

**LOCATION:** Kamkorp Park, Chertsey Road, Windlesham, Surrey, GU20 6HZ,

**PROPOSAL:** Hybrid planning application comprising: Full application for a new building for Sales, Manufacturing & Heritage (Building 2) together with test road, two new vehicular accesses onto Highams Lane, associated parking, landscaping and ancillary outbuilding. Change of use of existing buildings (comprising former BOC Headquarters) for education, storage, business and ancillary uses. Outline application with all matters reserved for 2 new buildings for Headquarters and Engineering (Building 1) and Vehicle Research and Development (Building 3).

**TYPE:** Full Planning Application

**APPLICANT:** Gordon Murray Group Limited

**OFFICER:** Mr Neil Praine

**RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions and referral to the Secretary of State as a Departure from the Development Plan**

**1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The application site, the former headquarters of the British Oxygen Corporation (BOC), lies in the Green Belt and comprises approximately 22 hectares in size. The existing buildings are located at the northern end of the site with open fields to the south. The proposal is a hybrid planning application with full planning permission sought for a new building with an additional ancillary outbuilding both on the open land at the southern side of the site, two new accesses off Highams Lane and associated parking and access. A test road and change of use of the northern existing buildings (comprising former BOC Headquarters) for mixed education, storage, business and ancillary uses are also proposed as part of the full application. Outline permission is sought for two further buildings with associated parking and access, however all matters are reserved. The existing buildings total 12,630 m<sup>2</sup> and the proposal would total 12,760 m<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.2 The applicant, Gordon Murray Group (GMG), is a design and engineering company developing vehicles and automotive technologies. These technologies have a number of applications which include ultra-lightweight parts for electric and combustion vehicles as well as autonomous electric vehicles and the development of a flat pack lightweight vehicle which can be quickly delivered, assembled and used in remote areas for many uses including aid programs.
- 1.3 It is also proposed to use the application site to produce a bespoke low volume supercar (known as the T.50) as well as develop technologies (as outlined above in paragraph 1.2) from concept, design, prototype and development through to a production ready product. There is no objection to the proposal on highway grounds, heritage, trees, residential amenity, noise, lighting, air quality, biodiversity, and flooding. The development is also not CIL liable.
- 1.4 The new buildings would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt and its purposes. Similarly the test road and changes to levels would also be inappropriate and harmful Green Belt development. By association, the development would also cause harm to the existing rural, natural and

undeveloped character of the area. As such it is necessary to consider whether there are any 'Very Special Circumstances' (VSC) to outweigh the identified harm.

- 1.5 Section 8 of the report lists and details the applicant's VSC. The NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth. Thus, in the officer's opinion, the development's contribution to the local, regional and national economy, particularly in a growth global market, which tackles challenges facing the UK as well as the wider international stage, together with associated employment opportunities weighs significantly in support of the proposal. It is considered that the in-combination weight of VSC outweigh the harm and so this report recommends approval, subject to conditions.
- 1.6 Under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 this proposal represents a departure from the Development Plan, because it is major development within the Green Belt. Under this Direction and if Members agree with the recommendation to grant, the application must therefore be referred to the Secretary of State. This gives the SoS the opportunity to either make no comments or use call-in power and make the decision on the application. The Planning Authority cannot grant permission until the expiry of 21 days from the date the SoS confirms receipt of the consultation.

## **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The site comprises approximately 22 hectares and lies within the Green Belt. The site has an established office use, with its former use as the headquarters for the British Oxygen Corporation (BOC). Since 2007 the premises have broadly remained vacant, however, the site was briefly owned by Kamkorp Ltd, but this company entered into administration in 2019 and the site has since been acquired by the current applicant.
- 2.2 The site is located within the parish of Chobham but sits adjacent to the Windlesham parish boundary. It is also outside of but in close proximity to the Chobham Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); the Thurley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC); a National Nature Reserve; and, the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA). These areas of designation are located on the northern side of Chertsey Road opposite and beyond the site. The site also lies outside the floodplain and is not identified as having a designated landscape of historical, cultural or archaeological importance.
- 2.3 All of the existing buildings (totalling approximately 12,630 sq metres) are located at the northern end of the site with the principal vehicular access off Chertsey Road used for visitors. There is also a secondary vehicular access to the site off Chertsey Road (known as Shepherd's Lane) used for deliveries. Highams Lane runs parallel with the site's eastern boundary and at the northern end of Highams Lane there is a further vehicular access which was used by staff, with access to the main building's basement car park.
- 2.4 The main building has an oxygen molecular shape footprint with a series of wings fanning out. The building is part single and part two-storey, with the rear of the building having an attractive landscape setting which includes two linked ponds and a lake. Beyond this and to the site's southern boundary, which is adjacent to the M3 motorway, the land levels drop and comprise open fields. The M3 motorway itself is on higher land up on an embankment.
- 2.5 There are a series of smaller ancillary buildings located closer to Chertsey Road than the main building. This includes the locally listed clock tower, plus single storey garage and plant building. These buildings are walled off from the main visitor entrance with a separate parking area. At the northwest corner of the site there is also a walled garden, and also a small graveyard which are both remnant of the original convent use of the site.
- 2.6 All site boundaries are well screened with mature trees and vegetation, although there are no statutory protected trees within the site or boundaries. Along the southern boundary rows of conifers have been planted to screen the motorway and the northern Chertsey Road boundary also includes walling. The immediate surrounding area is not densely populated with the most residential dwellings to the west of the site, on the edge of Windlesham.

### **3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY**

- 3.1 82/0214 Demolition of existing convent buildings with exception of clock tower and associated buildings and erection of new headquarters office building, restaurant and car parking – Approved 26/7/87.
- 3.2 84/0213 Details for erection of new headquarters office building, staff restaurant and car parking - Approved 26/4/84.
- 3.3 15/0067 Hybrid planning application comprising: Full application for two new wings to existing building, extension to existing garage next to the clock tower and enlarged plant enclosure to existing energy centre; plus two new buildings 1 and 2 for research and development located at the southeast corner of the site together with circular test road, gatehouse, cycle/waste storage building with new vehicular access from Highams Lane; and, monorail stations and monorail track between the existing building and proposed building 1; Outline application with all matters reserved for extension to restaurant; enlarged test road and monorail track in the western field; and, new building 3 for research and development adjacent to the M3 motorway, monorail station adjoining building 3, and test building – approved 28/08/15 – permission lapsed.
- 3.4 18/0776 Application for reserved matters approval (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) for an enlarged test road and monorail, building 3 and mono rail station pursuant to hybrid planning permission reference 15/0067 (full application for two new wings to existing building, extension to existing garage next to the clock tower and enlarged plant enclosure to existing energy centre; plus two new buildings 1 and 2 for research and development located at the southeast corner of the site together with circular test road, gatehouse, cycle/waste storage building with new vehicular access from Highams Lane; and, monorail stations and monorail track between the existing building and proposed building 1; Outline application with all matters reserved for extension to restaurant; enlarged test road and monorail track in the western field; and, new building 3 for research and development adjacent to the M3 motorway, monorail station adjoining building 3, and test building) application invalid and permission lapsed.

### **4.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The applicant has worked in the automotive industry for over 50 years with the Gordon Murray Group (GMC) formed in 2007. The GMG is a design and engineering company developing automotive technologies which are affordable, durable, safe, compact, lightweight and low carbon. These technologies have a number of applications which include light weight electric and combustion vehicles as well as the development of a flat pack lightweight vehicle which can be quickly delivered, assembled and used in remote areas for example with aid programs. It is proposed to use the application site to develop these technologies from concept, design, prototype and development through to a production ready product. In addition, low volume bespoke vehicles are produced on site and this can range from high spec limited production supercars to smaller electric or autonomous vehicles.
- 4.2 The GMG is a well-established and globally recognised business and currently occupies premises at both Shalford and Dunsfold with a high proportion of the applicant's staff living close to these premises. However, with the applicant's success in the automotive industry and the associated growth of the business allied with the business being currently spread out across several locations, it is the applicant's goal to consolidate all activities into one fit for purpose 'campus' / location which is freehold and will provide a long term home which justifies the significant investment which is planned (see below). This planned expansion is

not possible at the existing sites as the applicant is currently constrained by short term leases. Additionally, given the existing workforce lives local to Shalford and Dunsfold it is also essential to the applicant to relocate within a local area.

- 4.3 The proposal therefore is a hybrid planning application comprising:
- a) Full/detailed application for a new building for Sales, Manufacturing & Heritage (known as Building 2) and ancillary outbuilding (comprising substation, stores, and cycle parking) located at the southern side of the site together with test road, parking, access and landscaping. It is also proposed to install two new vehicular accesses from Highams Lane and a change of use of the existing buildings (comprising former BOC Headquarters) to mixed education, storage, business and ancillary uses associated with the southern proposed buildings.
  - b) Outline application with all matters reserved for 2 new buildings for Headquarters and Engineering (known as Building 1) and Vehicle Research and Development (known as Building 3).

The aim of the applicant is to establish the company HQ and each of the applicant's key business functions (design, automotive and technology) in one location. The one site campus style design ensures a high degree of cross pollination between these business functions and allows for the business to continue to grow and function.

