

## Item 03

## Application No. IP/25/00097/FPI3

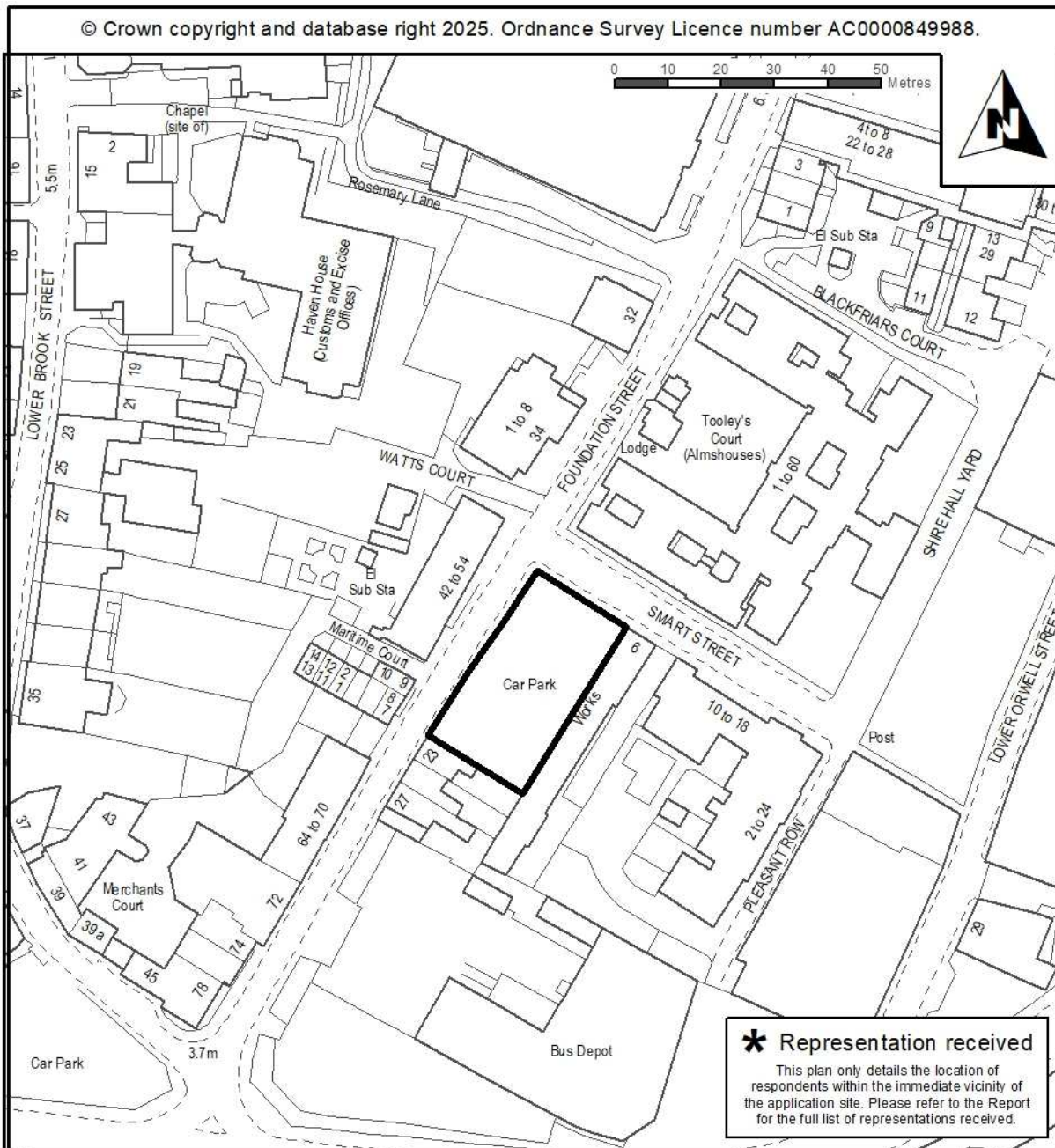
**Ward:** ALEXANDRA

**Proposal:** Continued use of land on temporary basis as short-stay public car park (further to planning permission ref: IP/22/00085/FP13).

