

Application No: 17/4989M

Location: The County Hotel, HARDEN PARK, ALDERLEY EDGE, CHESHIRE, SK9 7QN

Proposal: Demolition of existing County Hotel and redevelopment to provide 2no. residential blocks consisting of 26no. 2 bed apartments, alongside parking, landscaping and associated works

Applicant: Mr Andrew Hall, Harden Park Gardens Limited

Expiry Date: 19-Feb-2018

SUMMARY

The site comprises previously developed land in a sustainable location, with access to a range of local services and facilities nearby and has good public transport links. It would add to the stock of housing and its construction and occupation would result in economic benefits, albeit relatively minor.

The development would make effective use of a previously developed site and would also result in the removal of the existing unsociable use of the hotel and pub, given the proximity of existing residential properties. The development would improve the appearance of the site which has been vacant for many years, and has fallen into disrepair.

The proposed development is not considered to have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt or the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. The proposal also raises no significant design, amenity or highway safety issues.

However the proposal does not allocate any on-site affordable housing provision for which there is a clear, proven need and the justification for this is insufficient. There is also a lack of information as to the impact of the proposal on the bat roost potential of the trees affected by the proposed development.

Together these negatives of the scheme outweigh any benefits the scheme offers and with this in mind the application is recommended for refusal

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

REASON FOR REPORT

Due to the scale of the proposal the application requires determination by the Northern Planning Committee under the terms of the Council's constitution.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises the existing County Hotel building, associated car parking area and outdoor amenity area. The site is located within the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the erection of 2no. replacement buildings comprising 26no. apartments with associated landscaping and basement car parking. 20no. apartments would contain two bedrooms and 6no. apartments would contain one bedroom.

RELEVANT HISTORY

12/4353M Full planning permission for the demolition of the existing former County Hotel building and construction of 14 No. residential units with car parking and associated landscaping and external works.

Approved 01 October 2013

11/4542M Full planning permission for the extension, refurbishment, alterations and conversion of the former County Hotel to create 6 residential apartments; erection of new four storey block of 8 residential apartments; together with car parking, landscaping and associated external works.

Withdrawn 06.03.2012

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – adopted 27th July 2017

MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement Boundaries

PG3 Green Belt

PG7 Spatial distribution of development

SD1 Sustainable development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable development principles

SE1 Design

SE2 Efficient Use of Land

SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE4 The Landscape

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability

Appendix C – Parking Standards

It should be noted that the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. There are however policies within the legacy local plans that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

Saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Policies

NE11 (Nature conservation interests)
DC3 (Amenities of residential property)
DC6 (Circulation and Access)
DC8 (Landscaping)
DC9 (Tree protection)
DC35 (Materials and Finishes)
DC36 (Road layouts and circulation)
DC37 (Landscaping in housing developments)
DC38 (Space, light and Privacy)
DC41 (Infilling housing or redevelopment)
DC63 (Contaminated Land)

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Framework (NPPG)
Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan – currently under consultation at regulation 7
The Cheshire East Borough Design Guide (2017)

National Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways: no objections

Environmental Health: no objections subject to conditions relating to noise and a travel pack

United Utilities: no objections, subject to conditions relating to drainage

Housing: objection – on site provision required

Education: awaiting comments.

Public Open Space: awaiting comments

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Alderley Edge Parish Council: *“The Parish council recommends refusal and call in to NP committee – This proposal constitutes significant overdevelopment within the greenbelt. The increased footprint and footage is significant. Ingress and egress from Harden Park will have considerable risk with added pressure from the former “Yesterdays” site, currently being developed, proposed developments on the Royal London site and ever increasing traffic on the A34/Alderley Road. A round about likely won’t allow exit and so traffic lights could be the only option. The PC objects to the proposal being a gated complex. The positioning of the entrance directly opposite existing houses compromise their amenity and privacy.”*