- 4.4 The proposal will be built in phases hence the hybrid outline and full application with future reserved matters applications expected. It is anticipated that the proposal will be undertaken in four phases as follows:

Phase 1 – (works start quarter one 2021 with estimated completion and occupation by quarter two 2023) Building 2 is proposed to be erected with adjoining service building & cycle stores, adjacent landscaping, access road & adjoining parking spaces and the test road including immediate landscaping. As part of phase one it is also proposed to replant / refurbish the Walled Garden, an internal refurbishment of the listed clock tower including clock mechanisms. Internal refurbishment of the other existing ancillary buildings for re-use, repair & maintenance of the two existing lakes, clear existing overgrown vegetation & maintain the historic graveyards. It is also proposed to clean and repair the underground sections of the molecule buildings for vehicle storage.

Phase 2 - (works start quarter four 2021 with estimated completion and occupation by quarter three 2023) Building 1 is to be erected with adjoining service building & cycle store, adjacent landscaping and adjoining parking.

Phase 3 -(works start quarter two 2023 with estimated completion and occupation by quarter four 2024) Building 3 is proposed to be erected with adjoining services building, adjacent landscaping and access & adjoining parking spaces

Phase 4 - (works start quarter one 2025 with estimated completion by quarter three 2026) repair and maintain the Molecule Building for use for Higher Educational & Office functions / ancillary uses for the GMC group and wider community.

- 4.5 Building 2 (Gordon Murray Automotive) would be sited parallel to the M3 motorway, approximately 110m north and its closest elevation would be a distance of approximately 123 metres from Highams Lane. This building would accommodate the following activities:
- Ground floor – Customer reception, heritage vehicle collection area, Production vehicle work area, production vehicle assembly area, stores & staff welfare areas.
  - 1st floor – Sales & customer area, heritage presentation area, heritage office, meeting rooms, viewing galley (of assembly area).

Building 2, is primarily for the low output build and assembly of vehicles. The ground floor 'Heritage' section which will serve as a classic car & exhibition space with the remainder of the building focused on sales areas and office space associated with the manufacturing and delivery of car projects. The floor area shows manufacturing areas for bespoke vehicle production and the applicant has confirmed that they have no intentions for mass vehicle production on site, producing approximately 3 vehicles per week to end customers.

- 4.6 Buildings 1 (Gordon Murray Design and HQ) and 3 (Gordon Murray Applied Technologies) while outline at this stage, will support the wider Gordon Murray Group as follows:

Building 1 will serve as both the main HQ building with activities including normal HQ functions such as HR, accounting and general admin as well as meeting, presentation and product launch space. The ground floor includes a reception area, technical labs & machinist shops for supporting R&D and prototype builds with 3no. prototype garages. The 1st Floor activities include engineering & design offices, styling & graphic inc. virtual reality studios, purchasing & procurement, boardroom & Chairman's suite.

Building 3 will serve as a more flexible research and development function into automotive technologies and vehicles. Here ideas, concepts and designs will can be tested, reviewed and refined. This would include R&D test beds and labs, stores, vehicle repair & servicing, stores and offices.

- 4.7 It is also proposed to utilise the existing 'molecule building (the former BOC Headquarters building) to the north of the site. Initially this building will be ancillary to the general use of the site such as storage and other uses associated with the transfer of activity from the applicant's present sites at Shalford and Dunsfold. It will also provide temporary useable floorspace for the applicant's business while the new buildings are constructed. In due course the applicant seeks to use the building to support the HQ buildings to the south of the site and also house its education activities. These education activities will be the centre for company-led apprenticeships, meetings, seminars and conferences.
- 4.8 Two new vehicular accesses are proposed off Highams Lane. The southern access which is sited to the south eastern corner of the site sits next to bridleway 74. This southern access is to be used during construction and after which will be closed off and used for emergency access only. The bridleway would also remain open throughout construction and also post development. The second access is to be sited approximately 120m north of the emergency access. This application proposes 74 vehicle parking spaces and 26 cycle parking spaces within this detailed application with the reminder of parking outline and reserved for later determination. However, the applicant has provided indicative figures of the final buildout setting out that parking will offer 290 vehicle parking spaces and 80 cycle spaces.
- 4.9 The test road is proposed as part of the detailed application extending northwest from building 1. At its closest point it would be approximately 134 metres away from the site's eastern boundaries and would cover a lap distance of approximately 500m. It is also proposed to raise ground levels and re-contour the land within the test road to a maximum height of 4.5m. These re-profiled land levels would be landscaped. Any other significant re-profiling of the land if necessary is outline at this stage and will be considered under future applications. The applicant confirms, the test road is for low speed proving of vehicles and is not a test track for high speed testing.
- 4.10 The final build out of the proposal will provide approximately 265 total jobs. The applicant already employs 120 staff and this project is anticipated to create 145 new jobs. The employment created from this proposal will be primarily technical with engineering, technicians and manufacturing staff. However, there will also be a mixture of financial, administrative and support service employee roles.

4.11 The following tables summarise the size of the proposed buildings and a brief comparison of the current scheme and the previous scheme as set out at paragraph 3.3 and 3.4 above.

Current proposal	Footprint (M sq)	Floor Area (M sq)	Volume (M cub)
Building 1	2,810	5,090	25,791
Building 2	3,450	5,765	31,564
Building 3	1,110	1,500	10,155
Other buildings	405	405	n/a
Totals	7,775	12,760	67,510

Previous "Kamkorp" proposal	Footprint (M sq)	Floor Area (M sq)	Volume
Building 1	4,740	6,040	43,134
Building 2	2,520	2,520	22,932
Building 3	3,240	3,690	29,484
Other buildings	890	1,285	n/a
Totals	11,390	13,535	95,550

It is noted that the current scheme is approximately 3,615 sqm smaller in footprint terms, 775 sqm smaller in overall floorspace terms and just over 28,000 cubic meters smaller in volume terms than the previous scheme. The officer also noted that Building 2 and indicative buildings 1 and 3 are lower in height than the previous scheme and the provision of a gatehouse, high level monorail and stations have been removed from the current scheme. A smaller slow-speed test road rather than an unrestricted test track is also now proposed.

4.12 A series of documents have been submitted in support of the application, relevant extracts of which will be referred to in sections 7 and 8 of this report. The documents, amongst others, include the following:

- Design and Access Statement which includes Planning Statement with Green Belt Very Special Circumstances;
- Flood Risk and Drainage Assessments;
- Transport Assessment;
- Travel Plan;
- Energy Statement;
- Noise Assessment;
- Lighting Assessment;
- Arboricultural Assessment;
- Ecological / Biodiversity Appraisals;
- Air Quality Assessment; and,
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Landscape Management Plan.

4.13 Prior to the submission of the application the applicant undertook the following:

- Requested a Screening Opinion as to whether the proposal constituted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development. The Planning Authority concluded this was not EIA development;
- As reported in the Design and Access Statement, undertook a public meeting with local residents and interested parties;
- Pre-application meetings with the Planning Authority.

## 5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

5.1	Surrey County Highway Authority (CHA)	No objection subject to conditions, <i>[full response appended to this report, see Annex A]</i>  The CHA consider that the local road network can accommodate the increased traffic movements subject to junction improvements and conditions to agree a Construction Transport Management Plan and Staff Travel Plan. The CHA also raises no objection to the vehicular sustainability proposals or level of cycle / vehicle parking proposed.
5.2	Highways England (HE)	No objection subject to conditions, <i>[full response appended to this report, see Annex B]</i>  HE consider that the strategic road network including junction 3 of the M3 can accommodate the increased traffic movements subject to conditions to agree a Construction Transport Management Plan and Staff Travel Plan.
5.3	Natural England	No objection on protected sites such as the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or biodiversity / ecological grounds.
5.4	Surrey Wildlife Trust	No objections on ecological grounds subject to conditions to ensure protection of existing ecological species and habitat and implementation of biodiversity enhancements.
5.5	Environment Agency	No objection on flooding or pollution grounds.
5.6	Local Lead Flood Authority	No objection on flooding grounds subject to conditions.
5.7	Tree Officer	No objection on tree / landscaping grounds subject to conditions to ensure tree protection, replanting of trees and the longer term management of woodland / trees.
5.8	Heritage Officer	No heritage objections subject to conditions to agree protection, refurbishment and long term maintenance of heritage assets.
5.9	The Gardens Trust	No response – consultation period expired.
5.10	SCC Archaeologist	No objection on archaeological grounds subject to a condition securing a Written Scheme of Investigation.
5.11	Chobham Parish Council	No objection subject to full assessment of planning issues. <i>[Officer comment see paragraphs 7 and 8 below]</i> .
5.12	Windlesham Parish Council	No objection subject to full Green Belt and Transport Assessment <i>[Officer comment see paragraphs 7 and 8 below, The consultation response also draws attention to the Windlesham Neighbourhood Plan 2019 (WNP). However, the officer also notes the application</i>

*site lies outside of the geographical area covered by the WNP.]*

- 5.13 Economic Development Officer Supports proposal and states, - this type of proposal is supported by the Council's Economic Development Strategy and the emerging Surrey County Council Economic Development Strategy. *[see paragraph 8.2 below].*
- 5.14 Environmental Health Officer No objections in respect of air quality, contaminated land, noise and artificial lighting issues subject to conditions.
- 5.15 Urban Design Officer Broadly raises no objection to the detailed matters in respect to this hybrid application, subject to the following main points:
- The proposal is considered to demonstrate a high quality timeless design with a strong visual connection to this location and offers an improvement over the previous scheme by a reduction of total floor space, building heights and a reduction of the test track.
  - Advices against non-native planting and welcomes the wider native tree and hedgerow planting to soften and assist with the visual impact of the proposal recommends controlling of soft and hard landscaping features (via condition).
  - However, the Urban Design Officer raises concern about the alterations to land levels, which she considers, will have a negative impact upon the quintessential open, natural and rural character of the existing parkland, setting.
- 5.16 Runnymede Borough Council No objection.

