

Planning Reference No:	10/4018N
Application Address:	56 Crewe Road Nantwich, CW5 6JD
Proposal:	Conversion and Extension of Former Public House and Managers Flat to 2 Dwellings and Erection of 9 Residential Apartments with Car Park
Applicant:	Alexandra Countryside Investments Ltd
Application Type:	Full Planning
Grid Reference:	365830 352232
Ward:	Nantwich
Earliest Determination Date:	1 st December 2010
Expiry Dated:	9 th December 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	10 th November 2010
Date Report Prepared:	19 th November 2010
Constraints:	N/A

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Loss of community facility
- Impact on adjoining residential amenities
- Impact on character and appearance of area
- Impact on highways

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to the Southern Planning Committee as it involves a residential development of more than 10 dwellings.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is located in a mainly residential area on the south side of Crewe Road. It is within the settlement boundary for Nantwich. The site comprises the Cheshire Cheese public house and land to the rear extending for approximately 95m in depth.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for a change of use from public house and manager's flat to two 3 bedroom dwellings and the provision of a building for nine apartments on land to the rear. This includes 6 two-bedroom units and 3 one-bedroom units. The apartments will be provided in a single three-storey building which will align with the end terraced house known as 60 Crewe Road. The building will be constructed in brick and plain tiles. Parking and private garden space will be provided to the rear of the public house to serve the two dwellings. A total of 19 car parking spaces are proposed two of which are disabled driver spaces and an area of open space will be provided to serve the apartments. Cycle parking is proposed for the apartments. The existing access to the car park at the public house will be used to serve all the new development. A bin store will be positioned between the

apartments and the rear of the Cheshire Cheese so that the refuse vehicle does not have to access the narrow space alongside the flats.

The works to convert the public house to a residential accommodation include the removal of a single storey extension on the rear of the main building and the erection of a two-storey extension.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

P08/0865 - Change of Use from Public House to A3 Indian Restaurant – Refused 3rd July 2009

P08/0498 - Conversion of Former Public House and Managers Flat to One Dwelling and Erection of 9 Residential Apartments with Car Park – Approved 29th July 2008

P07/0079 - Four dwellings - Refused 9th March 2007.

5. POLICIES

Development Plan policies

Local Plan Policy

BE.1 (Amenity)
BE.2 (Design Standards)
BE.3 (Access and Parking)
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
BE.5 (Infrastructure)
RES.2 (Unallocated Housing Sites)
RES.3 (Housing Densities)
CF.3 (Retention of Community Facilities)
NE.9 (Protected Species)

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 – Spatial Principles
DP2 – Promote Sustainable Communities
DP4 – Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure
EM1 – Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets
EM18 – Decentralised Energy Supply
MCR4 – South Cheshire

National policy

PPS 1: (Delivering Sustainable Development)
PPS 3: (Housing)

Supplementary Planning Document on Development on Backland and Gardens

6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

The Strategic Highways and Transportation Manager: No representations received at the time of writing this report

Environmental Health: Request conditions regarding contaminated land and construction hours

Hospital Street Association: No representations received at the time of writing this report

United Utilities: No representations received at the time of writing this report

7. NANTWICH TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council welcomes this application.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of representation received from the occupants of 10 Whitewell Close and 15 Jackson Avenue raising the following points;

- Parking is a problem in the area
- Additional parking should be provided for the residential properties along Crewe Road
- Concern over the boundary treatment proposed to the southern boundary of the site

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement (*Produced by Rex Brockway*)

- Planning permission (P08/0498) was granted on 29th July 2008 for a similar development including an identical block of 9 residential apartments but with the conversion of the former public house and manager's flat to one dwelling rather than the two dwellings now proposed
- Closure of the Cheshire Cheese does not leave the local community without alternative public houses or other opportunities for social gatherings. The nearest public house (the Leopard) is 300 metres away. Within 800 metres of the Cheshire Cheese there are 13 alternative public houses
- Conversion of the public house to 2 dwellings is appropriate having regard to the desirability of retaining the existing building taking into account its contribution to the street scene, the existing residential use of the first floor, the suitability of the ground floor for residential use and the residential character of the area
- The proposed small dwellings will help to achieve a mix of housing in the area in accordance with PPS3 paragraph 24. The scheme achieves a density equivalent to 61 dwellings per hectare. This is appropriate taking into account the highly sustainable location of the site but also the need for the new building to respect the scale and proximity of nearby residential properties and avoid problems of overlooking and overbearing
- The layout reflects the need to retain the public house building on the front of the site, the site's long and narrow shape and the need to position the apartment building to avoid amenity problems
- The proposed apartment block is three storeys in height. This is appropriate having regard to the ridgeline of the adjacent tall Victorian houses which are built on higher ground than the proposed apartments
- The external appearance of the public house will be unaffected. To the rear the outbuildings will be replaced by a rear extension in keeping with the appearance of the former public house. The appearance of the apartment building reflects features typical of the area and includes chimneys and decorative bargeboards as previously approved