**Address:** Car Park, 15 - 21 Foundation Street,

**Applicant:** Ipswich Borough Council

**Agent:** Mr Michael Newsham



**25/00097/FPI3 - Car Park, 15 - 21 Foundation Street**

## **Recommendation**

### **Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions (briefly):-**

1. Use shall cease on or before 3rd April 2027.
2. Short stay parking only (maximum 5 hours)
3. Disability parking signage to be retained.
4. Parking and manoeuvring areas to be maintained as per submitted plans for the duration of the development.
5. Secure cycle and PTW parking to be retained.

**The application is submitted under the provisions of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, in that the applicant is Ipswich Borough Council, and the application site is on land owned by Ipswich Borough Council.**

## **1. Proposal**

- 1.1. The application site relates to an existing pay and display car park at the junction of Foundation Street and Smart Street, with access from Smart Street. The car park has 21 car parking spaces including 1 disabled space with vehicular access from Smart Street.
- 1.2. The site is located within the Town Centre boundary and IP-One Area, as well as within the Central Car Parking Core. It is also located within IP-One Opportunity Area B – Merchant Quarter. The site is outside of any Air Quality Management Areas or buffer zones. The site is part of a wider site allocated for residential redevelopment (under site allocation reference IP011c). Allocation IP011c has an indicative capacity for 7 dwellings, whilst IP011a has 18 dwellings and IP011b has 56 dwellings. The adopted Local Plan Appendix 8 Housing Trajectory has site IP011c coming forward in 2028/29.
- 1.3. The application seeks the continued use as a short stay car park for a further period of two years.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. The current car park has been in use for public, short stay, pay and display car parking since 2014 (14/00099/FPI3 refers). The most recent consent, ref. IP/22/00085/FPI3, granted a short-stay public car park for a two-year period which expired on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The reason for a temporary permission was so as not to constrain the future redevelopment of the site, given the site allocation.
- 2.2. The existing car park has a black-top surface, which is fully marked out with regard to spaces and running lanes. Ticket machines and associated signage benefit from floodlighting and the car park is bounded with chain-link fencing on its Smart Street and Foundation Street frontages. The car park includes a single space suitable for people with a registered disability as well as a shelter to accommodate four cycles and two powered two-wheelers.
- 2.3. The most recent planning permission included a condition requiring submission of details for the installation of four electric vehicle (EV) charging points. Whilst details were submitted, and the condition discharged (ref 22/00909/CON) in respect of this, the EV charging points have not been installed. The applicant reports that whilst it had been intended to provide the charging points, the application now submitted is on the basis of the existing facilities without the provision of electric vehicle charging points. This is because, given plans for the redevelopment of the site in the future in line with the Ipswich Local Plan, and in particular given the small size of the car park, it is not financially feasible to

provide these as the income generated is insufficient to justify the costs; the car park has only 21 spaces.

### **3. Consultations**

3.1 Public and statutory consultation was undertaken between 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Four adjacent properties were notified of the application, in addition to a press notification, and site notice. The application was advertised on the IBC website in accordance with the Ipswich Statement of Community Involvement 2024.

3.2. Suffolk CC Highways – No objection, with requirement that a condition is implemented to maintain parking and manoeuvring areas as indicated in submitted plans and for no other purpose.

IBC Environmental Protection – No comment received.

### **3.3. Representations**

None received.

### **4. Policy**

#### National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)  
National Planning Practice Guidance

#### Local Planning Policy

#### Ipswich Core Strategy and Policies DPD Review (2022)

Policies DM3 (Air Quality), DM12 (Design and Character); DM18 (Amenity), DM21 (Transport and Access in New Developments), DM22 (Car & Cycle Parking in New Developments).

#### Ipswich Site Allocations and Policies DPD (2022)

IP-One Opportunity Area B – Merchant Quarter.  
Policies SP1 (The protection of allocated sites); SP26 (Housing allocations in the IP-One area); SP34 (Town Centre Car Parking in the IP-One area).