## 6.0 REPRESENTATION

The application was advertised in the local press, site notices erected and 35 individual notification letters were sent out. At the time of preparation of this report 3 letters of support and no letters of objection have been received. The letters of support outline the following benefits:

- The proposals are sensitive to the surroundings,
- An international company will make the best of this particular site,
- The proposal will generate local jobs,
- The proposal will save the BOC building and will be a great addition to the local area; and
- The proposed technical college / apprenticeships are welcomed.

## 7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION

- 7.1 Policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and, Policies CP1, CP2, CP8, CP11, CP14A, DM1, DM7, DM9, DM10, DM11, DM13 and DM17 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP) are relevant. Regard will also be had to advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG); the Council's 2020 Economic Development Strategy, the Strategic Economic Plan For The Enterprise M3 Area 2018 – 2030 and the emerging Surrey Economic Development Strategy.

7.2 Policy DM13 of the CSDMP recognises that employment development can occur outside of the core employment centre and town centre and this policy's supporting text acknowledges that these uses can play an important role in the Borough's economy, often comprise large bespoke sites and are not just confined to the urban area but also located in the Green Belt and countryside. Whilst the policy seeks to retain these uses, the policy restricts development on these sites to extensions or additions and promotes redevelopment where this would improve environmental and residential amenity. In principle, therefore, and given the site's established use there is no objection to the proposed use, subject to the merits of the proposal not causing material harm. As such, the following main issues need to be addressed in determining this application:

- Green Belt appropriateness and harm;
- Impacts on the character of the area, heritage, landscape and trees;
- Highway impacts;
- Impacts on residential amenity;
- Impacts on biodiversity;
- Energy and sustainability;
- Other matters; and,
- Very Special Circumstances (see Section 8 of this report).

### **7.3 Green Belt appropriateness and harm**

7.3.1 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt. While exceptions are listed at paragraph 145, the officer concludes that the proposal does not fall within any of these exceptions. Paragraph 146 states that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. This includes engineering operations.

7.3.2 The south of the site is undeveloped and has an open rural character to it. The introduction of buildings, hardstanding and activity will change this openness and as set out in paragraph 4.11 above the spatial floor area and volume is significant. The buildings will have a visual presence and one which undoubtedly will diminish the undeveloped openness of the site. Building 2 and the other buildings proposed, including those in outline form, would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the applicant also accepts this. It is considered these buildings would cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of their size and the spread of development on the land. This quantum of built form would also conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt by encroachment into the countryside.

7.3.3 Turning to the test road, access, parking and other landscaping, including the re-profiling of land within the test road, a fact and degree judgement must be made as to whether these operations preserve openness. Currently the land is open and devoid of any development. Therefore any development on this land is likely to have an urbanising effect. Whilst the test road and parking would be at ground level they would not be contained in a modest area and cover a significant degree of hardstanding. The proposed changes to land levels will also increase the extent of the change to the open character of the Green Belt. This sprawl of development would inevitably have a permanent effect upon the open and undeveloped character that the land currently possesses. The associated movement of vehicles and parked vehicles would further add to the impression of urbanity. It is therefore considered that these operations would not preserve openness, would conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt by failing to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and would therefore be inappropriate development.

7.3.4 The NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It goes on to state that substantial weight ought to be given to any harm to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Before considering the applicant's very special circumstances it is therefore first necessary to consider whether in addition to the significant Green Belt harm this proposal causes any other harm. This is considered below.

#### **7.4 Impacts on the character of the area, heritage, landscape and trees**

7.4.1 The NPPF requires development to integrate into its natural, built and historic environments and Policy DM9 (ii) of the CSDMP reiterates this requiring development to respect and enhance the environment, paying particular attention to scale, materials, massing, bulk and density. Whilst the M3 motorway delineates the southern boundary of the site and the existing site buildings are commercial, the environmental character of the southern part of the site and wider area is predominantly rural, open and natural. The applicant's Landscape and Visual Appraisal describes a significant area of the site as having a 'parkland' setting enjoying open grassy land with scattered groups of trees and pastoral fields.

7.4.2 The Council's Urban Design Officer (UDO) in her consultation response finds the proposed building design to be contemporary and minimalistic with rooflines deliberately broken by distinct top plants to create some contrast. She considers the main façade materials create a floating character for the upper parts of the buildings and the recessed ground floors that characterise the building design and the contrast in upper and lower building materials and colours assist in visually reducing the massing. She concludes that the buildings demonstrate a high quality timeless design with a strong visual connection to this location.

7.4.3 However, the development by reason of the use, size and location of the new buildings to the south being remote from the existing site buildings, together with the test road 290 parking bays and circulation paths and roads and land level changes result in a development that would fail to respect the existing rural, open and natural attributes that the area possesses, contrary to Policy DM9. Even if this conclusion is incorrect and the proposal respects its context, then in this high quality natural environment any development ought to enhance the environment and so it is difficult to argue that this would be the case. However, in the applicant's favour, the proposal makes an effort to improve on the previous consented scheme, Building 2 has a total building height of approximately 12.13m, including roof plant (excluding the roof-plant the proposed building height is approximately 9.1 m). This is a reduction in height compared with the previously consented scheme and while buildings 1 and 3 are in outline form the indicative drawings confirm that height will be similar. The proposal is reduced in both height and floorspace of the previous scheme as set out above at paragraph 4.11.

7.4.4 Furthermore, existing views into the site are limited because of the high degree of natural boundary screening and the M3 embankment. The natural gradient changes on the site also limit views across the entire site. Given this existing context, the architecture, and given that much of the existing landscaping would be retained and significant additional planting proposed, the proposed buildings or changes to the land levels would not be prominent from outside the site. The creation of the new Highams Lane accesses would open up views but it is considered that the impact would be restricted to these points only. However, the main access and its level of use would inevitably have a damaging effect upon the existing sense of rurality.

7.4.5 The applicant's proposed landscape enhancements are, however, welcomed subject to later agreement in respect to species and planting (to be controlled by condition). The Council's Tree Officer has also raised no objection as tree loss would be limited and that the loss of the category B and C trees would have a minor impact on the landscape character and profile of the area. Subject to suitable conditions to control tree works and a comprehensive landscape planting and management scheme.

- 7.4.6 The Council's Heritage Officer is also supportive of the proposal concluding that there would be no harm to the locally listed clock tower, walled garden and convent burial ground subject to conditions to agree protection and details of any maintenance / management of these historic assets. In addition and given that the proposal can also be conditioned in respect of archaeology, the proposal would comply with Policy DM17.
- 7.4.7 However, the development by reason of the use, size and location of the new buildings to the south being remote from the existing site buildings, together with the test road 290 parking bays and circulation paths and roads and land level changes result in a development that would fail to respect the existing rural, open and natural attributes that the area possesses, contrary to Policy DM9.

## **7.5 Highway impacts**

- 7.5.1 Both the Surrey County Council Highway Authority (CHA) and Highways England (HE) have been consulted as part of this proposal. Firstly informal discussions were undertaken at the pre-application stage between the applicant and the CHE and HE. These discussions informed the design and layout of the proposal before submission of this planning application. Once the application was lodged, both bodies were formally consulted again and their responses to this planning application are included as appendixes to this report. (CHA – Annex A and HE – Annex B).

### Vehicular Access and trips

- 7.5.2 The three existing vehicular access points to the north of the site will be retained. These are; the access point to the north of the site accessible directly from Chertsey Road (B386), the access point to the north-west of the site via Shepherds Lane, which connects to Chertsey Road and the access point to the east of the site via Highams Lane. Access to the main campus buildings at the south of the site will be provided by a new southern entrance along the eastern border of the site via Highams Lane. The entrance will lead directly to designated parking facilities. An additional access point, also on Highams Lane, will be provided at the south-eastern corner of the site just north of the M3 motorway bridge. This will be used during construction and retained afterwards for emergency access only.
- 7.5.3 The applicant's Transport Assessment (TA) confirms that the current GMG headquarters in Shalford have working days of Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 17:00 and the same will be the case at this application site. Therefore, the peak hours in terms of trips arriving at and departing from the site will be 07:00-08:00 in the morning and 17:00-18:00 in the evening. Anticipated staff numbers, existing staff mode share and average building occupancy have been used to calculate vehicle trips to the site in the peak hours and during working hours. The TA also states that operation of the site means that vehicle trips outside of weekday hours 07:00-19:00 are not anticipated.
- 7.5.4 Turning to the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) figures, in the AM peak hour at completion of the full buildout, 246 vehicle arrivals and 30 vehicular departures are expected. The PM peak hour would see 17 arrivals and 202 departures. Over the space of an average weekday (07:00 – 19:00) the AADT figures project 780 vehicle arrivals per day and 788 vehicle departures.
- 7.5.5 It is accepted that the AADT demonstrates some significant traffic increases on the immediate road network and in response to this junction modelling has been undertaken on the local road network and also Junction 3 of the M3 motorway. As a result of this modelling and assessment, mitigation measures have been identified and these have been incorporated and agreed with the CHA and HE and are to be imposed as conditions in accordance with the consultation responses. The assessment shows the local and strategic road network has capacity to accommodate the expected traffic flows and both the CHA and HE raise no objection in this respect. Additionally these figures represent a worst case scenario and the applicant is to adopt a travel plan to reduce this impact further.

