

Registration Date:	N/A	Application No:	PREAPP/13 02
Officer:	Neil Button	Ward:	Central
Applicant:	Green Monarch	Application Type:	Major
Agent:	Ashleigh Cook, Icen Projects, Da Vinci House, 44 Saffron Hill, London EC1N 8FH		
Location:	Queensmere Shopping Centre (including Dukes House and Wellington House), 141, 143, 145 and 165 High Street, and associated land, Slough, SL1 1LN		
Proposal:	Outline application (with all matters reserved) for the demolition of buildings and the phased redevelopment of the site to provide a mixed-use scheme comprising residential; flexible commercial Town Centre Uses floor space (Use Class E and Use Class F), supporting sui-generis town centre uses; car and cycle parking; site wide landscaping and associated servicing and highways works		



PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION

Introduction:

SBC has entered into pre-application negotiations with the Applicant [Green Monarch] in connection with the comprehensive redevelopment of the Queensmere Shopping Centre (including Dukes House and Wellington House), 141, 143, 145 and 165 High Street, and associated land. The site comprises a substantial part of Slough Town Centre including a large section of the High Street. The site forms part of Strategic Site Allocation 14 (SSA14) Queensmere and Observatory Shopping Centres designated in the Development Plan Document Site Allocations which forms a part of the Core Strategy 2006-2026.

The Applicant intends to submit an outline planning application (with all matters reserved) for the demolition of buildings and the phased redevelopment of the site to provide a mixed-use scheme comprising residential; flexible commercial Town Centre Uses floor space (Use Class E and Use Class F), supporting sui-generis town centre uses; car and cycle parking; site wide landscaping and associated servicing and highways works.

The Site and Surroundings:

The site comprises the Queensmere Shopping Centre (including Dukes House and Wellington House), 141, 143, 145 and 165 High Street, and associated land. The Site extends to 4.82 ha and through the mix of buildings currently on the Site, it provides a range of retail, leisure and office facilities. There are a row of trees on the High Street and Wellington Street adjacent to the application site.

The site is a shopping centre which was constructed in the early 1970s. It is characterised internally by commercial floorspace with ground floor frontages onto the high street and office floorspace on the floors above.

The Site is demarcated to the north by the A4 (Wellington Street) and to the south by the High Street. On the west it adjoins the Grade II Listed Church of Our Lady Immaculate and St Ethelbert and the St Ethelbert's Presbytery. To the east it adjoins the Observatory Shopping Centre and further afield a range of town centre buildings and retail uses, with residential and industrial areas surrounding the town centre.

The site has limited heritage significance. The Grade II Listed St Ethelbert's Church is located immediately west of the site with the Grade II listed Station to the north. The eastern end of the site is adjacent to the Slough Old Town Area of Special Character.

The High Street (including shopping centre) is located within the designated Town Centre Shopping Centre Area in the Local Plan (2004) and is within the Town Centre Area (Local Plan 2004). The Site is within Flood Zone 1.

Site History:

Ref: P/19264/001 - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) request for a Scoping Opinion pursuant to Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017 for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Queensmere Shopping Centres to comprise the construction of a phased residential-led, mixed use development including residential,

commercial, business and retail floorspace, car parking, access arrangements and associated landscaping.

Scoping Opinion Issued 22nd September 2021

Ref: P/06684/015 - Partial demolition and internal alterations/extensions to existing shopping centre as part of a part new build/part refurbished mixed used scheme for 11,533 sq m of A1 retail, class A3 - A5 food and drink and class D2 assembly and leisure floor space and 675 residential units. The residential element comprising 346 no. 1 bedroom and 329 no. 2 bedroom being contained within 4 no. Towers of between 15 and 23 storeys plus infilling development on top of the existing shopping centre and a standalone tower of 15 storeys with a viewing galley on top. Reconfiguration of existing access and frontages onto Wellington street and works including, alterations and improvements to the entrances to the shopping centre; provision of amenity space and landscaping; vehicle and cycle parking; refuse and recycling storage; provision of new and/or upgrading existing infrastructure; groundwork's and re-profiling of site levels; ancillary engineering and other operations and plant and machinery.

Resolution to Grant planning permission subject to s106 [Application Withdrawn]

Policy Background (in connection with the Site)

Site Allocation Document (2010) - SSA14 – Queensmere and Observatory Shopping Centres. The Reason for Allocation is:

To establish the principles for the comprehensive redevelopment and/or reconfiguration of the Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres. To ensure that the future development of the shopping centres positively contributes to the wider regeneration proposals for the town centre; particularly the Heart of Slough. To support development proposals that will encourage further retail investment in the town centre.