#### Other Planning Guidance

Cycling Strategy SPD (2016)  
Suffolk Guidance for Parking – Technical Guidance (2023)  
Low Emissions SPD (2021)  
Ipswich Parking Strategy (March 2019)

### **5. Planning Assessment**

#### Principle of Development

5.1 Policy SP1 of the Site Allocations and Policies DPD states that allocated sites will be safeguarded for the uses for which they have been allocated and that the Council will only permit alternative uses if they are compatible with other plan objectives; do not harm the overall plan strategy; and where the applicant can demonstrate that the allocated use is both no longer needed to meet planned development needs; and not viable or deliverable for the allocated use and likely to remain so during the plan period.

5.2 The current plan period is up to 2031 and the site represents an important site within the context of the wider town centre area. The site is part of a wider site allocated for residential redevelopment (allocation reference IP011c).

### Principle of extending the temporary use for a further period

- 5.3. Across the Borough, a number of temporary car parks have been granted consent, the majority of these are on development sites that have stalled. Temporary car parks make good use of sites, which would otherwise remain vacant.
- 5.4. The Council approaches town centre car parking with the twin aims of supporting the economy of the town centre and limiting congestion, through supporting the Travel Ipswich measures and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport through policy SP34.
- 5.5. Policies DM22 and SP34 are the starting point for the consideration of any application for car parks within the town centre. The policies encourage the use of sustainable means of transport, particularly for journeys to work and to reduce town centre traffic congestion by avoiding increasing the stock of long stay car parking within the Central Parking Core. The restriction on longer stay car parking usually takes the form of a planning condition requiring 'financial disincentives' for parking for longer than 5 hours and it is important that this approach is consistently applied across the Borough.
- 5.6. Policy SP34 also states that applications for additional temporary car parks will not be approved and that applications to renew existing temporary short stay car parks will not be permitted when permanent provision has been delivered. To this end a Central Car Parking Core has been identified, and sites are allocated for medium sized multi-storey car parks at Crown Street, Mint Quarter, as well as No.8 Shed Site at Orwell Quay, Turret Lane, and long stay commuter car parking at West End Road. Only the Crown Car Park has been constructed as part of this provision thus far (located within Zone 5 of the Ipswich Parking Strategy). Whilst outline planning permission for a multi-storey car park on the former cattle market site at Portman Road has been granted (20/00398/OUT13 refers), reserved matters are yet to be approved.
- 5.7. While the permanent provision is being established, Officers conclude that the continued use of this particular site as a short-stay car park is acceptable having regard to policies DM22 and SP34.
- 5.8. Furthermore, the Ipswich Parking Strategy sets out a number of different options for how many additional public car parking spaces should be provided by 2036, this being based on an 85% occupancy rate and assuming a reduction in demand as a result of the successful implementation of measures to increase the use of sustainable modes of transport across the Borough. The Parking Strategy splits the wider town centre area into five zones and based on the report, the table below has been produced (the application site is located in Zone 4). This shows the number of public parking spaces (excluding those reserved for disabled blue badge holders), how many of these are spaces provided under a temporary planning permission and which are assumed will be lost by 2036, and how many additional spaces need to be built by 2036 and the overall net change.

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Existing spaces (excluding disabled)</b>	<b>Spaces lost (as developed)</b>	<b>New spaces required for 85%occupancy</b>	<b>Net change in spaces</b>
Zone 1 Riverside	1,654	-898	+322	<b>-576</b>
Zone 2 Station & Office	1,917	-397	+712	<b>+315</b>
Zone 3 Town Centre Central & West	1,170	-254	+363	<b>+109</b>

<b>Zone 4 Town Centre East</b>	1,120	-325	+383	<b>+58</b>
Zone 5 Town Centre North	809	0	+97	<b>+97</b>
Totals >	6,670	-1,874	+1,877	<b>+3</b>

5.9. This table illustrates an overall net change of only an additional 3 public parking spaces by 2036, and the significant variations in each zone. The Foundation Street Car Park renewal application is located within Zone 4 (Town Centre East). The 325 existing spaces in this zone provided under temporary planning permissions include the following:

- Bond Street = 14 spaces
- Foundation Street = 21 spaces (*i.e. the application site*)
- Star Lane = 30 spaces
- Tacket Street = 260 spaces

5.10. In respect of where within each zone the identified need for the construction of new public parking spaces should be allocated, this is a matter for an Ipswich Area Parking Plan to identify the location for this permanent provision. It could be that some of the provision will be met on the sites of existing temporary public car parks (*i.e. some or all of those above*). However, currently the Ipswich Area Parking Plan is not in place and permanent provision in Zone 4 has not been delivered, therefore each application for public car parking will be considered on its own merits with due consideration to the maximum public parking requirements per zone as per the table above as part of the Ipswich Parking Strategy, which is adopted through the Ipswich Local Plan.