It should be noted these comments were for the original proposal and no comments have been received since the revised plans were submitted.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Amended plans were received during the application period. 6no. objections were received prior to the amendments with a further 1no. objection received following the re-consultation which is a repeat of the earlier comment. The last date for comments is the 2nd May so an update will follow if any further comments are received. Below is a summary of the main, relevant issues:

- Highway safety issues due to the number of cars proposed.
- Green Belt issues – inappropriate development.
- Over development of the site.
- Underground parking will not be used, Harden Park will be used.
- Incorrect access position.
- A site management plan should be conditioned.
- Residents would have to drive into Wilmslow or Alderley edge due to the distance. There is no pavement into Alderley edge.
- Bats are roosting in the existing building and would be disturbed by the development.
- Design is an ‘architectural disgrace’.
- No visitor parking.
- The conditions were not discharged properly before commencement of development, so the previous permission is not extant.
- The block to the north would fall short of the Council’s space guidance distance of 28m to Orchard Cottage.
- There are more trees to be lost with this application than the previously approved development.
- The transport statement contains numeric errors.
- Protected species would be impacted by the development.
- Concerns regarding the impact on trees.

APPLICANT’S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The applicant has submitted a bat report, arboricultural statement, transport statement, design & access statement and planning statement. The planning statement concludes that:

- Redevelopment will remove an unsightly and imposing building, enhancing the setting and appearance of the site.

- There is an extant permission, 12/4353M, which establishes the principle of the development and allows an increase in the overall scale and massing of development when compared to existing.
- The proposal provides three high quality residential blocks, carefully laid out and sited to minimise their visual impact. In this case, the proposals seek to divide a large form of development (permitted under the extant consent) into two smaller forms, breaking up the built form and massing that could be delivered on site, ultimately reducing the prominence of buildings on site.
- The separation of the buildings helps to increase the openness at the site by increasing views through the site.
- The building would result in an increase in floor area above ground floor level. However, this has to be considered alongside the significant reductions in the hardstanding areas compared to existing and also the 'extant' permission. The overall height of the building would also be no higher than the existing.
- The site is well screened and so has no impact on the openness of the wider Green Belt.
- The replacement of the former County Hotel with a building of a traditional design which reflects the architectural features of the original building would also be of positive benefit to the site and Green Belt.
- The proposed development will not conflict with any of the five purposes of maintaining land in the Green Belt and will not result in a materially greater impact on Green Belt openness.
- There would no harm to highway safety or the amenity of neighbouring residential properties as a result of the proposed development due to the nature of the use and the distances between buildings.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Key Issues

- Impact on the character of the area,
- Impact on trees,
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties,
- Highway safety implications

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Housing Land Supply

On 27 July 2017, the Council adopted the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. This followed an extensive public examination led by an independent and senior Planning Inspector.

The Inspector's Report on the Local Plan was published on 20 June 2017 and signalled the Inspector's agreement to the Plans policies and proposals. The Local Plan Inspector confirmed that, on adoption, the Council was able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. In his Report he concludes:

"I am satisfied that CEC has undertaken a robust, comprehensive and proportionate assessment of the delivery of its housing land supply, which confirms a future 5-year supply of around 5.3 years"

The Inspector's conclusion that the Council had a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land was based on the housing land supply position as at 31 March 2016.

Following the adoption of the Local Plan Strategy, the Council released its annual Housing Monitoring Update, in August 2017. It sets out the housing land supply as at 31 March 2017 and identified a deliverable housing land supply of 5.45 years.

On 8 November 2017, an appeal against the decision of the Council to refuse outline planning permission for up to 400 homes at White Moss Quarry, Alsager (WMQ) was dismissed due to the scheme's conflict with the Local Plan settlement hierarchy and its spatial distribution of development.