## Parking

- 7.5.6 The proposal for the full buildout is to provide a total of 290 new car parking spaces (including disabled spaces and electric vehicle charging points), 80 new cycle parking spaces and 3 lorry parking spaces at the south of the site. The provision of the car, cycle and lorry parking spaces at the south of the site is sufficient for GMG staff and additional visitors expected at the completion of the main campus and fully complies with the SCC Vehicular and Cycle Parking Guidance.

### Sustainable Transport

- 7.5.7 The applicant is to provide secure cycle storage facilities, showers and lockers for staff wishing to cycle, walk or run to work. The applicant is also committed to initiatives such as providing all employees with an information pack which will include maps of local walking routes, cycle routes, creating a Bicycle User Group (BUG), set up by the Transport Co-ordinator, to provide suggestions for further improvements to encourage cycle use; and encouraging staff to sign up to a Cycle scheme to provide employees with tax-free bicycles. As part of the travel plan it is also proposed to consider further providing the provision of clothes drying and storage areas as well as the promotion of the health benefits of cycling. The applicant is also exploring provision of electric bike charging facilities and electric bike or scooter hire schemes and cycle mileage rates could be provided for business travel just as with car mileage.
- 7.5.8 The nearest bus stops to the site are more than 400m walking distance away with no bus routes passing near the site. This means, in reality, that they do not provide an attractive transport option. On this basis, the applicant anticipates that the local rail network will provide a more feasible alternative to commute via public transport. There are two main rail lines within a four mile road distance from the site:

- London Waterloo to Reading, with the nearest station at Longcross situated 2.2 miles from the application site; and
- Ascot to Guildford, with the nearest station at Bagshot situated 3.7 miles from the development site.

Services operate with a peak weekday frequency of around four trains per hour at each station. The practicality of employees commuting by train is recognised by the applicant and this will depend on the ability to travel between the rail station and application site. Cycling or taxi sharing may be a viable method and is to be explored in the travel plan. The applicant is also committed to actively disseminating public transport information and incentivising staff by providing interest-free season ticket loans.

- 7.5.9 For those staff unable to commute via active modes or by public transport, the applicant also remains committed to reducing the number of private vehicle trips to and from the site. The following list details measures the applicant is implementing to reduce car travel, with a particular focus on reducing single-occupancy car trips.

- Setting up a car-share/carpool program;
- Promotion of existing commercial Car Club schemes;
- Provision of the option of flexible hours or working from home; and
- Provision of high-quality teleconferencing facilities to reduce the need of travel.

### Highway Conclusion

- 7.5.10 On the basis of all the evidence including the no objections from both the County Highways Authority and Highways England, subject to conditions, which include a Construction

Transport Management Plan, parking conditions and Travel Plan condition, the development is therefore considered to be acceptable on highway capacity, safety and parking grounds, complying with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the CSDMP.

## **7.6 Impacts on residential amenity**

- 7.6.1 Along the Highams Lane boundaries the closest residential properties include Highams Lodge, The Cottage and The Lake House. It is considered that the amenity of these neighbours would be most affected by the scheme given that the principal development works would be at the south eastern end of the site. However, all of these residential properties would be some distance away from the new buildings, for example The Lake House is approximately 180m away from the northern elevation of building 1 and so it is considered that there would not be a direct loss of residential amenity for these residents by reason of loss of privacy, overlooking, light or visual impacts. Whilst residents would be affected by the increased traffic movements using Highams Lane, the aforementioned highway evidence suggests that the impacts would not be significantly adverse. Furthermore, Highams Lodge is located adjacent to the existing staff access and so it is considered that there would not be a dissimilar impact for this neighbour than the existing extant situation.
- 7.6.2 There are a number of residential properties located along Chertsey Road, to the west of the site, of which the closest dwellings with curtilages adjoining the application site include Sundial and Orchard Cottage. These two dwellings are located adjacent to the walled garden and remote from the main proposed development works and so given the proposed improvements to landscaping and restoration of the walled garden, it is considered there would be no adverse impact on these neighbours' amenities. Additionally the dwellings including, for example Gunners Meadows and Lynbrook Cottage, would also not be adversely affected by the development works given their separation and locations.
- 7.6.3 South of the M3 motorway the closest property is Rose Cottage, some 70+ metres away. Given this significant separation distance, the existing motorway embankment and screening it is considered that there would be no adverse impact on this neighbour's amenities.
- 7.6.4 In addition to the above conclusions, the applicant's Noise Assessment assessed potential noise from the construction phases, operation of the vehicle test road facility; activities within workshops and any noise from plant or machinery. Baseline noise survey data was collected at three locations around the proposed development nearest to the closest residential properties. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has considered the application and concludes that there would be no adverse noise impacts for residential properties (subject to conditions).
- 7.6.5 The applicant's Lighting Report confirms that all lighting will be in accordance with Bats and Lighting guidance and guidance in respect to the reduction of obtrusive light. The report sets out that external lighting is required to roads, car parks and pedestrian areas for safety and security purposes. Lighting columns at 6m have been proposed to minimise lighting spill while maintaining an efficient lighting design and where additional lighting is required for pedestrian areas, poles will be reduced to 3m. All lighting has been designed to ensure that light spill to sensitive areas will be minimised. The report also confirms that external lighting control will be achieved through a timeclock, daylight sensor and manual override. The control system will enable 50% of the lighting to be turned off after peak times to further reduce light pollution and energy usage. The Council's EHO raises no objections commenting that the report is in accordance with guidelines. It is considered reasonable to impose conditions relating to lighting so that the full details can be submitted. It is therefore considered that there would be no adverse impact of light pollution on local residents. The EHO also confirms that the proposal would not cause adverse air quality issues.
- 7.6.6 As such it is considered that the proposal would not result in adverse loss of residential amenity and would comply with Policy DM9 (iii) of the CSDMP.

## **7.7 Impacts on biodiversity**

- 7.7.1 Policy CP14 of the CSDMP seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity and does not permit development that would result in harm to or loss of features of interest for biodiversity. Despite the relative proximity of the site to areas of local, national and international importance it is a material consideration that Natural England raises no objection to the impact of this proposal. It is therefore concluded that the proposal would not be harmful to the THBSPA, SAC and SSSI.
- 7.7.2 The proposal seeks to retain as well as enhance biodiversity features. As noted in the submitted ecological appraisal, grassland will be restored to lowland meadow, significant native tree, wildflower and hedgerow planting is also proposed alongside ongoing woodland and landscape management.
- 7.7.3 Species specific enhancements, including bat and bird boxes, as well as log piles and hibernacula are also proposed which will enhance the site for protected and notable species. A strategic emphasis has also been considered with the retention and increase of habitat connectivity across the site via the provision of replacement and compensatory tree planting and hedge planting. All these features all provide a considerable biodiversity net gain. Surrey Wildlife Trust recognise this biodiversity net gain and confirm that it meets the Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development Guidance.
- 7.7.4 In respect of ecology, the Surrey Wildlife trust raise no objection subject to conditions to agree sensitive lighting, protection of existing ecology and further biodiversity enhancements including the implementation of the Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan with associated planting plans.

## **7.8 Energy and Sustainability**

- 7.8.1 The applicant has submitted an Energy Strategy for the site and the strategy sets out that the proposed buildings will be designed to meet energy targets set out by the Building Regulations Approved Document Part L2A and the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'Very Good'.
- 7.8.2 The strategy includes the following principles: high insulation standards, high-performance glazing to minimize heat loss, good natural daylight provision, low g-value glass to reduce solar gain, a ventilation design to minimise requirements for active cooling, high efficiency heat pumps, low energy services distribution systems and lighting, site-wide automatic controls/building management systems to increase operational efficiency and adoption of photo voltaic panels at roof level.
- 7.8.3 Therefore, the officer notes a number of energy demand reduction measures are proposed for all the buildings on the site. The measures proposed include both passive design measures (such as architectural and building fabric optimisation) and active measures (such as energy efficient service design), as well the inclusion of renewable energy technologies. This approach is in line with the best practice to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

## **7.9 Other matters**

- 7.9.1 Given that the site lies outside the floodplain and given no objections are raised by the EA or Lead Local Flood Authority, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any flood risk (subject to condition) and complies with Policy DM10 of the CSDMP.
- 7.9.2 The application is not CIL liable because CIL only applies to residential or retail uses. Furthermore, in line with paragraph 56 of the NPPF planning obligations should only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. No such requirements have been identified.