5.11. As the proposal is only a renewal of an existing temporary planning permission, and no new car parks are yet proposed within Zone 4, there are no grounds for refusal of the application in terms of the Ipswich Parking Strategy at this time. However, once the Ipswich Area Parking Plan has identified and allocated where the 58 net new spaces should be provided in this zone, and once such provision has taken place, any remaining temporary public car park planning permissions should not be further renewed on the grounds that the identified provision has been made. This would be a material consideration in the assessment of any renewal applications of the temporary planning permissions within this zone, and help to provide the policy basis for refusing permissions and encourage stalled development sites to come forward for redevelopment.

5.12. Furthermore, there have been recent appeal decisions at Ranelagh Road (refer IP/22/01007/FUL) and Slade Street (refer IP/22/00647/FUL) where temporary car parks have been allowed. In particular Ranelagh Road made reference to the permanent allocation of car parking not yet being operational and at Slade Street found car parking was an appropriate meanwhile use with a further temporary planning permission granted.

#### Impact on long term regeneration of the site

5.13. There is a need to comprehensively redevelop this allocated site and there is often a concern that continued use for car parking and other meanwhile uses would serve to discourage such redevelopment.

5.14. This site was subject to approved applications for housing and mixed-use development in 1983 and 1999 and is the northern part of a wider allocated site referred to as IP011c, allocated for residential use for 7 dwellings within the current Local Plan. No recent proposals have been submitted for this site and with the temporary nature of permission, there is no indication that use of the site as a car park would be a hindrance to re-development if a developer was to submit a proposal for this site. In the

absence of other interest in the site, its use as a public car park is considered a good alternative to the site being vacant.

- 5.15. It is therefore considered that a two-year permission would still be appropriate at this time and would be acceptable having regard to the site allocation set out within policies SP1 and SP34.
- 5.16. Whilst comprehensive development is the long-term solution for the site, the continued use as a car park in the short term will avoid a vacant site prone to anti-social behaviour and enable further time for a comprehensive redevelopment to be progressed.
- 5.17. It is acknowledged that the National Planning Policy Guidance (paragraph 014) states that under section 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the local planning authority may grant planning permission for a specified temporary period only. Circumstances where a temporary permission may be appropriate include where a trial run is needed in order to assess the effect of the development on the area, or where it is expected that the planning circumstances will change in a particular way at the end of that period. A temporary planning permission may also be appropriate to enable the temporary use of vacant land or buildings prior to any longer-term proposals coming forward (a 'meanwhile use'). It will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission (except in cases where changing circumstances provide a clear rationale, such as temporary classrooms and other school facilities). Further permissions can normally be granted permanently or refused if there is clear justification for doing so. There is no presumption that a temporary grant of planning permission will then be granted permanently. In this case a further temporary two-year permission would be appropriate having regard to the already anticipated timeline for commissioning design concepts consultation and ultimate determination, and implementation of a comprehensive planning application on the site and surrounding area, and with regard to policies DM22, SP1, and SP34.
- 5.18. Officers can conclude that a two-year permission would be acceptable on balance, taking into account the above allocation. There is no evidence that suggests the presence of the temporary use would deter comprehensive development.