However, in his decision letter, the WMQ Inspector did not come to a clear conclusion whether Cheshire East had a five year supply of deliverable housing land. His view was that it was either slightly above or slightly below the required 5 years (4.96 to 5.07 years). In this context, the Inspector engaged the 'tilted balance' set out in the 4th Bullet point of paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This introduces a presumption that planning permission is granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

On 4 January 2018, an appeal against the non-determination of an outline planning permission for up to 100 homes at Park Road, Willaston was dismissed due to conflict with Local Plan policies that sought to protect designated Green Gap, open countryside and rural character. The Inspector also took the view that the housing land supply was either marginally above or below the required 5 years (4.93 to 5.01 years). On this basis, he adopted a 'precautionary approach' and assumed a worst case position in similarly engaging the 'tilted balance' under paragraph 14 of the Framework.

The Council is continuing to update its evidence regarding housing land supply to ensure that decisions are taken in the light of the most robust evidence available and taking account of recent case law.

For the purpose of determining current planning applications it is therefore the Council's position that there is a five year supply of deliverable housing land.

Affordable Housing

The Cheshire East Local Plan (CELP) and the Council's Interim Planning Statement: Affordable Housing (IPS) states in Settlements with a population of 3,000 or more that we will negotiate for the provision of an appropriate element of the total dwelling provision to be for affordable housing on all unidentified 'windfall' sites of 15 dwellings or more or larger than 0.4 hectares in size. The desired target percentage for affordable housing for all allocated sites will be a minimum of 30%, in accordance with the recommendations of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment carried out in 2013. This percentage relates to the

provision of both social rented and/or intermediate housing, as appropriate. Normally the Council would expect a ratio of 65/35 between social rented and intermediate housing.

This is now a proposed development of 26 dwellings within 2 blocks; therefore in order to meet the Council's Policy on Affordable Housing there is a requirement for 8 dwellings to be provided as affordable dwellings.

The SHMA 2013 shows the majority of the demand in the sub area of Mobberley, Chelford and Alderley Edge, Per Year until 2017/8 is for 16x 1 bedroom, 17x 2 bedroom, 11x 3 bedroom and 9x 4 bedroom General Needs dwellings. The SHMA is also shown a yearly need for 9x 1 bedroom and 22x 2 bedroom Older Persons dwellings.

The Older Persons dwellings can be provided via flats, cottage style flats and bungalows.

The current number of those on the Cheshire Homechoice waiting list with Alderley Edge as their first choice is 143. This can be broken down to 70x 1 bedroom, 45x 2 bedroom, 23x 3 bedroom and 5x 4 bedroom dwellings, therefore a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom General Needs dwellings and 1 and 2 bedroom Older Persons dwellings on this site would be acceptable. 7 units should be provided as Affordable rent and 3 units as Intermediate tenure.

The applicant in the planning statement has stated that they are proposing to use a commuted sum in lieu of on site Affordable Housing provision. Their reasoning is that permission for this was given in an extant application. This full application is a new application, and is not accompanied by an agreed viability assessment confirming that this is the case.

There are clear differences between the current application and the previous one. The last application consisted of one block containing three bedroom apartments, which apparently was not acceptable to any RP's. The current application contains two blocks with a mix of one and two bedroom apartments. No discussions appear to have taken place between the applicant and any RP's and so it has not been confirmed whether the current proposal would be acceptable or not.

The Cheshire East Local Plan has also been adopted since the last approval, and of specific relevance to the application is policy SC5 relating to affordable housing. This policy contains the following paragraph:

"Affordable housing is required to be provided on-site, however, in exceptional circumstances, where it can be proven that on-site delivery is not possible, as a first alternative, off-site provision of affordable housing will be accepted; as a second alternative a financial contribution may be accepted, where justified, in lieu of on-site provision."

The increased number of dwellings with this application over the previous approval also creates an increased need for affordable housing and there are no known sites in the area that would be able to provide the affordable housing provision so to receive a commuted sum would not seem appropriate in this case.

