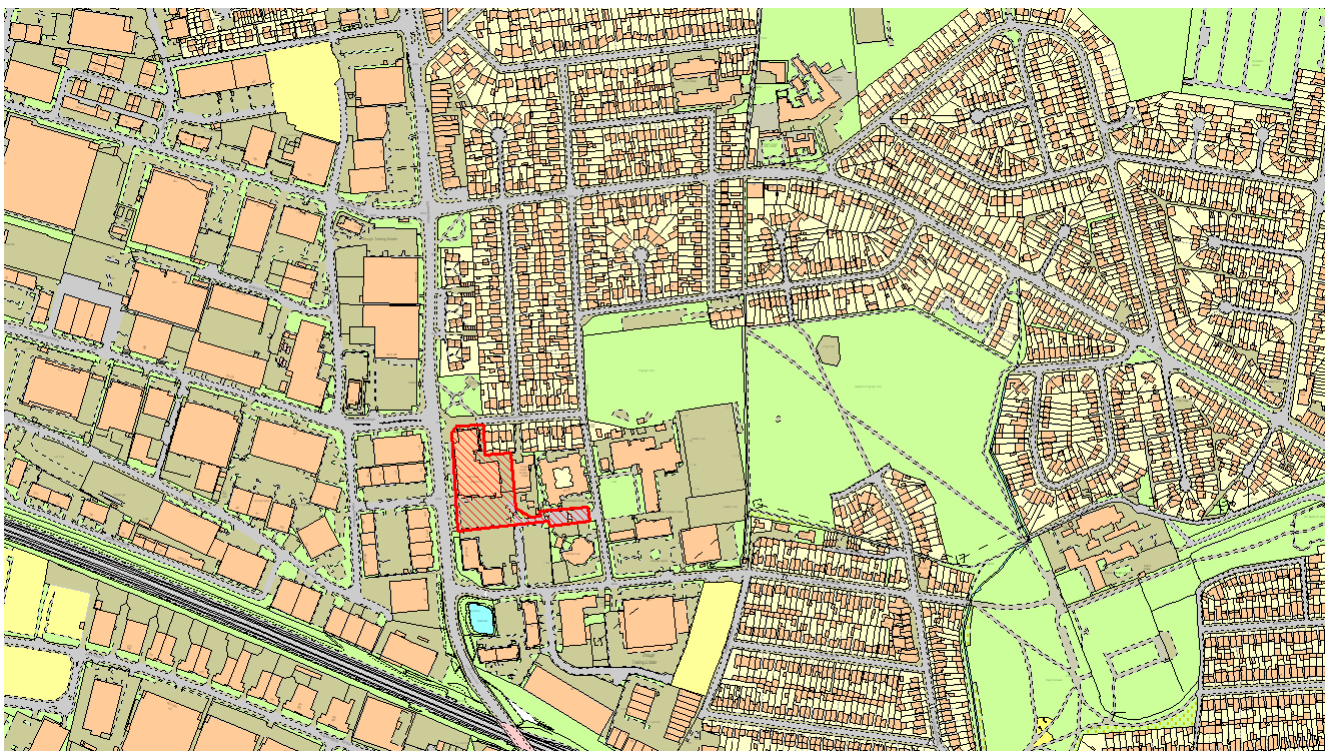


Registration Date:	13-Apr-2016	Applic. No:	S/00197/014
Officer:	Mr. Albertini	Ward:	Farnham
		Applic type:	13 th July 2016
		13 week date:	
Applicant:	Slough Borough Council		
Agent:	Mrs Laura Jackson, DHA Planning Eclipse House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road, Maidstone, ME14 3EN		
Location:	The Centre, Farnham Road, Slough, Berkshire		
Proposal:	Demolition of existing building and erection of new Leisure Centre together with access, parking, landscaping and ancillary works.		

Recommendation: Delegate to Planning Manager for approval.



Delegate to Planning Manager for approval.

PART A: BACKGROUND

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 This is an outline planning application with all matters reserved i.e. details of site access, layout and building have not been submitted for approval at this stage. However supporting documents and illustrative drawings show access, layout and building mass detail. The broad location of the building is shown on the plans.
- 2.2 The proposal will replace The Centre building and subsequently Montem leisure centre will close. The indicative layout shows a 5,100 sqm. Two storey height building along the west side of the site with car parking to the rear. This floorspace is 900 sqm more than the existing 4,200 sqm. Centre building. In comparison to the existing building it will extend further south on the site. The protrusion at the back of the building will be less and further away from homes on the north boundary. The new building will be closer to the flank of the nearest house.
- 2.3 The drawings show the current in only access drive off Whitby Road (now called Melbourne Ave.) and exit onto Northampton Avenue retained. The indicative scheme shows service access off Buckingham Ave. East to access the likely plant room location on the north end of the building. This part of Buckingham Ave East (the paved area forming the current road closure) is also shown as a parking/drop off/landscaping area.
- 2.4 The indicative scheme has no parking layout detail but statements say 95 car parking spaces will be on site behind the building and in the existing overflow parking off the Northampton Ave. exit road. The existing parking area near Melbourne Ave/ Whitby Road is not included in the application site boundary but is referred to in one of the application documents as serving the proposed building. The Transport Assessment indicates parking, in terms of demand and policy, will be clarified at a later date. Clarification of this matter is being sort prior to the Planning Committee meeting.
- 2.5 The illustrative drawings show the main building entrance on the south west corner adjacent to Farnham Road and access to the entrance from the rear car park by way of the building being set back from the south boundary by 14m. The sports hall, the largest element of the building, is shown on the south east quadrant; the pool to the north west visible from Farnham Road and changing areas at the back with studios above and on the Farnham Road elevation above the entrance. A single storey plant room is shown at the north projecting slightly forward of the building line along Buckingham Ave. East. The scheme shows the existing frontage trees retained.
- 2.6 A Breeam rating of very good is to be aimed for. The developer will also investigate the potential to make use of district heating. This is linked with the Council's current Government grant funded feasibility study of expanding the existing district heating system in the Trading Estate.
- 2.7 Supporting technical information includes Planning Statement, Transport Assessment, Draft Travel Plan, Design and Access Statement, assessments of light, noise and flood risk.
- 2.8 The leisure centre has been designed to include :
- 8 Lane 25 metre pool
Learner Pool

5-court sports hall
100 station fitness suite
2 dance studios
Spinning studio
Treatment rooms
Entrance area café and activity zone
3 sets of changing facilities.

2.9 The application highlights sport, leisure and health related policies and objectives in the Council's five year plan, leisure strategy for Slough, Joint Wellbeing Strategy and Planning documents.

3.0 **Application Site**

3.1 The 0.83 hectare site encompasses the existing 1990's Centre leisure and conference site including the Northampton Ave exit parking area (next to Rotunda site) but not the parking alongside Melbourne Ave./Whitby Road. The building is generally two storey in height with a prominent glazed frontage and wavy roof line alongside Farnham Road. The irregular shape building generally covers the northern two thirds of the site and it contains some office space at the north end above a small semi-basement.

3.2 To the east, at the north end, are two storey homes in Buckingham Ave. East all with rear garden buildings across the width of the plots. The flank wall of the end house abuts the site. Godolphin Nursery abuts the rest of the east boundary. To the south is a three storey block of flats recently converted from offices and an associated small, new block off flats on Melbourne Ave. Both buildings have some windows facing the site. Opposite to the west are commercial units and to the north is a paved area of forming the closed off end of Buckingham Avenue E with an open space beyond.

3.3 There small trees on the Farnham Road frontage and next to the building where Buckingham Ave East has a paved area. There is one tree in the car park plus some overhanging boundary trees/bushes.

4.0 **Site History**

4.1 Community Leisure Centre and offices Approved May 1997.
Various alterations and advertising 1998- 2001.

5.0 **Neighbour Notification**

5.1 Farnham Road 91 – 99 odd, 105, 118 – 124 ev
Farnham Road 102-104 (flats 4,5,17,18,30,31).Buckingham Ave. East 6 – 14, 5 – 11. Slough Centre Nursery School.
Northampton Ave : Rotunda; Rotunda Bungalow; Northampton Place (3-7, 14-18, 33-37 incl.

5.2 No comments received

5.3 Public Notice in Slough Express – no comments received

6.0 **Consultation**

6.1 **Traffic/ Highways**

Lack of information in Transport Assessment to determine the impact of the proposal on the safety and operation of the public highway and the wider transportation network. The Travel

Plan does not accord with the Council's guidance. Whether or not all existing car parking for The Centre site will be available is not clear. The application site does not include the access from the public highway. Servicing off Buckingham Ave. East is not acceptable as proposed. Recommends refusal unless further satisfactory information supplied.

6.2 Drainage

Comments will be provided on meeting amendment sheet. The car park area is likely to be suitable sustainable drainage system to be incorporated and the applicant refers to a soil test from an adjacent site which indicates the ground is suitable for soakage.