#### Low Emissions SPD

- 5.19. Policy DM3 states the Council will ensure that the impact of development on air quality is mitigated and ensure that proposals do not negatively impact on existing air quality levels in the Borough. The recently adopted Low Emissions SPD supports the delivery of policies relating to car parking within the IP-One area of central Ipswich and how parking provision could influence travel choices and consequently affect the contribution vehicle emissions make to air pollution.
- 5.20. The proposal is located near to an Air Quality Management Area, but is outside of it and its buffer zone, and the proposal is for the continuation of an existing temporary use of land for car parking and this is therefore considered to be acceptable whereas a new use might not. There are no grounds to refuse planning permission having regard to policy DM3 and the Low Emissions SPD and in this case mitigation is provided in the form of cycle parking. Continued use of the site for a further 2- year period would not undermine the objectives of policy DM3.

#### Standard of development

- 5.21 Policy SP34 now requires that all temporary car parks will now be expected to achieve the same level of quality of provision as permanent car parks. The car park has been surfaced to an acceptable standard and is level. Disability parking has already been provided and this is appropriate having regard to policy DM22 and the Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2023). The Guidance requires 1 accessible space, and this is appropriately signed. A planning condition is proposed to ensure the signage and disability space remain in situ.
- 5.22. The car park is provided with secure cycle and powered two-wheel storage provision, with a well maintained black top surface, and the car park is adequately lit with lighting columns above the ticket

machines adjacent to the pedestrian accesses, but no electric vehicle charging facilities have been provided. Although previously agreed, the provision of electrical infrastructure would not represent a prudent use of resources in a small, temporary car park which is earmarked for redevelopment. As the car park is only temporary, it is not considered that electric vehicle charging would be justified, and this position has previously been tested at appeal with the Inspector agreeing in favour of the applicant in not providing such infrastructure. It is noted that 2 EV charging bays have been installed at Slade Street Car Park (ref. 22/00647/FUL) which is adjacent to the Town Centre East parking zone, and therefore EV charging facilities are in close proximity of the application site (being approx. 130 metres to the east). 4 EV charging spaces are also available at Tacket Lane car park (ref. 24/00358/FUL) which is approx. 200 metres to the north of the application site, and within the same parking zone. Whilst Policy SP34 requires temporary car parks to be expected to achieve the same level of quality as permanent ones, this has to be balanced against comprehensive site redevelopment. The proposal consequently satisfies the requirements of Policy DM22.

### Flood Risk

- 5.23. The site is within Flood Zone 2. Policy DM4 states that development will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that it does not increase the overall risk of all forms of flooding in the area or elsewhere, will be adequately protected from flooding, will remain safe for people for the lifetime of the development and includes water efficiency measures such as rainwater harvesting, or use of local land drainage water where practicable.
- 5.24. The continued use of the car park will not increase flood risk, will be adequately protected by existing and future defences and will be safe for people. Given the limited scope of works, which does not involve any operational development, water efficiency measures or improvements to drainage would not be justifiable or practicable. The proposal is therefore appropriate having regard to policy DM4.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.25. The continued Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain came into force on 2 April 2024. This was before this application was registered and therefore BNG is applicable. However, it is considered the development is subject to the de minimis exemption as the proposal does not impact upon any habitat totalling more than 25 sqm.

## **6. Planning Balance/Conclusion**

- 6.1. The site is allocated along with adjacent and close by sites for comprehensive residential development. With no current development proposal in existence for either the site or that adjacent to it, it is evident that in this case the use of this part of the wider allocation for a temporary car park, for a further two-year period would not stifle the regeneration of the area. The continued use as a car park will be an appropriate 'meanwhile' use on this allocated site, and having regard to policy relating to parking provision.
- 6.2. With the proposed future development of the site anticipated to come forward in 2028/29, there is an interim period in which the site would potentially lie dormant and at risk from anti-social behaviour if left vacant. In such circumstances, continued use of the site as temporary car park would be desirable and makes the best possible use of the site during the period in which the intended development is brought to fruition.
- 6.3. Whilst Policy SP34 requires temporary car parks to provide the same standard of facility as offered in permanent car parks, the temporary nature of the proposed development would now make this a wasteful investment of finite resources.
- 6.4. On balance, it is considered that a two-year temporary permission would be acceptable having regard to policies DM22, SP1, and SP34, as well as the NPPF.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1. On balance, it is considered that a further two-year temporary permission would be acceptable having regard to policies DM22, SP1 and SP34, as well as the NPPF.