With this in mind the Council's Housing Officer objects to this application. There is a clear need for Onsite Affordable Housing provision in Alderley Edge. There is no documentation advising on a Viability Study or the provision of the Affordable Housing via an RP.

Vacant building credit may apply in this instance. The issue is subject to clarification and an update will be provided before the committee meeting.

Open Space

The proposal is above the threshold identified within the Council's SPG on planning obligations for the provision of public open space and recreation / outdoor sport facilities. Normal requirements are for 65 square metres per dwelling. It appears that this cannot be provided on site and therefore financial contributions will be required for off site provision in line with policy SE6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

Comments are yet to be received from the Council's Open Space Officer and will be confirmed in an update.

Education

Comments are yet to be received from the Council's Land and Sites Officer and will be confirmed in an update.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Green Belt

Paragraph 89 of the Framework identifies that the complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), which would not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development is not an inappropriate form of development.

The key test for this aspect of Green Belt policy is not whether the proposal is materially larger than the existing; it is whether the proposal has a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it. For this reason, it is considered that the assessment should relate more to the overall scale, bulk and massing of the proposed development compared to the existing and the associated impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, rather than a comparative assessment of floorspace / footprint.

The proposed building is clearly larger than the one it replaces. The floorspace figures indicate that whilst the footprints of the buildings remain similar, there is a 24% increase in floorspace, excluding the basement. As the basement is totally subterranean there would be no impact on the openness of the Green Belt from the basement and so, although extensive it is not included in the assessment.

The previous approval contained an increase of 14% over existing. This is still extant due to the commencement of the development within the three year time period. In response to the neighbour it appears that all of the relevant conditions were discharged prior to development and so is a material consideration in the determination of this application. Substantial weight

was previously given to the significant decrease in hardstanding, and associated car parking, and associated level of activity that also currently impact on openness during the operation of the existing hotel / pub use. It is accepted that the extent to which the existing use impacts upon the openness of the Green Belt is more than just the existing building. The current site does contain significant areas of hardstanding, which when fully occupied would have a significant impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. While the previous approval did go some way to decreasing the amount of hardstanding there was still a significant amount approved with 33no. above ground parking spaces in addition to the internal access roads. This hardstanding covered large areas of the site and would have still had a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The current proposal contains no above ground car parking spaces with all parking confined to the basement, which means that all of the space previously allocated to parking could be used for landscaping which would soften the impact of the proposed buildings, and also help to improve the visual impact of the site.

The proposed buildings comprise two blocks, rather than the one current building and one previously approved building. The block to the rear is lower with two stories which echoes the existing format with a lower section to the rear of the site. The elevations are broken up with a two storey element closest to the main road and three storey element in the middle. This variation in heights helps to reduce the bulk of the proposal. The buildings would be set a similar distance from the main road as the existing building, however rather than large areas of hardstanding adjacent to the main road the proposal would contain a large area of landscaping.

Having regard to the factors noted above, on balance, the proposed development is not considered to have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt or the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. Therefore the proposal is not considered to be inappropriate development as identified under paragraph 89 of the Framework.

Residential Amenity

Saved Macclesfield Borough local Plan policy DC3 seeks to ensure development does not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearly residential properties through a loss of light, overbearing effect or loss of sunlight/daylight with guidance on space distances between buildings contained in saved policy DC38 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and guidance within the Cheshire East Design Guide.

The objections have been carefully considered. The closest property to the proposed buildings is positioned 25.7m from the rear of block 2, Orchard Cottage. This property is not directly opposite the proposed buildings and the distance complies with the recommended distance of 21m between rear to rear of dwellings outlined in the Cheshire East Design Guide and more than the 25m outlined in saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan policy DC38. The elevation facing onto this property would also contain obscure glazing in order to prevent overlooking of the garden of Orchard Cottage.

The other surrounding dwellings are further still from the proposed buildings with surrounding vegetation further lessening any impacts.