Applications for planning permission on sites in the Site Allocations DPD will be expected to comply with Slough's Development Plan and other material guidance. The Site Planning Requirements state that Redevelopment and/or reconfiguration proposals should:

- Create an internal pedestrian link between the Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres (already delivered);
- Improve the retail and leisure offer around the Town Square through change of use of key units and improved retail offering
- Link to the Heart of Slough through provision of a western entrance to the shopping centre, and access to residential units above the centre (delivered)
- Create active frontages along the A4 Wellington Street and St Ethelbert's Church frontage
- Remove the service ramp to the Prudential yard in coordination with the Heart of Slough proposals for the area (delivered)
- Improve pedestrian links to the bus and train stations via Wellington Street (part delivered)
- Rationalise multi-storey car parking provision and its links to the centres and Wellington House

- Redevelop the western end of the Queensmere Centre adjacent to St Ethelbert's church, including improved retail units, residential accommodation above the centre and removal of the toilet block;
- Transform the Wellington Street frontage to create an urban boulevard with tree planting, improved north-south route connection to the town centre, active retail frontages and access to residential accommodation above the retail units
- Aim to reduce the negative impacts of construction upon existing businesses and on the quality of life for residents and users of the town centre by appropriate phasing and implementation.

The Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework (2019) – The Interim Planning Framework (IPF) was prepared to start the process of producing a Master Plan for the Centre of Slough which can help to resolve all of these issues by promoting sustainable growth and investment in the area. The IPF promotes an “activity” led strategy which seeks to maximise the opportunities for everyone to use the centre for a range of cultural, social, leisure and employment activities which are unique to Slough. The IPF comprises a “concept” led strategy which seeks to promote the centre’s potential as location for major employment and housing growth and destination for leisure and cultural activities, all underpinned by a sustainable transport network and world class transport hub.

The Queensmere Site lies within the ‘**Central Area**’ which the IPF requires that the centre of Slough will be an attractive, vibrant hub providing high quality offices, retail, leisure, landmark buildings and cultural opportunities for our diverse communities. By encouraging investment, regeneration, innovation and high standards of design we will have created distinct environments with high quality public realm that creates a sense of place.

The IPF notes that *it is clear that the overall size of the shopping centre will have to be reduced. Whilst there may be the opportunity to introduce many new uses, as part of the activity led strategy, the amount of retail floorspace needed in the centre will be less than it is at present.*

The IPF states that: *The demolition of the precincts and reduction in retail floorspace will allow new uses to be created on the sites including major new residential development, employment uses, replacement retail and new leisure uses. It will also allow the existing car parks to be reconfigured. The principles for development are set out in more detail below.*

The IPF proposes that the redevelopment of the Queensmere (and Observatory Shopping Centres) provide the opportunity to refocus major retail development back onto the High Street which should become the prime frontage for the retail/leisure units.

A key proposal of this Framework is that a new pedestrian route is created from the station to the High Street by extending Brunel Way southwards. This will include creating a super crossing across Wellington Street.

Much of the planning guidance set out in the IPF is replicated and developed further in the CSRF and Emerging Spatial Strategy described below.

The Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework (CSRF) (2020) – Comprises an evidence based study prepared by Urban Initiatives to inform the Council’s Emerging Spatial Strategy. The CSRF envisages that development proposals for the [Queensmere Shopping Centre]

should result in the 'establishment of a mixed-use quarter on this large and prominent site within Slough's urban core'.

The Regeneration Framework suggests some indicative estimates as to what land uses could be provided. It states that there could be a minimum of 1,000 dwellings, 50,000 m² of offices, 10,000 m² of retail and 5,000 m² of leisure including food and beverage and a cinema. *[NB: The Regeneration Framework has been updated to consider the emerging proposals for Queensmere Shopping Centre redevelopment].*

Further detailed development principles are set out in the framework, which elaborate further upon the guiding principles within the Emerging Spatial Strategy (as set out below).

Proposed Spatial Strategy (PSS) (2020) – Concentrating development in the Centre of Slough is at the heart of the Spatial Strategy which will inform the Emerging Local Plan for Slough. The PSS confirms that the Centre of Slough will provide the bulk of housing that will be built in the Borough. The Queensmere Shopping Centre site is proposed to deliver a substantial number of these new homes [in addition to the adjoining Observatory Shopping Centre which will be planned to come forward at a later date].

