

Planning Services
Worcester City Council

26 February 2015

FAO Mrs N Robinson

Application P15P0013 - New headquarters for Gtech, comprising offices, research and development, storage and distribution facilities with access from Berkeley Way. Location Land at the junction of Berkeley Way and Parsonage Way

I refer to the above planning application and on behalf of Warndon Parish Council **wish to object** for the following reasons.

We understand that the emerging SWDP has a positive approach towards employment developments. Policy SWDP 8 'Providing the Right Land and Buildings for Jobs' states those proposals that clearly demonstrate the potential for job creation and investment will be welcomed. We welcome the creation of jobs for local people and encouraging local businesses within Worcester and the application states that this development will secure 60 jobs in the City with the capacity of the new building allowing for the potential employment of 250 people in future years. It was however reported in the Worcester News (5th December 2014) by owner and founder of GTECH (Mr Grey) *"It will maximise the growth potential of the company, secure existing jobs and give the potential for the company to continue to grow, supporting up to 100 jobs in future years,"* not the 250 stated in the superseded planning statement provided as part of the application.

Taking the needs of local employment into account the SWDP has identified land for employment that does not include Berkeley Way. A question that must be answered is that after many years of development and scrutiny, all the research and effort undertaken in the development of the plan, why was this parcel of land never included? If it was not deemed fit for purpose for the SWDP after many years of research why should it be considered now. This site is not identified specifically for any development within the Local Plan and the site is part of the Green Network and therefore subject to policy NE9. Further to this, the site falls within the designated M5 Protection Corridor (Policy NE11) and is also identified as an Archaeological Sensitive Area (Policy BE21.)

The concern of the Parish Council and also from many local residents is that if this application is approved a precedent will be established for any other development proposals in the vicinity of the Green Network, in addition to those already outlined in the SWDP and result in speculative development bids for any green spaces, regardless of their current perception of protected status. This goes against the City of Worcester Local Plan, which emphasises measures to protect views and skylines, focal points and features' and to enhance the city's conservation areas and protect the archaeology city wide. Junction 6 is a gateway to the City and the view of St Nicolas Church is iconic and this development will have an impact on the view and skyline.

The application states the site holds a prominent position on the approach to the city located on a major traffic island with a clear road frontage. The proposals will make a positive contribution to this gateway approach to the City, with a new modern building making an exciting contribution to the street scene. This is a question of judgement as our view is St. Nicholas Church the oldest building in Warndon Villages built in the 8th century provides a more positive contribution to the gateway approach rather than a new building that will dilute the view, expand the industrial and office unit feel and produce increased

light and noise pollution and potentially changing the character of this area forever.

According to the application the fabrics of the listed buildings will not be affected by the development. However the setting of the listed buildings is also important. The question is has an impact study been undertaken on the affect this site and associated extra traffic (including HGV traffic) will have on this and other listed buildings close by. The proposed building would be visible and the warehouse noise intrusive to the tranquillity and of the site in addition to the proposed development immediately borders a residential area. Some principles outlined in the National Heritage Protection Plan seeks to ensure that England's historic environment is not needlessly at risk of damage, erosion or loss and is experienced, understood and enjoyed by local communities and these important points have not been explained in any consultation exercise.

In 1986 Warndon Court was designated a conservation area and when considering proposals for a development or building works that are within a conservation area, the Council has a legal duty to ensure its preservation and enhancement because this application could have a damaging effect on a conservation area and bring changes to the setting.

On the subject of nature and wildlife we see no evidence of any comprehensive survey work that has been undertaken for protected species and this must be carried out prior to any planning application. Until this survey has been undertaken no application should be considered because no consideration has been given to the effects on wildlife of any works the applicant wishes to carry out and animals, plants and habitats may be protected under the 'Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981'), or under European legislation (EU protected species, such as the Great Crested Newt).

The final point is local residents and the impact on their daily lives. We are always hearing the word localism and in this application over 65 people have met to understand the application and the impact it will have on their daily lives because they will have to live it 7/24/365. The consultation as outlined in the application is commendable but was very poorly publicised, took place in an inappropriate location and consequently was very poorly attended. As the application references this event the 65 plus people and others who have raised concerns on the planning portal, should and must have their voices (concerns) heard.

It is known by all who use this area that at peak times it is congested and in the main HGV traffic flows into the industrial units. HGV's will now flow from the prosed new site entrance adding a potential safety issue on the roads. Also no consideration has been given to the increase in noise and light pollution around Warndon Court Conservation area and St Nicholas Church, indeed no noise impact survey is even offered as part of this application. Planning policies and decisions should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new developments and this development could impact the local area through noise from the warehouse facility with HGV loading and unloading over long hours, potentially seven days per week until 10pm in the evening would be a significant noise nuisance.

The applicant has highlighted further discussions are expected with the City Council in respect of conditions and the list will evolve during the determination of the planning application. Before any decision is reached these further discussions should include local representation so a true and proper consultation with all known facts can be communicated and understood by all the interested parties because there can be no doubt it will have a significant adverse impact on the local residents.

Parking is also an issue and no consideration for the growth is provided for this. The application contains a Travel Plan which is primarily directed at staff and seeks to

encourage travel by sustainable modes and a reduction in car travel. While recognising that the applicant has done what they can to offer the choice of alternative means of transport it is inevitable that staff would rely heavily on car based travel and this reduces its sustainability credentials. If no parking is available this will add to the already increasing problem in the nearby streets and will increase parking and safety pressures. This is inevitable if the projected growth to 250 people is achieved in the near future or is it the 100 outlined by Mr. Grey. Therefore, clarity is required, (we understanding company confidential information cannot be shared) on what the number is, when this number will be achieved so the overall impact is understood at the outset.

The proposed development is not designated in the SWDP and due to its adverse impacts on heritage assets and local residents these demonstrably outweigh any benefits perceived by the applicant from this development. I also find it strange that the proposed Technology Park is being commissioned for high-technology companies like GTECH and yet this is not seen as an option because of timing issues. GTECH brand and reputation is critical to success and the impact of this application will cause serious damage to both.

In conclusion, Warndon Parish Council **object to the planning application** for the reasons set out in this letter.

Yours sincerely

Dave Long

Chairman of Warndon Parish Council