial content and character.

Concluding Remarks

The application proposes minor external changes, new cycle storage and shower pods, new plant area and the introduction of 137.3 sqm of additional employment floorspace by way of a double storey glazed extension. The proposals seek to refurbish and modernise the existing office accommodation to improve its presence within the Oxford Business Park and to make it more attractive to prospective future tenants.

New and refreshed signage is proposed to ensure Trinity House is identifiable on approach from Garsington Road and John Smith Drive. The signage is of a high quality and feature illuminated lettering of an appropriate level for the surrounding context.

The proposals comply with the relevant policies within the NPPF and the statutory development plan and will improve employment premises in an area where planning policy (Policies E1 and SP10) supports such proposals. Sustainable economic growth is at the heart of the NPPF. This includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and clearly states that where proposals comply with the provisions of the development plan, planning permission should be granted without delay.

We trust the information provided is sufficient for you to validate and determine the planning application and we look forward to receiving your confirmation of this. However, should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague, Alison Bembenek.

Yours sincerely



Nuala Wheatley
Senior Planner

Annex 1: Application Drawings

Drawing Title	Drawing Number
Site Location Plan	21.863.PL.001
Existing Site Plan	21.863.PL.002
Existing Ground Floor Plan	21.863.PL.003
Existing First Floor Plan	21.863.PL.004
Existing Second Floor Plan	21.863.PL.005
Existing Roof Plant Plan	21.863.PL.006
Proposed Site Plan	21.863.PL.007
Proposed Ground Floor Plan	21.863.PL.008
Proposed First Floor Plan	21.863.PL.009
Proposed Second Floor Plan	21.863.PL.010
Proposed Roof Plant Plan	21.863.PL.011
Existing Elevations – Sheet 01	21.863.PL.012
Existing Elevations – Sheet 02	21.863.PL.013
Proposed Elevations – Sheet 01	21.863.PL.014
Proposed Elevations – Sheet 02	21.863.PL.015
Proposed Section A	21.863.PL.016
Proposed Section B – Sheet 01	21.863.PL.017
Proposed Section B – Sheet 02	21.863.PL.018
Proposed Shower Unit	21.863.PL.019
Proposed Cycle Store	21.863.PL.020
Proposed Building Name Signage	21.863.PL.021
Proposed Tenant Totem Signage	21.863.PL.022
Proposed Building Façade Signage	21.863.PL.023
Proposed Building Façade Signage (Eastern Elevation)	21.863.PL.024
Proposed Building Façade Signage (Western Elevation)	21.863.PL.025