7.9.3 The applicant has submitted an Air Quality Assessment. This assessment considers the potential impacts on local air quality impacts arising from the construction phases and operational phases of the proposed development and at chapter 8 identifies appropriate best practice mitigation measures. The Environmental Health Officer has considered the proposal and raises no objection in respect of air quality. On this basis it is considered appropriate to impose a condition to ensure compliance with the mitigation recommended at chapter 8 of the submitted an Air Quality Assessment.

## 8.0 VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

8.1 On the basis of the Green Belt inappropriateness and significant harm to openness identified in paragraph 7.3 above; and, other harm to the character of the area identified in paragraph 7.4 it is necessary to consider whether this overall harm can be outweighed. The applicant's main very special circumstances to justify the development are summarised below, the merits of each will be considered in turn and then in combination:

- (i) Economic contribution and prestige.
- (ii) Employment provision and the wider benefits including education and training.
- (iii) Need for the development and lack of alternative sites.
- (iv) Design quality and innovation.
- (v) Community support and benefits including landscape enhancement and reuse of existing building.

### 8.2 (i) Economic contribution and prestige

8.2.1 The NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development of which there are three dimensions i.e. economic, social and environmental. The economic role is *'to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.'* [NPPF Paragraph 8]

In order to deliver a strong and competitive economy the NPPF, at paragraph 80, states the following:

*Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.*

8.2.2 Sustainable economic growth is important locally and nationally, the Government's Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future - sets out a vision to drive productivity improvements across the UK. It identifies a number of Grand Challenges facing all nations and sets out a delivery programme to make the UK a leader in *[inter alia]* future mobility for the UK transport system.

8.2.3 The applicant considers this proposal to be consistent with this national, regional and local economic policy for the reasons summarised below:

- The proposal is not aspirational, the applicant is a proven and known entity with very clear proposals which will be comprehensively brought forward with a sound level of certainty. The GMC has already developed collaborative working relationships with major companies in the UK and overseas. The GMC is a well-established brand with established presence in the automotive sector. Its impact will also be positively felt locally as the use of goods and services from local businesses as well as bringing a vacant site back into full use.
- The GMC is a business with a rich heritage with an extensive network of reliant supply chain business, both up and down stream of the group. The business has a proven track record of producing exemplar technical solutions which ultimately have been utilised in mainstream manufacturing processes and high street automotive products. GMC is dedicated to using their specialist automotive knowledge to develop 21st century solutions to increase vehicle performance through light-weighting and energy efficiency, both enhancing existing methods of mobility, but also looking for new ways to support and provide mobility in the future. A good example of this is the recent development of the 'Motive' autonomous vehicle which is a concept vehicle looking to harness AI technology and address modern issues surrounding personal transportation, logistics 'last-mile' delivery. GMC has also developed formula 1 technologies such as composite lightweight materials which have successfully been integrated into low cost mainstream motor vehicles and electric vehicle technologies. Here the materials require less energy to produce and also offer energy savings during usage in vehicles.
- The GMC also produce the T.50 super car which is designed to showcase the very best of British automotive engineering. Aside from the prestige of a British design and built supercar, the production of the supercar has and continues to act as a springboard for advancing new automotive technologies that will go on to influence and answer existing automotive transport / mobility challenges.
- The GMC has a full 'order book' with customers from all over the world purchasing their technologies including OEM (Original equipment manufacturer) for vehicle manufactures as well as Government and Non-Government organisations. The Group has a sound economic base, seeing a year on year increase in gross margin rising from 47% in 2018 to 68% in 2019, with turnover for 2019 at £11m of which £10m was generated via automotive design services & £1m from Government grants.
- The applicant is of local origin looking for larger premises to become its headquarters to sustain the growth of the organisation. Local staff will be retained with a local move as well as the expansion of the business as it is given opportunity to fulfil its vision.

8.2.4 The officer notes the applicant's ability to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century solutions which fit within one of the Government identified 'grand challenges of the future' in this case future mobility within the UK Transport System while also meeting the needs for a low carbon future. These economic benefits which are local, regional, national and international carry significant weight and are welcomed. The proposal allows a British business opportunity to invest, expand and adapt within the current market and additionally the showcasing of British talent and British produced products on a national and international stage is also of benefit. It is considered that the proposal will contribute toward building a strong, responsive and competitive economy to appropriately support growth, innovation and improved productivity. This proposal is considered to support the Government objective to promote Britain as a global leader in driving innovation and this will also support economic growth within Surrey

Heath, the wider region and nationally. These future challenges are also likely to become even more important in future years and so taking all these matters into consideration significant weight must be given to this circumstance in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 80 of the NPPF.

### **8.3 (ii) Employment provision and the wider benefits including education and training**

- 8.3.1 The applicant states the development would eventually have up to approximately 265 total employees working at the site once complete. This direct job creation would be up to 145 new jobs in addition to the 120 existing jobs. In terms of breakdown of skills, the employment created from this proposal will be primarily technical with engineering being required up to approximately 40% of the new jobs created. Technicians and manufacturing staff, both skilled and semi-skilled will be the next biggest grouping at 35% and the remaining 25% a mixture of financial, administrative and support service employees. The applicant also states that employment would be created during construction with a preference for local builders and contractors and indirect employment as a result of increased expenditure on local goods and services as well as using local companies for ongoing internal facilities maintenance.
- 8.3.2 In addition to the new permanent skilled and semi-skilled job roles created, there is the need to ensure a pipeline of new talent into the applicant's business and the wider automotive engineering and advance technologies sector. The applicant already has an apprenticeship scheme run in conjunction with Brooklands College, as well as providing placements for undergraduates and postgraduates from Surrey University. The applicant confirms that the proposal as a larger facility with a greater capacity for production would have the subsequent effect of enhancing existing industrial placements, as well as being able to increase the number of individuals whom may benefit from them.
- 8.3.3 Supplementary to the existing educational programme set out above, is the applicant's (Professor Gordon Murray) personal ambition to establish a technical collage which will be directly linked to the company and embedded within the working facility itself. Professor Murray has already established a charitable trust which he intends to use as the basis to fund the development of this technical college that will provide students with an education space for students and existing employees to share ideas and experiences and to further education in automotive and applied technology, as well as technical applicants with education in artisan automotive trades.
- 8.3.4 The applicant's justification is further supported by evidence provided by the Council's Economic Development Officer (EDO). Namely, research shows that each filled job in Surrey Heath contributes around £55,775 to the UK economy in GVA (Gross Value Added). Thus, the direct employment from this proposal could amount to £14.8 million to the UK economy, of which there would inevitably be knock on benefits to the Borough and region by virtue of indirect job creation and economic growth. The EDO considers that the proposal is fully supported by the Council's Economic Development Strategy and the officer notes that it is one of the Council's aspirations to promote apprenticeships and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths skills in the area and to enhance the links between employers and local education providers.
- 8.3.5 The EDO also states that economically, the proposal would be a welcome addition to Surrey Heath securing 120 existing jobs and creating a further 145. This British business has a history of producing innovative electric and autonomous vehicles and therefore is at the forefront of the next stage of global car production requirements for 2030, as well as the proposals considering its impact on the environment. This high profile investment will have global reach and will support further the Boroughs Inward Investment programme. The new jobs would add a further British employer to the Borough.

8.3.6 Policy CP8 of the CSDMP seeks to provide up to 7,500 new jobs for the period up to 2027 and the proposal would support this. It is therefore considered that the employment opportunities weigh significantly in favour of the proposal, in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 80 of the NPPF.

#### **8.4 (iii) Need for the development and lack of alternative sites**

8.4.1 Summarised below is the applicant reasoning for why new accommodation is needed in this location, why specialist bespoke accommodation is needed and why no other alternatives exist:

- Due to the businesses steady growth, this has resulted in a need for more manufacturing and office space, the Company's current leased holdings are beginning to limit operational capacity. The current site is too small to redevelop and is subject to a restrictive leasehold. The business has already acquired short term leased light industrial units approximately twenty minutes travel from its current headquarters but having the workforce split across two sites, some distance from each other is not ideal.
- The core requirements for the applicant is to find a site which can provide a minimum of 14,000sqm light industrial office & manufacturing space, a low density site with landscaping and green space for employees to enjoy while providing a campus style development within a South East location along the M3 corridor. Furthermore, given the long term ambitions of the applicant for this site, a security of tenure (freehold) is particularly important as well as a local site to retain the existing workforce.
- The applicant acknowledges that there is a great deal of light industrial space along the M3 corridor, however, it is noted that the majority of these sites are designed for distribution and haulage with office space generally limited at these sites. Sites which do have sufficient office space present a difficulty of not having sufficient manufacturing space. Furthermore, re-development opportunities on existing light industrial parks big enough to accommodate the applicant, typically require the adoption of multiple short term leases and were not available for anything over 25yrs making the investment a significant risk for the applicant. Freehold is therefore a preference for the applicant due to the Company's ambition for sustainable growth, but also as a way to ensure the large investment required to develop and construct a campus facility is low risk.
- During the applicant's search they found two other similar sites which met the core requirements. One at Longmoor in Hampshire, a former MOD shunting yard and the former film studio site at Longcross just north of the Windlesham site. Desktop studies were conducted on all three sites for comparison and the application site was a stronger and more suitable fit given the core requirements set out above particularly in the context of the previous successful planning application (see paragraph 3 above) for a similar proposal. On this basis, there is no other site within the applicant's catchment area for staff, M3 corridor and international transport links that offers a viable economic alternative.