The PSS notes that **Queensmere shopping centre [and Observatory Shopping Centre]** currently performs many of the traditional town centre functions in Slough, but are outdated and, like many, have lost their attractiveness. As a result, the PSS considers they provide the biggest opportunity for regeneration in the Centre of Slough.

The overall objective within the PSS is to encourage the comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment of the shopping centres which will transform the area into an attractive, vibrant, well connected place that can provide for some of the important shopping, leisure, cultural and business needs" whilst also meeting some of Slough's housing needs. The following planning principles will be applied to the proposed comprehensive mixed use development of the Queensmere Shopping Centre Site. [some principles are also relevant to the Observatory site, which is not currently under consideration and does not form a part of the application site].

The redevelopment [of the Queensmere Site] should provide:

- Comprehensive mixed use scheme which follows the broad principles set out in the Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework and the Regeneration Framework.
- New **retail and leisure** facilities which will create an attractive and vibrant centre. This will include new **food and beverage outlets and a cinema** which will help to sustain an evening as well as day time economy. This could also include provision for **new cultural facilities**.
- Approx **50,000 m² of offices** could be built along Wellington Street as part of the "workplace led" regeneration strategy.
- A **substantial amount of housing** throughout the redevelopment with a concentration at the eastern end, possibly in a new residential quarter. This should include a range of accommodation including the maximum reasonable provision of **affordable housing**;
- A **high standard of architecture** will be required in order to deliver this dense city centre scale development;
- The tallest buildings should generally be to the north alongside Wellington Street, which should become a new "address street". The height of buildings should step down

towards the High Street in the south where they should generally be a maximum of 6 stories in order to retain its human scale.

- The scale and nature of development at the western end of the sites needs to reflect and enhance the setting of St Ethelbert's church and The Curve;
- A **new pedestrian route** (with active frontages) will be created which links the High Street to the railway station via an improved Brunel Way.
- The whole site will need to be permeable with convenient and attractive links to the rest of the town centre.
- Buildings should be set in a high quality public realm that includes areas of planting and semi-mature tree planting.
- New areas of public open space will have to be provided including a "**civic square**" adjacent to, or part of, the new pedestrian link from the High Street to the railway station.
- Opportunities should be taken to provide landscaped roof gardens on the tops of buildings.
- The views of the surrounding area should be optimised, particularly those of Windsor Castle to the south. A public viewing area could be provided to create an attraction and enhance the appreciation of the area.
- Potential creation of a secondary "neighbourhood" of shops and leisure uses behind the High Street frontage;
- The layout should put pedestrians first.
- Vehicular access to the public car parks should be from Wellington Street;

The Proposal:

The development will include the phased demolition of all buildings and phased redevelopment for up to 350,000 sqm across six Development Zones (DZs), to provide a mixed-use scheme, including:

- Up to 1,600 residential units (Class C3 and up to 20% of which could be Class C2 use), with flexibility in the upper levels of DZ1, DZ 2A&B and DZ4 for either residential or office use, and DZ6 for residential use with sandwich car parking and/or residential use and MSCP, or MSCP for office use only in DZ1/DZ2A/DZ2B/DZ4.
- Up to 550 car parking spaces.
- 0 sqm – 40,000 sqm office space on the upper levels of DZ areas highlighted above.
- 5,500 sqm – 12,000 sqm retail, food and beverage uses (Class E and Class F (Use Class F would not include primary or secondary schools under F1(a))).
- 0 sqm – 1,500 sqm live music venue/cinema (Sui Generis)
- 0 sqm – 2,250 sqm bar/hot food takeaway (Sui Generis)
- Additional flexibility in basement footprint allowance.

The development is planned to be completed in phases from west to east across the site, with demolition and construction starting in 2023. The development is anticipated to be built over 14 years with a completion year of 2036. The Applicant will set out in their presentation to the Planning Committee on 13th October, further specifics of the development, as it currently comprises, at this stage in the pre-application process.

The Application is proposed to be submitted in outline form with all matters reserved. The documents submitted for approval will comprise parameter plans and mandatory design

codes, alongside an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Scope of the EIA has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

The Applicant has carried out a comprehensive Community Stakeholder Engagement exercise throughout the pre-planning application process. This included newsletters (sent to local residents, amenity groups, businesses and other local stakeholders), on-line events and forums, including the provision of an interactive web-site. The proposals have been subject to two Design Review Panel sessions with Design South-East and regular technical meetings have been held with the Local Planning Authority and its team of expert consultants and consultees. The Applicant has carried out briefings with the Lead Members, Ward Councillors and Leader of SBC. A Statement of Community Involvement will be submitted as part of the Planning Application detailing the feedback given during the consultation process to date.