6.3 Environmental Protection (re noise)

No comments received.

PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.0 **Policy Background**

7.1 The headline of Core Strategy policy 6 requires new major leisure developments to be in the town centre to support the shopping centre, improve the image of the town centre and because that location is more sustainable in terms of travel. However the Core Strategy also states that such development could take place in district centres (such as Farnham Road). Regarding sustainability the sites location can be considered reasonably sustainable being within walking and cycling distance of a large part of the town and served by a good bus service linking to various parts of the town. Consequently the proposal can be considered to be in broad accordance with this Core Strategy policy.

7.2 Core Strategy policy 6 and Local Plan policy OSC 17 both seek retention of community facilities such as The Centre. A loss can be justified if new facilities are funded or provided or (for the Local Plan policy) if alternative facilities are available or functions are not needed anymore. In this instance the Council is funding a new community facility on the same site. In addition studio space and the sports hall in the proposed leisure centre will provide alternative space for some current Centre activities. Further information is being sort on loss of other activities on the site. However meeting rooms and conference space are available in other venues across the town.

7.3 A further justification to support making an exception to wider policy constraints is the importance of the Leisure centre to the town and the difficulty in finding a suitable and available site in the town.

8.0 **Access and Transport**

8.1 Although this is an outline application it is important that enough space is available for car and cycle parking to serve the illustrative proposal and floorspace figure provided. As leisure centre uses vary calculation of parking demand needs to be bespoke to the facility planned rather than applying a standard rigidly. The Leisure centre use may well be similar to The Centre in terms demand for car parking and access needs. More information on this matter has been requested.

8.2 The 95 spaces indicated within the site is unlikely to be sufficient. This number is smaller than the existing parking space within the same site. Clarity on the long term availability of the existing Council owned car park area (off Whitby Road – about 85 spaces) shown outside the application site boundary has been sought. The existing site has over 200 spaces available in total.

8.3 The retention of the existing access arrangement is likely to be acceptable. The new service

access off Buckingham Ave. East is not satisfactory as drawn and a revision has been requested. It makes use of a paved pedestrian area and no safe turning area is shown.

8.4 The applicants state an addendum transport assessment will be produced and that parking demand will be assessed at the detail stage. As indicated above more information is needed at this stage to decide the application and compliance with Core Strategy policy 7 Transport.

9.0 **Layout and design**

9.1 The block plan submitted fixes the broad outline of the building along the Farnham Road side of the site. However the height of it and detail of massing, elevations and appearance etc. are not part of the application or are shown as illustrative only. Based upon the broad outline and floorspace figure provided compared to The Centre the new building will not protrude out to the rear as much. The protrusion will be further away from Buckingham Ave. East homes at a distance of about 40 m. The building will extend further south and partly close up the existing gap between the Centre and 102/104 Farnham Road (the old tax office now converted to flats). It will be about a metre closer to Farnham Road and the existing 6.5 m gap between the existing building and the flank of 6 Buckingham Ave East will be 3 metres.

9.2 The location of the building is broadly acceptable as it will be prominent on Farnham Road and provides the opportunity to have a lively frontage as The Centre does now. The current illustrative layout has the pool and entrance foyer/cafe on the frontage under a high level canopy. Compared to the existing building the proposal will have less impact on most of the adjacent homes and the school being further away. The impact of the precise height of the mass of the building cannot be assessed at this stage but the above assessment assumes a building of similar height to the existing.

9.3 However for the nearest house, 6 Buckingham Gardens, the rear of the building will be closer to the side boundary than the current building. This is not ideal as a 45 degree view out of rear windows will be blocked at a point 3 metres from the side boundary of the garden. However the light study indicates this house will receive satisfactory levels of day and sun light. The view directly out from the rear will benefit from not having a building so close to the immediate rear of the garden.

9.4 On the Buckingham Ave East frontage the new building is likely to be single storey rather than the current two storeys adjacent to the flank on the frontage. This is a benefit for the street scene and adjoining home. Window position and treatment on the east elevation will need careful arrangement at the detail stage to avoid overlooking of homes.

9.5 A light study indicates that the nearby homes will still receive satisfactory levels of day and sun light. This study will need repeating when the full details of the building are known.

9.6 A noise study will be needed at the detail design stage to ensure plant does not cause nuisance to neighbours. The submitted noise study indicates current background levels and criteria for proposed plant to avoid nuisance and comply with standards.

9.7 The distance between the south end of the building and recently converted flats will be between 23 and 28 metres. This is sufficient for living conditions to be acceptable regarding windows on this elevation.

9.8 The appearance of the building is not to be decided at this stage but illustrative proposals indicate the applicant's current thinking including an outline of landscape treatment. This includes a high level over-sailing canopy at the entrance and along the frontage, a glazed frontage with horizontal fins. The stated objective is for a high quality, vibrant, striking

development, using a varied palette of materials, maximising glazing where appropriate to provide views in and out of the building.

- 9.9 This outline scheme complies with Core Strategy 9 Natural and built environment and Local Plan design policy EN1 subject to possible revisions associated with outstanding transport related matters referred to above.
- 9.10 The applicant's commitment to Breeam very good complies with Core Strategy 8 Sustainable development policy. This policy also requires energy from low carbon sources and the applicant agrees to pursue this. In particular exploring the opportunity to link in to the Trading Estates district heating scheme which is linked to the power station. The Council is assisting with this having commissioned a feasibility study, supported by SSE, through a Department of Energy and Climate Change 'Heat Network Development Unit' grant funded scheme.

PART C: RECOMMENDATION

10.0 **Recommendation**

Delegate a decision to the Planning Manager to approve the proposal subject to satisfactory resolution of outstanding matters referred to above and completion of a Section 106 planning obligation (or equivalent of) to cover, if necessary, transport and highway requirements.

11.0 **PART D: LIST OF CONDITIONS**

1. Outline applications - Reserved Matters.

Details of the layout, scale, access, appearance and landscaping of the development hereinafter collectively referred to as 'the reserved matters' shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development.

REASON To ensure that the proposed development is satisfactory and to comply with the provisions of Article 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

2. Outline applications - Time limit

Application for approval of all reserved matters referred to in condition 1 above shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority no later than the expiration of two years from the date of this permission.

The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than whichever is the later of the following dates and must be carried out in accordance with the reserved matters approved:

- i) the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission: or
- ii) the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters referred to in condition 1 above, or in the case of approval of different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

REASON To prevent the accumulation of planning permissions, and to enable the Council to review the suitability of the development in the light of altered circumstances

and to comply with the provisions of Section 92 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. Approved plans

The development hereby approved shall be implemented only in accordance with the following plans and drawings hereby approved by the Local Planning Authority:

10095 (08) 003 revision 01 regarding maximum footprint area and broad access location at Melbourne Ave and Northampton Ave.

REASON To ensure that the site is developed in accordance with the submitted application and to ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the amenity of the area and to comply with the Policies in the Development Plan.

4. Surface Water drainage

No construction work shall commence until details of surface water drainage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The building shall not be occupied until the approved drainage scheme has been implemented. The drainage scheme shall be retained and maintained thereafter.

REASON In the interests of flood prevention.

5. Sustainable Development Breeam

Development shall not commence until a certificate, from an accredited BREEAM assessor, has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority confirming that the development has been designed to achieve a standard of BREEAM Very Good. The development shall be constructed so as to achieve a standard of BREEAM Very Good and confirmation of compliance from an accredited BREEAM assessor shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within one month of completion of each of the two buildings on the site.

REASON In the interest of sustainable development in accordance with policy 8 of the Core Strategy

6. Sustainable Development Energy

Construction of the development shall not commence until a low carbon energy scheme has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The scheme shall show how the design and construction of the building will achieve carbon emissions that will be 10% lower than the buildings Target Emission Rate as calculated in accordance with the Building Regulations 2013 Part L and associated Approved Documents.

The scheme shall include details of how it is proposed to achieve the 10% carbon emissions requirement by including (a) an energy statement listing the Target Emission Rate and building emission rate and calculations to show the combined figures for both; (b) descriptions of building fabric enhancements, building services enhancements (c) reference to low or zero carbon energy condition 7.

The scheme shall be implemented as approved and the building shall not be occupied

until its associated low carbon energy scheme measures have been installed and are operational.

REASON In the interest of sustainable development in particular reducing carbon emissions and in accordance with policy 8 of the Core Strategy 2008.

7. Sustainable Development Low Carbon Energy

Construction work shall not commence until a low or zero carbon energy scheme has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of energy to be generated on the site from low or zero carbon sources or details of connection to a local district heating scheme (or a combination of both). The scheme shall be implemented as approved and the building shall not be occupied until its associated energy generating equipment or connection has been installed and is operational.

REASON In the interest of sustainable development in particular reducing carbon emissions and in accordance with policy 8 of the Core Strategy 2008. .