- 8.4.2 Turning to the use of the existing building on site, the applicant sets out that the existing 'molecule' building (the former BOC HQ) is a bespoke building designed primarily for office use (with some storage and underground car parking). The applicant explains that given its bespoke design as an office building, the molecule building can be reused for office use, but it is not suitable for production or R&D, for which bespoke buildings are required. The officer has also visited the molecule building and notes its irregular design with narrow corridors leading to smaller workspaces off the main centre. The applicant therefore proposes to use the molecule building for primarily office related uses, such as some office based secondary R&D and design workshops. That said the applicant is very clear that the primary R&D facility must be positioned alongside the production and prototyping areas in the southern part of the site. Therefore, and what is less clear, is the longer term future of the molecule building and why the wider office type uses of the applicant's business cannot be incorporated within the molecule building.
- 8.4.3 The applicant has also stated, he is also proposing to use the molecule building as an education facility, including additional meeting and display / exhibition and community spaces. The officer is particularly concerned about the aspirational nature and limited explanation for how these ancillary business uses, community and education uses within the molecule building will operate in the longer term. At this stage it has not been explained in sufficient detail how this building can be protected from future severance from the wider site if the molecule building becomes surplus to requirements particularly as the need for educational facilities and community uses has not been robustly demonstrated. Likewise, it also hasn't been demonstrated why the proposed office functions associated with this proposal cannot all (or partly) be incorporated within the molecule building. The officer does not consider that the future of the molecule building has been secured or explained in a way that offers a long-term viable use for this existing building. This is of concern and one which weighs against the proposal. The planning history of this site is noted but this application must stand up to scrutiny on its own individual merits and the Green Belt tests represent a high bar which needs to be passed. Given the purpose built nature of the southern buildings and the more secondary nature of the molecule building sited further away and detached from the campus of the south, there is concern that this northern part of the site may be released as surplus to the business in the future, if the community uses and educational uses run at a loss or demand declines. The officer has approached the applicant for further clarity on this point and an update will be provided at the committee.
- 8.4.4 That said the wider economic contribution, employment provision, education, training, need for the development and lack of alternative sites with potential for community support benefits do carry weight and are important considerations in the wider balancing of the Very Special Circumstances (VSC) as set out at paragraph 8.8 below. Therefore, it is recommended that prior to the submission of the Reserved Matters application, the applicant submits a detailed business, education and community plan for the molecule building for agreement. This should set out and robustly demonstrate how the aspirations of the longer term use of this molecule building will be viable financially and also how a continued pipeline of demand can be demonstrated. The report must also articulate how all the primary office functions of the applicant's business cannot be incorporated into the molecule building. Additionally, given the weight attached to the educational and community benefits that the proposal delivers (if proved to be viable), and the wider VSC which is to be considered in the round at paragraph 8.8 below, it is also appropriate to impose a planning condition to prevent the sub-division of the site to protect the finely balanced arguments for the VSC. Without the molecule building and the education and community benefits it delivers secured, the finely balanced assessment of VSC are at risk.
- 8.4.5 Therefore, as part of building a strong and competitive economy, paragraph 8 of the NPPF encourages business growth, innovation and improved productivity, it is clear from the evidence submitted, that a thorough and robust assessment of alternative sites and the existing facilities has been undertaken and there is no other currently suitable to support the applicant's business. In addition splitting up the facilities across multiple sites would also be fundamentally at odds with the applicant's own business model to develop advances in automotive technologies and sustainable modes of transport on one campus site. While

there is some concern about the use of the existing molecule building and its future use, subject to the planning conditions as set out above, the officer considers that on the basis of the information submitted, the applicant's need arguments and lack of alternatives weigh in favour of the proposal.

## **8.5 (iv) Design quality and innovation**

8.5.1 The applicant explains that a high standard of design has been applied to this proposal and indeed the proposal is a bespoke design for a specific end-user and not a generic industrial building. The applicant explains that their business is recognised for its high quality of design and has been reflected in the buildings from which it is to operate as part of the company ethos and branding; consequently, the design and materials used must be of a high quality. Furthermore, it is accepted that the facilities here are required to inspire and promote collaborative and innovative thinking and whilst an industrial unit within a business park may meet a functional need, it is typically not an inspirational location to encourage creative and original thought.

8.5.2 It is considered that high quality design is not limited to the desirable needs of an applicant but has wider importance for the environment and in any event, should be a pre-requisite of any proposal, particularly a development of this size. The NPPF requires good design and that securing high design and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations and includes how new development integrates into the natural, built and historic environment.

8.5.3 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raises the standard of design more generally in the area. Whilst the individual architecture of building 2 is of high quality and this is acknowledged by the Urban Design Officer, the buildings still have a degree of visual prominence which impacts upon the openness of the Green Belt. This is because the primary indicator of harm to openness is an assessment of size. Similarly a well designed and energy efficient building should be a pre-requisite of any development of this size and so cannot be said to outweigh Green Belt harm. Whilst, therefore, the applicant's commercial needs for an iconic building and an environment which facilitates thinking is understood it is considered that this carries only limited weight in favour of the proposal.

## **8.6 (v) Community support and benefits including landscape enhancement and reuse of existing building.**

8.6.1 According to the applicant the feedback (48 socially distanced drop in sessions with 204 individuals) from the consultation event was that the majority of local residents were supportive of the development proposals and pleased to see the site in active use again. The applicant also explains that primarily the heritage facility is for invited visitors, however, it would also be open to members of the public and local community to visit on a limited number of days per year. The applicant explains in the Design and Access Statement that it is highly likely that employees who operate a social committee and will organise charitable events and accordingly will seek a great deal of engagement with the local community. To date and since purchasing the site in February 2020, the applicant has confirmed that a dialogue has already begun with the Windlesham Parish Council's Pram Race Committee and an undertaking to ensure the Pram Race has use of the site in the same way as before has been given. The applicant also explains that, other areas of community support and focus such as The Field of Remembrance would also become a focus for the Company to enhance its links with the local population as there is a strong desire to become an integral part of the Windlesham community. The applicant says there is also likely to be other direct community interaction as GMG settles into the site, but what form this takes will largely be dependent on what appetite there is within the community to make use of the former BOC site in a mutually beneficial way such as community open days, fetes, and similar events.

- 8.6.2 By bringing the community and corporate activities to the site, it could be argued that the increased activity here is not a Green Belt benefit at all as rather it would further urbanise the site by virtue of the increased comings and goings, and so be more damaging to the Green Belt. It is therefore considered on the basis of the information provided only limited weight ought to be given to the community benefits.
- 8.6.3 The site is currently a mixture of formal gardens laid out in a parkland manner and the larger meadow type grassland area. The applicant explains how they would seek to retain and renovate the formal gardens and lawns including the historic walled garden and orchard. The larger grassland meadow would be used to develop the new proposed scheme but areas of landscape lost due to this development would be mitigated via enhancements to other areas of the property, with additional individual and group planting of trees and the re-introduction of suitable lowland acid grass land to enhance the biodiversity of the site but also to ensure it is in keeping with historic common grass lands prior to 20th Century agricultural improvements. Where the existing grassland has been uncut and unmanaged recently, further restoration would be carried out to remove invasive species and to implement a regular management through regular cutting for silage. However, the officer considers that landscape and biodiversity enhancements should be an expectation with any application of this size and so providing this cannot be said to be unique or very special. In this instance the landscape enhancement would be mostly site contained and so benefits to the wider community for enjoyment of this landscape, for recreation or otherwise, would not be felt. It must also be noted that land is designated as Green Belt land irrespective of its landscape quality and so improving a landscape cannot somehow then be used as an argument to justify development. It is therefore considered that landscape enhancement carries very limited weight in support of the proposal.
- 8.6.4 As discussed above, the applicant sets out their intentions to incorporate the 'Molecule Building' as of the group HQ and it is proposed to use parts of it as a technical training college and other parts as a flexible working space that could be of use to the community for uses ranging from large or small group meetings, adult learning facilities, hustings and polling station usage. Due to the existing state of the molecule building, the applicant has confirmed that it is not possible to re-develop this portion of the site first. As such the applicant advises that it is imperative that they are allowed to develop the southern aspect of the site first, which in turn will generate income to ensure the sustainable re-development of the Molecule Building. The time taken to establish Company operations in the southern part of the site will also enable more opportunity for the company and the community to work together to understand what company needs exist for the building and how best it can also serve the wider community. In the officer's opinion the eventual retention and refurbishment of the main building is desirable. However, for all of the main building's architectural merits it is not statutory or locally listed and neither is it a community asset that is essential to retain in the Borough. Furthermore, and most importantly, the future retention of the main building does not in turn justify the quantum of new proposed development in the Green Belt. Again this carries very limited weight in the support of the proposal.

## **8.8 In combination consideration of (i) – (v)**

- 8.8.1 Of the very special circumstances presented by the applicant limited weight can be given to (iv) Design quality and innovation and v) Community support and benefits including landscape enhancement and reuse of existing building. Moderate weight can be given to (iii) Need for the development and lack of alternative sites. However, significant weight can be given to (i) Economic contribution and prestige; and, (ii) Employment provision and the wider benefits including education and training.
- 8.8.2 Whilst alone (i) - (v) does not justify the development, in the officer's opinion the combined weight of these very special circumstances marginally outweigh the significant harm to the Green Belt and other harm. It is considered that the applicant's contribution to the local, regional and national economy while according with the Governmental ambitions for

*“Building a Britain Fit for the future”* carries substantial weight. The proposal focuses on British jobs in the design and engineering sectors on an international and national stage. The economic benefits of a British company in Surrey Heath are insulated from many potential negative effects arising from Brexit and this business continues to grow despite the international impact of a global pandemic. The GMC group sits within growth sections of the automotive industry where finding sustainable solutions to future mobility issues are identified as one of the “Grand Challenges” facing all nations and the Government is very keen to see the UK as a global leader in this field. These factors tip the balance in favour of support. In coming to this difficult conclusion regard has been had to whether permitting this development would set a precedent in the Green Belt, or in the event that the applicant vacated the site result in future development that would be even more harmful.

8.8.3 However, it is considered that the proposal is genuinely unique and so other developments elsewhere in the Green Belt would still have to be considered on their own merits being subject to the same stringent Green Belt control with assessment of their own unique circumstances. In respect of the applicant’s commitment to the site, it must be borne in mind that the applicant has already invested significantly into this development and so the likelihood of the applicant leaving the site in the short term is unlikely. It is also acknowledged that this is not a speculative application, the applicant is a high profile public figure who runs a successful and well-established business looking for a consolidated headquarters for his growing company to meet the challenges of the future and continue to be a successful organisation. Even if the applicant did sell up and vacate the site, then the nature of the development would only lend itself to other R&D companies of a similar business model so potentially bringing comparable benefits to the Borough. It is nevertheless necessary and reasonable to add an element of additional control by imposing conditions restricting the uses to office / light industry only to ensure the integrity of the Borough’s Green Belt would be retained.

## **9.0 ARTICLE 2(3) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2012 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER**

In assessing this application, the officer have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included the following:

- a) Provided or made available pre-application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.
- c) Have negotiated and accepted amendments to the scheme to resolve identified problems with the proposal and to seek to foster sustainable development.
- d) Have proactively communicated with the applicant through the process to advise progress, timescale or recommendation.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

10.1 The proposal by reason of the new buildings, land raising, parking and the test road, would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with its purposes. By association, the development would also cause harm to the existing rural, natural and undeveloped character of the area. The development would therefore conflict with policies CP1, CP2 and DM9 of the CSDMP.

However, in the officer's opinion the in-combination weight of the very special circumstances, and in particular the economic arguments, are also significant and, on balance, outweigh the harm and justify this development. The application is therefore recommend approval.

## 11.0 RECOMMENDATION

REFER to the Secretary of State for approval subject to the following conditions:-

1. Approval of the details of the layout, scale, appearance, access and the landscaping of the site under the outline application (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development, subject to the outline permission, is commenced.

(a) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority within three years of the date of this permission.

(b) The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and to comply with Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2010 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order) and Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (2) of the Planning and the Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2. The development hereby permitted for the full planning application shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

3. The full planning application (hereinafter known as the detailed development) shall be built in accordance with the approved plans all as listed in the 'Planning Drawings Issue Sheet' reference 1714-P as received 15.09.2020 plus additional drawing nos. LD-DET-652 P01, LD-DET-653 P01 and GMDW-ARUP-ZZ-XX-SK-C-0001 P01, GMDW-ARUP-ZZ-XX-SK-C-0002 P01, GMDW-ARUP-ZZ-XX-DR-C-2160 P01 and GMDW-ARUP-ZZ-XX-DR-C-2150 P01 unless the prior written approval has been obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning and as advised in ID.17a of the Planning Practice Guidance.

4. No development shall take place until details and samples of the external materials to be used in respect of the detailed application hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall be carried out using only the agreed materials.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

5. For the avoidance of doubt, the development hereby permitted shall be used for Class E(g) use as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order), and for no other use unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To retain control in the interests of the Green Belt, the character of the area and residential amenities and to comply with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies and the NPPF.

6. Notwithstanding the provisions of Part 3, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) the development (including existing buildings subject to the change of use) hereby approved shall not be converted to a residential use or any other use without the express permission in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over inappropriate changes of use and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Immediately prior to commencement of development, a survey of the site by an appropriately qualified ecologist shall be undertaken, to check for any new signs of badger sett construction, if any badger activity is detected a suitable course of action shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All other details hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the mitigation and enhancement measures set out in Section 5 of the applicant's Ecological Appraisal, authored by Land Use Consultants Ltd, dated August 2020 and any deep excavations left overnight should be provided with a ramped means of escape and stockpiles of soft materials shall be covered overnight to prevent badgers excavating new setts.

Reason: To comply with Policy CP14 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the NPPF.

8. Prior to occupation of development hereby permitted, a comprehensive lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This shall include details of all external lighting including appearance, manufacturer's specifications, automatic sensor controls and timers, hours of illumination and light spillage diagrams for the detailed application. A 'Sensitive Lighting Management Plan' should also be submitted and this should comply with the recommendations of the Bat Conservation Trusts' document entitled "Bats and Lighting in the UK - Bats and The Built Environment Series". The approved details shall be fully implemented prior to first occupation of new buildings, or with a phasing plan agreed by the Planning Authority, and thereafter there shall be no changes unless otherwise agreed.

Reason: To limit light pollution in the interests of the rural character of the area, residential amenities and nature conservation and to comply with Policies DM9 and CP14 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the NPPF.

9. The detailed application hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the submitted Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan and associated native planting plan, version P01, prepared by Land Use Consultants and dated August 2020 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To comply with Policy CP14 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the NPPF.

10. Prior to commencement of works and in accordance with paragraph 5.9.1 of the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment, a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement, to include details of drainage services, contractors facilities and a cross section through the No-Dig areas showing existing and proposed levels shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, prior to construction or ground work starting on site. Once agreed the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with the agreed details, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

11. A minimum of 7 working days before any development, including any works of demolition or site clearance, a pre-commencement meeting must be arranged with the Arboricultural Officer. The purpose of this meeting is to agree the extent of any facilitation or management tree works, tree and ground protection, demolition, storage of materials and the extent and frequency of Arboricultural site supervision. In all other regards the development shall proceed in accordance with the supplied BS5837:2012 - Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction compliant report prepared by S J Stephens Associates and dated 9 July 2020.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

12. Prior to occupation of the detailed development hereby approved, a detailed 15-20 year woodland management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Once agreed the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with the agreed details, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

13. Prior to occupation of the detailed development hereby approved full details of both hard and soft landscaping works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved, and implemented prior to first occupation. Once agreed, all hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and all plant material shall conform to BS3936:1992 Parts 1 - 5: Specification for Nursery Stock. Handling, planting and establishment of trees shall be in accordance with BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

14. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of heritage and to accord with Policy DM17 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. Prior to commencement of works hereby approved, details regarding what measures will be put in place to protect the recognised heritage assets which include the clock tower, orchard, walled garden and burial ground during the construction period. Once agreed the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with the agreed details, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To preserve heritage assets in accordance with Policy DM17 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

16. Prior to occupation of the detailed development hereby approved, a Heritage Site Management Plan which includes details of the clock tower, orchard, walled garden and burial ground and their short to long term management, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once agreed the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with the agreed details, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To preserve heritage assets in accordance with Policy DM17 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

17. Prior to occupation of building 1 the following details are to be provided to and agreed in writing by the LPA.

i) Proof that any plant installed on site has a BS 4142:14 Laeq rating level (LarTr) that does not exceed the background level L90 at a the nearest residential receptor.

ii) An assessment of the noise impact of internal combustion engine vehicles using the test track ensuring compliance with internal noise levels as detailed within BS 8233:14 and BS 4142:14.

Once agreed these details shall be retained as approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenities and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

18. Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation must not commence until sections 1 to 4 of this condition have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority in writing until condition 4 has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

#### 1. Site Characterisation

An investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
  - (a) human health,
  - (b) property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
  - (c) adjoining land,
  - (d) ground waters and surface waters,
  - (e) ecological systems,
  - (f) archaeological sites and ancient monuments;
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

## 2. Submission of Remediation Scheme

A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

## 3. Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme

If required the approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report (referred to in PPS23 as a validation report) that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

## 4. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 1, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 2, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 3.

## 5. Long Term Monitoring and Maintenance

If identified as being required, a monitoring and maintenance scheme to include monitoring the long-term effectiveness of the proposed remediation over a period of 10 years, and the provision of reports on the same must be prepared, both of which are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of the measures identified in that scheme and when the remediation objectives have

been achieved, reports that demonstrate the effectiveness of the monitoring and maintenance carried out must be produced, and submitted to the Local Planning Authority. This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory strategy is in place for addressing contaminated land, making the land suitable for the development hereby approved without resulting in risk to construction workers, future users of the land, occupiers of nearby land and the environment generally in accordance with Policies CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework

19. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the design of a surface water drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The design must satisfy the SuDS Hierarchy and be compliant with the national Non Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS, NPPF and Ministerial Statement on SuDS. The required drainage details shall include:

a) Evidence that the proposed final solution will effectively manage the 1 in 30 & 1 in 100 (+40% allowance for climate change) storm events, during all stages of the development. The final solution should follow the principles set out in the approved drainage strategy. Associated discharge rates and storage volumes shall be provided using maximum discharge rates as detailed in Table 3 'Proposed discharge rates for completed development' in the approved document: Drainage Statement - Issue 01, ARUP, 13th August 2020, reference: GMDW-ARUP-ZZ-XX-RP-0002.

b) Detailed drainage design drawings and calculations to include: a finalised drainage layout detailing the location of drainage elements, pipe diameters, levels, and long and cross sections of each element including details of any flow restrictions and maintenance/risk reducing features (silt traps, inspection chambers etc.).

c) A plan showing exceedance flows (i.e. during rainfall greater than design events or during blockage) and how property on and off site will be protected.

d) Details of drainage management responsibilities and maintenance regimes for the drainage system.

e) Details of how the drainage system will be protected during construction and how runoff (including any pollutants) from the development site will be managed before the drainage system is operational.

Reason: To ensure the design meets the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and the final drainage design does not increase flood risk on or off site.

20. Prior to the first occupation of the detailed development, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This must demonstrate that the drainage system has been constructed as per the agreed scheme (or detail any minor variations), provide the details of any management company and state the national grid reference of any key drainage elements (surface water attenuation devices/areas, flow restriction devices and outfalls).

Reason: To ensure the Drainage System is constructed to the National Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS.

21. The detailed development hereby permitted shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the mitigation measures outlined at section 8 of the submitted Air Quality Assessment, Issue 01, prepared by Ove Arup & Partners Ltd and dated August 2020 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To comply with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the NPPF.

22. Prior to first occupation of the detailed development hereby approved, the proposed highway improvements at the junction of Highams Lane with B386 Chertsey Road comprising the removal or cut-back of vegetation to improve visibility west of the junction and widening of the junction bellmouth shall be completed broadly in accordance with Arup's drawing no. GMDW-ARUP-ZZ-XX-DR-C-2160 P01 and subject to detailed design and Surrey County Council's full technical and road safety auditing requirements.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

23. No part of the development shall be commenced unless and until the proposed highway accesses to Highams Lane have been constructed and provided with 2.4 x 120m visibility splays in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the visibility splays shall be kept permanently clear of any obstruction over 1.05m high.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

24. During Phase 1 and Phase 2 construction of the development, a temporary bridleway crossing shall be provided broadly in accordance with Arup's junction layout drawing GMDW-ARUP-ZZ-XX-DR-C-2150 P01. This shall be revoked and the existing bridleway reinstated once the construction is finished.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

25. No development shall commence until a Construction Transport Management Plan, to include details of:
- (a) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors.
  - (b) loading and unloading of plant and materials.
  - (c) storage of plant and materials.
  - (d) vehicle routing taking account of any HGV restrictions and local schools.
  - (e) measures to prevent the deposit of materials on the highway.
  - (f) on-site turning for construction vehicles.
  - (g) hours of construction.

has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, after consultation with Highways England and the Surrey County Council Highway Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented during the construction of the development.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with Section 10 of the Highways Act 1980.

26. Prior to the occupation of the final build out, a Travel Plan shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Highways England and the Surrey County Council Highway Authority in accordance with the sustainable development aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and Surrey County Council's "Travel Plans Good Practice Guide". and then the approved Travel Plan shall be implemented prior to first occupation and thereafter retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with Section 10 of the Highways Act 1980.

27. The new building for Sales, Manufacturing & Heritage together with test road hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the approved plans for vehicles to be parked and for the loading and unloading of vehicles and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter the parking, loading and unloading, and turning areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

28. Detailed development

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until 15 parking spaces are provided with a fast charge socket (current minimum requirement: 7kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230 v AC 32 amp single phase dedicated supply) in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A further 15 parking spaces will be provided with power supply to provide additional fast charge sockets (passive provision).

Full build out

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until 29 parking spaces (10% of the total available parking spaces) are provided with a fast charge socket (current minimum requirement: 7kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230 v AC 32 amp single phase dedicated supply) in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A further 29 parking spaces will be provided with power supply to provide additional fast charge sockets (passive provision).

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

29. Detailed development

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until 20 cycle parking spaces are provided in a secure, covered storage facility and a further 6 cycle parking spaces provided for visitors.

## Full Build out

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until 72 cycle parking spaces are provided in a secure, covered storage facility and a further 8 cycle parking spaces provided for visitors.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

30. Buildings 1 and 3 hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for vehicles and cycles to be parked and for the loading and unloading of vehicles and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter the parking, loading and unloading, and turning areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

31. Buildings 1 and 3 hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until at least 10% of the available parking spaces are provided with a fast charge socket (current minimum requirement: 7kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230 v AC 32 amp single phase dedicated supply) in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A further 10% of the available parking spaces will be provided with power supply to provide additional fast charge sockets (passive provision).

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in compliance with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

32. Prior to the submission of the Reserved Matters application stage a detailed business, education and community plan for the Molecule building shall be submitted for approval by the LPA. The plan shall robustly include details of:

(1) - The financial viability of delivering and maintaining a community and educational facility over the longer term.

(2) - Demonstrate a longer term pipeline of demand for educational and community uses within this building.

(3) - How all the primary office functions of the applicant's business on site cannot be incorporated into the Molecule Building and why a new building is required.

Development cannot commence in respect to any outline matters until the business, education and community plan has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice the openness of the Green Belt or the finely balanced Very Special Circumstances arrived at in approving this application in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

33. The redline application site hereby approved shall not be subdivided, split up or occupied by multiple business without first applying for planning permission to approve such changes.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to not prejudice the openness of the Green Belt or the finely balanced Very Special Circumstances arrived at in approving this application in accordance with policy DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Informative(s)**

1. The applicant is advised that this permission is only pursuant to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and is advised to contact Building Control with regard to the necessary consents applicable under the Building Regulations and the effects of legislation under the Building Act 1984.
2. The decision has been taken in compliance with paragraphs 38-41 of the NPPF to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner. Please see the Officer's Report for further details.
3. In respect to the detailed Arboricultural Method Statement, this must also address the level differences between Highams Lane and the interior of the site. This must utilise geotechnical solutions such as air spade soil removal and grading, cellular confinement systems and permeable wearing surfaces.
4. The applicant is advised that in respect of foundation design vegetation related clay shrinkage subsidence has been reported in the area. Accordingly, suitable foundations should be provided (pile / pier and beam etc.) that will allow for future differential movement from potential desiccation of subsoil or indeed heave from the removal of significant trees which predate any agreed construction.
5. With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0800 009 3921.
6. Where a developer proposes to discharge groundwater into a public sewer, a groundwater discharge permit will be required. Groundwater discharges typically result from construction site dewatering, deep excavations, basement infiltration, borehole installation, testing and site remediation. Groundwater permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 020 8507 4890 or by emailing [wwriskmanagement@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:wwriskmanagement@thameswater.co.uk) Application forms should be completed on line via [www.thameswater.co.uk/wastewaterquality](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/wastewaterquality) Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991.

7. The applicant is reminded of Natural England's standing advice in respect of species protection and if any protected species are found on the site that the appropriate licence be obtained.
8. If proposed site works affect an Ordinary Watercourse, Surrey County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority should be contacted to obtain prior written Consent. More details are available at <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk>
9. If proposed works result in infiltration of surface water to ground within a Source Protection Zone the Environment Agency will require proof of surface water treatment to achieve water quality standards.
10. The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out any works on the highway. The applicant is advised that prior approval must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, or verge to form a vehicle crossover or to install dropped kerbs. Please see [www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-permits-and-licences/vehicle-crossovers-or-dropped-kerbs](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-permits-and-licences/vehicle-crossovers-or-dropped-kerbs)
11. The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out any works that may affect a drainage channel/culvert or watercourse. The applicant is advised that consent may be required under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. Please see [www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/flooding-advice](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/flooding-advice)
12. The developer is reminded that it is an offence to allow materials to be carried from the site and deposited on or damage the highway from uncleaned wheels or badly loaded vehicles. The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to recover any expenses incurred in clearing, cleaning or repairing highway surfaces and prosecutes persistent offenders. (Highways Act 1980 Sections 131, 148, 149).
13. When access is required to be 'completed' before any other operations, the Highway Authority may agree that surface course material and in some cases edge restraint may be deferred until construction of the development is complete, provided all reasonable care is taken to protect public safety.
14. The developer is advised that as part of the detailed design of the highway works required by the above conditions, the County Highway Authority may require necessary accommodation works to street lights, road signs, road markings, highway drainage, surface covers, street trees, highway verges, highway surfaces, surface edge restraints and any other street furniture/equipment.
15. The developer is advised that Public Bridleway 74 crosses the application site and it is an offence to obstruct or divert the route of a right of way unless carried out in complete accordance with appropriate legislation.
16. The proposed new southern access to the site would involve the relocation of the 40mph speed limit sign which may require a change to the Traffic Regulation Order and be subject to any other approvals. This would need to be done at the applicant's expense.

17. The S278 junction improvement works may require the removal of trees on highway land for which the applicant would need to submit a tree report for approval. This may require the applicant to pay the County Highway Authority the agreed Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) value of the trees to be removed.