Within the site the two blocks are positioned approx. 10m apart. There are habitable windows facing onto habitable windows at ground and first floors. In order to prevent overlooking an obscure glazing condition should be included to the side facing lounge/dining rooms. These are secondary windows so the impact should be acceptable. The side facing bedroom windows would not contain obscure glazing as these would be the only windows to these rooms. While the 10m is below the 12m recommended in the design guide for habitable windows facing onto blank gables the impact would only be felt by future residents and so there is an element of 'buyer beware' attached to any impact.

With the above in mind an adequate amount of space, light and privacy is retained between the dwellings.

Air Quality

Having regard to the relative scale of the proposal and the existing lawful use of the site, no significant air quality concerns are raised. Environmental Protection have recommended a condition for electric car charging points to be provided, in the interests of air quality and to encourage the uptake of sustainable transport options for future occupants of modern housing, and also for a 'travel information pack' to be available for all new residents of the development.

Noise

Environmental Protection has noted that further information is required to ensure that a satisfactory level of amenity is maintained for future occupiers of the apartments due to the traffic related noise from the A34 road and by pass. It is therefore recommended that any approval is subject to a condition requiring an acoustic survey of the development, in order to ensure that acceptable internal noise levels are achieved.

Contaminated Land

The contaminated land officer advises that this site is within 250m of a known landfill site or area of ground that has the potential to create gas. Therefore adequate gas protection measures are required which can be dealt with by condition.

Trees/Landscape

The Council's Arboricultural and Forestry Officer has provided the following comments:

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Statement by Cheshire Woodlands (CW/7373-AS-17) dated 1st November 2017.

Located off site to the west of the proposed development site within the grounds of The Merlin public house are a group of trees protected as part of the Macclesfield Borough Council (Wilmslow - College Flats) Tree Preservation Order 1992; the trees are protected as part of a Woodland designation.

The development proposals require the removal of four moderate value Category B tree groups (G3, G4, G6, & G7) and four low value Category C individual trees (T3, T4, T6, & T9) and four Category C groups (G1, G2, G5, & G8).; the majority of the trees are located on the south, south eastern boundaries of the site. The removal of an un-classified Goat Willow T5 has also been identified.

The only large mature high canopy tree identified for removal is a Lime located within G3; the tree exhibits signs of reduced vigour and vitality, with dieback and reduced twig development noted. The remaining trees are closely spaced specimens; Elm regeneration was also noted which is likely to succumb to Dutch Elm Disease within the next few years. The collective contribution of these trees is not considered significant, any impact on the amenity of the immediate area and the wider landscape is considered to be moderately low.

The remaining individual trees (T1, T2, & T7) associated with the immediate development area are unaffected by the development proposals. It was noted that T2 appears to be decline with significant dieback identified within the trees upper canopy.

Construction works to facilitate the new basement extends within the RPA's of the retained trees identified as T8, G9/1, and G9/2; the incursions are all relatively minor, the presence of existing hard surfacing also mitigates any detrimental impact which is likely to be negligible.

The off site trees G9 protected as part of the Macclesfield Borough Council (Wilmslow - College Flats) Tree Preservation Order 1992 can be retained and protected in accordance with current best practice. The social proximity of the boundary trees associated with G9 to the existing building in some areas is not sustainable; the proposed development does not establish an inferior relationship to what exists at present. Pruning to establish and maintain adequate clearance will be an ongoing requirement, but this will not have a significant impact on the trees or affect external views of the trees.

The landscape details submitted with the application are limited and conflict in terms of tree retention with the submitted Arboricultural statement in terms of tree removal; this clearly has an impact on the Harden Park road frontage. In order to compensate for the proposed tree losses it is important to maximise the landscape space available to accommodate semi-mature high canopy replacement planting; this is particularly pertinent along Alderley Road and Harden Park where the buildings are set back into the site.

Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal will have an acceptable impact upon landscaping and trees within the site, in accordance with saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan policy DC9 and policy SE5 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

Ecology

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has provided the following comments:

Great Crested Newts

A number of ponds are located within 250m of the proposed development and a small population of great crested newts is known to occur at a pond located just over 130m from the application site boundary. The application site however offers limited habitat for great crested newts. The better quality

habitat, located to the north of the site, will however be used as a community garden as part of the proposed development.

In order to minimise the risk of Great Crested Newts being harmed during the works the applicant's ecologist has recommended the implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures.

Considering the distance between the proposed development and the adjacent ponds and the small area of better quality habitat affected by the development, it is advised that provided the recommended measures are implemented the proposed development would be unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitat Regulations. Consequently, it is not necessary for the Council to have regard to the Habitat Regulations during the determination of this application.

However, as there is a loss of some suitable habitat for great crested newts, albeit on a minor scale, it is advised that the proposed development should include some proposals to compensate for this loss. The Council's Ecologist suggests that this should take the form of the provision of a small additional pond and hibernacula. The applicant has been asked to amend the layout plan to include the provision of these features and a condition could be included to cover this.

Bats

Evidence of bat activity in the form of a minor roost of a relatively common bat species has been recorded within the existing hotel building on a number of occasions. Whilst it is now sometime since the last detailed bat survey was undertaken it is advised that it is unlikely that the level of roosting activity has changed. The usage of the building by bats is likely to be limited to small numbers of animals using the buildings for relatively short periods of time during the year and there is no evidence to suggest a significant maternity roost is present. The loss of the roosts associated with the buildings on this site, in the absence of mitigation, is likely to have a low impact upon on bats at the local level and a low impact upon the conservation status of the species as a whole.

The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places

(a) in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, and provided that there is

(b) no satisfactory alternative and

(c) no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range

The UK has implemented the Directive in the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 2010 (as amended) which contain two layers of protection (i) a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (“LPAs”) to have regard to the Directive’s requirements above, and (ii) a licensing system administered by Natural England and supported by criminal sanctions.

Saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Policy NE11 and policy SE3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan states that the Council will seek to conserve, enhance and interpret nature conservation interests. Development which would affect nature conservation interests will not normally be permitted.

The NPPF advises LPAs to conserve and enhance biodiversity: if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) or adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, planning permission should be refused.

Natural England’s standing advice is that, if a (conditioned) development appears to fail the three tests in the Habitats Directive, then LPAs should consider whether Natural England is likely to grant a licence: if unlikely, then the LPA should refuse permission: if likely, then the LPA can conclude that no impediment to planning permission arises under the Directive and Regulations.

In this case it is considered that the proposal will result in a more sustainable form of development than the existing, particularly in terms of energy efficiency, and any alternatives are likely to involve significant works to the existing building, which would have a comparable impact upon the species. The submitted report recommends the installation of bat boxes on trees and the incorporation of features for roosting bats into the replacement residential building to compensate for the loss of the existing roosts and the supervision and timing of the works by a licensed bat worker to mitigate the risk posed to bats during the works.

The nature conservation officer advises that the proposed mitigation/compensation is acceptable and it is highly likely that the favourable conservation status of the species concerned will be unaffected by the proposed development. However, if planning consent is granted a condition requiring the development to proceed in accordance with the recommendations made by the submitted Ecological Scoping Survey is recommended.

A number of trees will be removed as part of the proposed development. Whilst the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal states that the trees on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats no information on this has been included with the submitted report. A survey of the bat roost potential of the trees affected by the proposed development is required prior to the determination of this application. This has not been provided, at the time of writing, so an objection is raised with regard to the lack of information.

To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated

with the development it is recommended that if planning permission is granted a condition should be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed with the LPA.

Nesting Birds

In the event that planning permission is granted a suitable condition should be included relating to nesting birds.

Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are a biodiversity action plan priority species and hence a material consideration. There are records of hedgehogs in the broad locality of the proposed development and so the species may occur on the site of the proposed development. If planning consent is granted a suitable condition is recommended.

Highways

There are two existing access points to the site, one of these points is to be closed and the site access is taken using an existing access to Harden Park that leads to the basement car park.

The car parking provision is 61no. spaces which provides more than 2no. spaces/apartment, this level of provision accords with the CEC parking standards for 2 bed units. There is a communal bin storage located alongside the access road that is convenient for refuse collection from Harden Park.

The applicant has produced figures for traffic generation and the peak hour range is between 15 – 17 trips, this is considered an accurate assessment for apartments by the Council's Strategic Infrastructure Manager. This level of traffic is not considered to have a material traffic impact on the local road network and the former use of the site has also to be taken into consideration as this did generate similar traffic movements to the site.

Therefore, the proposals are considered acceptable and no objections are raised by the Council's Strategic Infrastructure Manager.

Design

The existing site is an eyesore with years of neglect leading to the existing dilapidated building currently on site.

The design of the proposed building replicates traditional features of buildings found in the vicinity and therefore it is considered that the design approach is adequately in keeping with the character of the area. The proposed buildings contain a variety of ridge heights which helps to break up the mass of the proposal. Furthermore, due to the positioning of the buildings within the site, and the existing boundary vegetation, it will be difficult to view the buildings together, with different sections visible from different vantage points. There are also other substantial buildings within the immediate area. The proposal is

therefore considered to have an acceptable impact upon the character of the area.

The reduction of hardstanding will also facilitate the creation of a substantial landscaped frontage to Alderley Road, which will represent a significant visual benefit compared to the existing situation.

Entrance gates are shown on the proposed site plan, however in order to promote inclusive communities in line with paragraph 69 of the NPPF a condition will be included with any approval removing the use of such gates.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

With regard to the economic role of sustainable development, the proposed development will help to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for housing as well as bringing direct and indirect economic benefits to the town including additional trade for local shops and businesses, jobs in construction and economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain.

HEADS OF TERMS

If the application is approved a Section 106 Agreement will be required, and should include:

- Secondary education contributions (amount TBC)
- Open space and recreation outdoor sports contributions (amount TBC)
- Provision of Affordable housing

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 it is now necessary for planning applications with legal agreements to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following:

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The provision of public open space, affordable housing and education contributions are necessary, fair and reasonable to provide a sustainable form of development, to contribute towards sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities and to comply with local and national planning policy.

All elements are necessary, directly relate to the development and are fair and reasonable in relation to the scale and kind of the development

PLANNING BALANCE

The site comprises previously developed land in a sustainable location, with access to a range of local services and facilities nearby and has good public transport links. It would add to the stock of housing and its construction and occupation would result in social and economic benefits, albeit relatively minor.

The development would make effective use of a previously developed site and would also result in the removal of the existing unsociable use of the hotel and pub, given the proximity of existing residential properties. The development would improve the appearance of the site which has been vacant for many years, and has fallen into disrepair.

The proposed development is not considered to have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt or the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. The proposal also raises no significant design, amenity or highway safety issues.

However the proposal does not allocate any on-site affordable housing provision for which there is a clear, proven need and the justification for this is insufficient. There is also a lack of information as to the impact of the proposal on the bat roost potential of the trees affected by the proposed development.

Together these negatives of the scheme outweigh any benefits the scheme offers and with this in mind the application is recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

- **The proposal includes a lack of on site provision of affordable housing, for which there is a clear and proven need in this area. This would be contrary to policy SC5 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.**
- **Insufficient information has been submitted with the application relating to bat roost potential of the trees on site affected by the development in order to assess adequately the impact of the proposed development having regard to policy SE3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan and saved policy NE11 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. In the absence of this information, it has not been possible to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with Development Plan policies and other material considerations.**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chairman (or in their absence the Vice Chairman) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice

