



ITEM NUMBER:

9

PLANNING COMMITTEE DATE:

4 June 2025

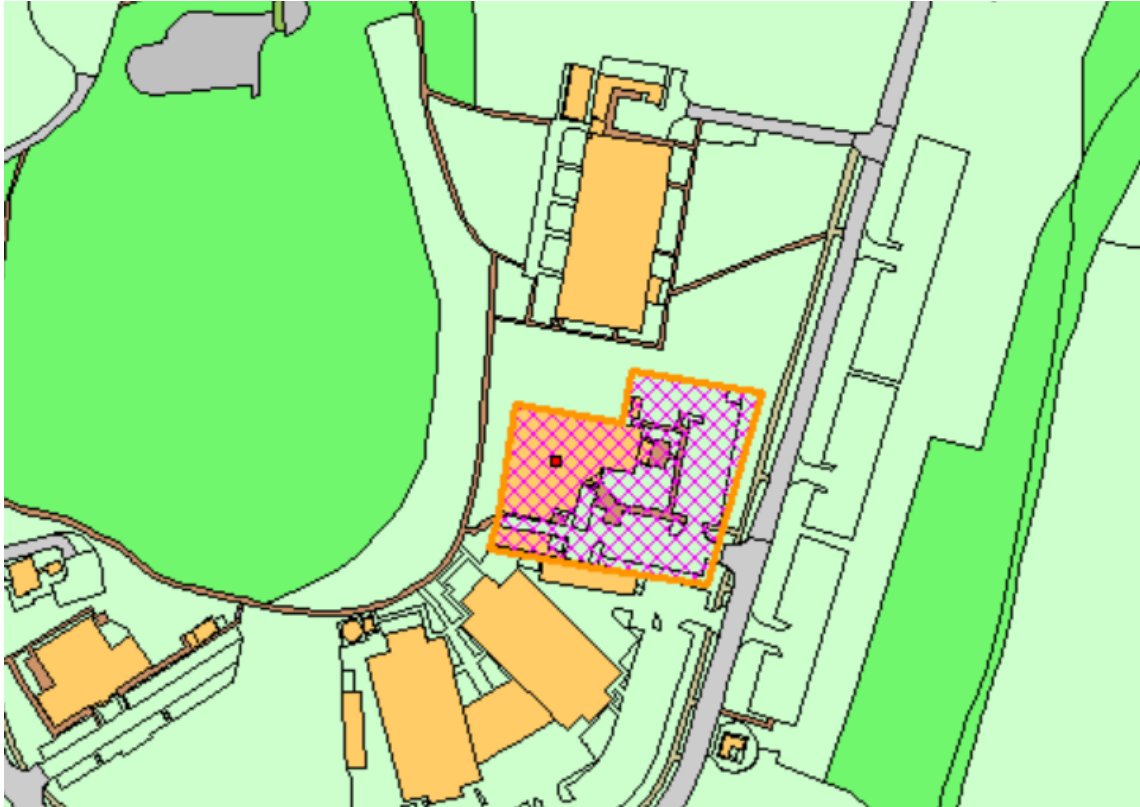
REFERENCE NUMBER:

UTT/25/0652/FUL

LOCATION:

**The Darwin Laboratory Building 900.
Chesterford Park
Little Chesterford
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB10 1XL**

SITE LOCATION PLAN:



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Organisation: Uttlesford District Council Date: 20 June 2025

PROPOSAL: Proposed Minor Works to Existing Building Entrance, including Replacement Lobby Structure and Canopy, Revised Parking Configuration and External Paving.

APPLICANT: N Staddon

AGENT: Mr Matt Brewer

EXPIRY DATE: 09 May 2025

EOT Expiry Date 05 June 2025

CASE OFFICER: Mr Ebenezer Che

NOTATION: Within Development Limits
Chesterford Park Research Station

REASON THIS APPLICATION IS ON THE AGENDA: Uttlesford District Council has land interest

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The application seeks planning permission for minor works to the existing building entrance which includes replacing the existing lobby structure and canopy and seeks to revise the existing parking configuration and external paving.
- 1.2** The proposals are appropriate in respect to their design and appearance and would not result in harm to amenities enjoyed by adjoining users or to the significance and setting of the character of the area.
- 1.3** The proposals have been assessed against the relevant policies contained within the Development Plan and the NPPF. It has been concluded that they comply and in accordance with these policies and guidance. In conclusion, it has been found that the proposals are acceptable and thus are recommended for approval subject to conditions.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Strategic Director of Planning be authorised to **GRANT** planning permission for the development subject to conditions in section 16 of this report

A) Conditions

3. **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION:**

- 3.1** The application site is within Chesterford Research Park. It is known as Building 900 (Darwin Building), and it is a purpose-built laboratory research facility built circa 2005. It is built over ground, first and second floor (plant room) comprising c.33,000 square feet gross internal area. Most recently the building has been solely occupied by AstraZeneca. Chesterford Research Park is a research and development park, located near Saffron Walden, within close reach of the M11 and A11, and is managed by Aviva Investors.
- 3.2** The Research Park offers high-standard laboratory and office spaces within a serene parkland setting.
- 3.3** The central building, known as the Nucleus, provides amenities such as meeting spaces, a restaurant, and fitness facilities. The Darwin building subject to this application is located approximately 500m from the Nucleus building. A driveway extends directly from the main road, leading up to the Darwin building. It has its own dedicated carpark and main entrance at the front, and delivery access to a service area on the side.
- 3.4** The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor does it contain any Listed Buildings or Locally Listed Buildings. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low risk from flooding).

4. **PROPOSAL**

- 4.1** The application seeks planning permission for proposed minor works to the existing building entrance, including replacement lobby structure and canopy, revised parking configuration and external paving. The proposed works include:
1. Replacement of the front entrance lobby, with a small footprint increase, and introduction of a canopy.
 2. Associated alterations to the pedestrian access, minor reconfiguration of existing car parking spaces.
 3. A section of the existing curtain walling to be converted to a door to facilitate access from a communal area internally to the grassed amenity space externally

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1** The development does not constitute 'EIA development' for the purposes of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

6. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- 6.1** There is a significant amount of planning history for the site and the surrounding area, however, none of which is particularly relevant to the proposals.

7. PREAPPLICATION ADVICE

- 7.1** No pre-application discussions were undertaken between the Applicant and the Council prior to the submission of the Application.

8. SUMMARY OF STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES

- 8.1** There is no requirement to consult statutory consultee as part of the assessment of this application.

9. PARISH COUNCIL

- 9.1** No comments were received at the time of the officer's assessment.

10. CONSULTEE RESPONSES

10.1 Environmental Health

- 10.1.1** No objections to the proposals.

10.2 ECC Highways:

- 10.2.1** No objections to the proposals.

11. REPRESENTATIONS

- 11.1** The application was notified by displaying a site notice and sending letters to adjoining and adjacent occupiers. No representations have been received at the time of this assessment.

12. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1** In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this decision has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework, The Development Plan and all other material considerations identified in the "Considerations and Assessments" section of the report. The

determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

12.2 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act requires the local planning authority in dealing with a planning application, to have regard to

(a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,;

(a) a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,

(b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and

(c) any other material considerations.

12.3 The Development Plan

12.1 Essex Minerals Local Plan (adopted July 2014)
Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2017)
Uttlesford District Local Plan (adopted 2005)
Felsted Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2020)
Great Dunmow Neighbourhood Plan (made December 2016)
Newport and Quendon and Rickling Neighbourhood Plan (made June 2021)
Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2019)
Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan (made July 2022)
Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan (made October 2022)
Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan (made December 2022)
Great & Little Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2023)

13. POLICY

13.1 National Policies

13.2 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

13.3 Uttlesford District Plan 2005

Policy S3 – Other Settlement Boundaries

Policy S5 - Chesterford Park Boundary

Policy GEN1- Access

Policy GEN2 – Design

Policy GEN4 - Good Neighbourliness

Policy GEN7 - Nature Conservation

Policy GEN8 - Vehicle Parking Standards

13.4 Neighbourhood Plan

There is not a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

13.5 Supplementary Planning Document or Guidance

Essex County Council Parking Standards (2009)
Uttlesford Local Residential Parking Standards (2013)
Uttlesford Interim Climate Change Policy (2021)
Uttlesford Design Code (2025)

14. CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

14.1 The issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- 14.2** **A) Principle of Development (Policy S3, S5, and the NPPF)**
 B) Design, Character and Appearance (Policies GEN2, & ENV1 and the NPPF)
 C) Neighbouring Amenity (Policies GEN2 & GEN4, and the NPPF)
 D) Vehicle Parking (Policy GEN8 and the NPPF)
 E) Biodiversity (Policy GEN7 and the NPPF)

14.3 A) Principle of development (Policy S3, S5, and the NPPF)

14.3.1 The site is located within the development limits of Little Chesterford where Policy S3 is applicable. Policy S3 states that planning permission development compatible with the settlement's character and countryside setting will be permitted within these boundaries.

14.3.2 The proposal falls within the boundary of the Chesterford Park Research and Development Site which is defined on the Proposals Map as a developed site in the countryside. Policy S5 states that facilities for research and development will be permitted within these boundaries if they are in accordance with this Plan.

14.3.3 The proposed development is for minor works to the existing building entrance, and in terms of size, scale and the location, the proposal is considered not result in detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the area, in this case, the proposal is therefore acceptable in principle and comply with Policy S3 and S5 of the Local Plan.

14.4 B) Design, Character and Appearance (Policies GEN2, & ENV1 and the NPPF)

14.4.1 In terms of design policy, good design is central to the objectives of both National and Local planning policies. The NPPF requires policies to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for the wider area and development schemes. These criteria are reflected in Policy GEN2 (Design) of the adopted Local Plan which also requires that development is compatible with the scale, form, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings.

14.4.2 Replacement of the front entrance lobby:

- 14.4.3** The proposed entrance alterations have been carefully designed to enhance both the functionality and aesthetic quality of the building while maintaining consistency with its existing character. The changes focus on creating a more welcoming and legible arrival experience through a thoughtful approach to scale, materiality, and landscaping.
- 14.4.4** The entrance area is being enlarged with a curved sliding doors lobby arrangement to improve circulation, enhance arrival experience, and provide a more functional lobby arrangement. This includes better zoning within the entrance to reduce draught ingress and improve comfort for occupants and visitors.
- 14.4.5** A new canopy is proposed over the entrance doors to provide shelter while preserving the integrity of the existing architectural composition. This canopy does not extend across the full width of the façade, ensuring that the building's proportions remain balanced while also enhancing the legibility of the main entry point. The extension is limited to the ground floor, aligning with the existing structure to ensure the alterations remain appropriate in scale and proportion.
- 14.4.6** Alterations to the pedestrian access & parking layout.
- 14.4.7** The applicant's intention is to create a clear, well-defined pedestrian pathway that leads directly from the driveway and parking areas to the entrance, enhancing wayfinding and emphasising the entry point. Accessible parking spaces are relocated closer to the entrance lobby, improving accessibility and convenience for all users
- 14.4.8** Minor alterations are proposed externally to respond to the new entrance arrangements to the building. This includes repositioning and new paving to the access path to the entrance, and associated reconfiguration of the car parking to respond to the path and delivery disabled parking spaces closer to the building. The parking surfacing will be completed to match that existing, with a new paved path providing direct access to the new entrance.
- 14.4.9** The external changes will complement the new entrance structure, enhance the entry arrangements to the building and improve accessibility. The proposals will maintain an appropriate setting to the building and improve the appearance of the site. The proposals retain the existing level of car parking and disabled parking in a configuration that responds to the new access arrangements to the building and delivering spaces closer to the building entrance.
- 14.4.10** Summary:
- 14.4.11** The proposals are in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing building, the surrounding locality and the street scene. The proposals comply with Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford District Local Plan and the NPPF.

14.5 C) Neighbouring Amenity (Policies GEN2 & GEN4, and the NPPF)

14.5.1 Policy GEN2 and GEN4 of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted unless its design meets a variety of given criteria, including that it minimises the environmental impact on neighbouring properties by appropriate mitigating measures and that it will not have a materially adverse effect on neighbouring users.

14.5.2 Due consideration has been given regarding the potential impact the proposal would have on the amenities enjoyed by adjoining occupiers in relation to noise and disturbance.

14.5.3 The works due to their location and nature will not have any impact on amenities of surrounding occupiers, the proposal accords with Policy GEN2 and GEN4.

14.6 D) Vehicle Parking (Policy GEN8 and the NPPF)

14.6.1 Policy GEN8 of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted unless the number, design and layout of vehicle parking places proposed is appropriate for the location as set out in the Supplementary Planning guidance 'Vehicle Parking Standards'.

14.6.2 The proposals retain the existing level of car parking and disabled parking in a configuration that responds to the new access arrangements to the building and delivering spaces closer to the building entrance.

14.6.3 This is a betterment to the existing conditions and thus in accordance with the local requirements of policy GEN8 of the adopted local plan.

14.7 E) Biodiversity (Policy GEN7 and the NPPF)

14.7.1 Policy GEN2 of the Local Plan applies a general requirement that development safeguards important environmental features in its setting whilst Policy GEN7 seeks to protect wildlife, particularly protected species and requires the potential impacts of the development to be mitigated.

14.7.2 The proposals are below the threshold for BNG assessment and will not negatively impact on existing biodiversity across the site, and the proposal will enhance the sustainability of the building through the delivery of a new entrance with improved insulation properties.

15. ADDITIONAL DUTIES

15.1 Public Sector Equalities Duties

15.1.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender

reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers.

- 15.1.2** The Committee must be mindful of this duty inter alia when determining all planning applications. In particular, the Committee must pay due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 15.1.3** Due consideration has been made to The Equality Act 2010 during the assessment of the planning application, no conflicts are raised

15.2 Human Rights

- 15.2.1** There may be implications under Article 1 (protection of property) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the First Protocol regarding the right of respect for a person's private and family life and home, and to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions; however, these issues have been taken into account in the determination of this application

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1** The proposed development is appropriate in respect to design in that they would respect and be in keeping with the character and appearance of the Chesterford Research Park and the existing building. The proposals would neither result in significant harm to the area or upon the amenities enjoyed by adjoining occupiers.

- 16.2** The proposals comply with the relevant policies contained within the development plan and as such it is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions suggested below.

- 1** The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2** The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as set out in the Schedule.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt as to the nature of the development hereby permitted, to ensure development is carried out in accordance with the approved application details, to ensure that the development is carried out with the minimum harm to the local environment, in accordance with the Policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) as shown in the Schedule of Policies.