**Key Issues –**

EIA was required to be undertaken to inform an application for planning consent by the local council for re-development of its own Council Offices at Bourne Hill, Salisbury. Landscape and heritage assets at the site made it particularly sensitive to development. The proposed development involved partial demolition and complete renovation of a Grade II listed building to enable use as a modern council facility and access point. The application site is within a Conservation Area and an Area of Archaeological Significance, adjacent to the Grade II* Listed church and close to a Scheduled Monument within the office gardens.

There was considerable public concern about the principle of the proposed redevelopment. The significant heritage value of the site, combined with proximity to nearby areas of public open space, residential properties and public rights of way, necessitated robust adherence to professional standards, best practice EIA and meticulous separation of the client’s role as both applicant and determining authority.

**Purpose of the project**

Salisbury District Council (SDC) needed to centralise its operations throughout Salisbury into one office base at Bourne Hill. The purpose of the project was to improve efficiency of the working environment and minimise use of old office buildings with poor energy efficiency ratings.

This case study revisits the scheme to review how the EIA influenced the way in which the established development is used.

**Description of the project**

The site, located in the centre of historic Salisbury, previously comprised a Grade II* Listed Council House, physically joined to a Victorian extension that was no longer fit for purpose. Demolition of the Victorian building, renovation of the Listed Council House and parkland, together with construction of new offices within the garden, was critical to 21st century operational needs. Landmark’s management of the EIA had to ensure strict separation of function between the applicant and planning authority. This included guiding the development team and liaison with.
Lessons learnt

the planning authority, consultees and the public, to jointly find a balance within a complex and politically sensitive consents process.

As well as the redevelopment constraints posed by the historic setting and structures, new uses and centralisation of previously dispersed staff and functions into one site raised other environmental challenges, e.g. ensuring accessibility, flexible open working environments, energy efficiency and public amenity. The final design emerged from cooperation at all levels informing the iterative EIA process, and extensive consultation with the local community and statutory bodies (particularly English Heritage).

Tight, well-informed management of the EIA process gave clarity and confidence in the quality of the applications to the client and the receiving authority and achieved a Good/Excellent Grade at Review of the EIA by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEM). Planning and Listed Building consents were granted in 2008. Salisbury District Council was absorbed in 2009 into the new unitary Wiltshire Council which subsequently developed the scheme.

Site development was technically complex, including novel approaches to embedded mitigation, working methods and further survey and monitoring commitments by the council to deliver the EIA compliant project. Reporting of these measures continued over the following years, in accordance with the Environmental Action Plan that flowed from the ES and the ongoing site Conservation Management Plan.

The Bourne Hill site now supports a stunning energy efficient modern building comprising 2600 m² of open plan offices, joined to the restored council house by a light and airy bridge. The site has achieved an ‘excellent’ BREEAM rating and is served by a sustainable transport plan informed by the ES. The project, and Architects Stanton Williams, have received a number of prestigious awards including:

- 2011 RIBA Award
- 2011 British Council for Offices Award
- 2011 SCALA Civic Building of the Year (Joint winner)
- 2010 Salisbury Civic Society Award

The current operational and community use of the site accords with the thorough approach adopted to deliver the site wide EIA.

Lessons learnt cont.

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