- The site is in a highly sustainable location within a short walking distance of a wide range of facilities, services and jobs within and close to Nantwich town centre
- Vehicular access is from Crewe Road. A Transport Statement prepared by David Walpole Associates and submitted as part of the first planning application concludes that the site will generate less traffic if it is redeveloped for residential purposes than it will if it continues as a public house.

Bat Survey (Compiled by Val Cooper and dated October 2010)

- Bats are active across the site. As there are identified potential access points and (limited) roosting opportunities in the building it is recommended best practice measures are taken to ensure that no bats are killed, injured or trapped in works and that contractors are aware of responsibilities if bats are found. The installation of boxes and other site enhancements will mitigate for the loss of potential roosting places in the building
- A number of other mitigation measures such as timing of works and the methods used in carrying out the works are also suggested.

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Policy RES.2 of the Adopted Local Plan allows for residential development on unallocated sites in Nantwich. Whilst the proposed density of development is slightly above that required by RES.3 of the Local Plan it should be noted that the site is in a sustainable location in close proximity to Nantwich Town Centre. Furthermore the site has approval for a similar development which included the conversion of the public house into one unit instead of the two units which are proposed as part of this application.

Policy CF3 seeks to protect community facilities which make a positive contribution to the social or cultural life of a community, unless suitable alternative provision is made. Appeal decisions make it clear that the consideration is whether there are alternative establishments in the local area not whether they offer exactly the same ambience / facilities as the one which has closed. Policy CF3 makes no reference to the need to market an establishment before it is lost or for any considerations regarding viability. Whereas the Council has used such a reason for refusal for other premises in villages, the same considerations do not apply to the loss of a public house in a town such as Nantwich with other public houses within walking distance. The loss of the public house was accepted following the receipt of marketing information as part of the previous approval (P08/0498).

Design

The three storeys apartment building would be constructed in brick and tiles with a traditional appearance which would respect its setting in this older part of Nantwich. The building itself would be split into two sections with the eastern section set slightly forward of the western part. This would help to break up the mass of the building. Overall, however, it would align with the terraced houses which terminate at 60 Crewe Road and therefore the proposed location respects this group of dwellings. Whilst the heights of buildings generally fall from east to west along Crewe Road, the ridge of the roof to the terraced houses is at the same level across all this group of dwellings. The ridge to the roof of the proposed apartments would stand above the ridge to the roof at the terraced houses and therefore would be contrary to the existing pattern of roofscape. However, the eaves lines would be at the same level and the apartments would be set well back from

the highway, and consequently the increase in height is not considered to be sufficient to justify a reason for refusal.

In detail, the brick plinth, front porch on the north elevation, the presence of string courses, cills and lintels and timber detailing in the main gable on the front elevation, spar feet and ornate barge boards would all present an appropriate appearance for the proposed development.

Appropriate amenity space would be provided for the two dwellings and also for the apartments.

Amenity

The proposal to convert the public house into two dwellings includes a two storeys rear extension, which would have a projection of 5.3 metres, a width of 6 metres and a ridge height of 7.2 metres. The principal windows in the extension would be at the rear (south elevation) and face into the site. At ground floor there would be two glazed doors to a dining area and a kitchen window. At first floor there would be two bedroom windows. The side (east) elevation would include at ground floor an entrance door and a window to a cloakroom and at first floor it would include a window to a bathroom. The majority of this proposed extension would be screened to No. 54 by the existing outrigger at the public house, whilst there would be a separation distance to No. 60 of 28 metres. It is therefore considered that the proposed rear extension would not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity.

The former manager's flat included a first floor lounge which adjoins No. 54. This would be used as a bedroom for one of the dwellings. Furthermore, there would be benefits to nearby residents due to the loss of the public house opening late at night.

The proposed apartment building would be aligned with the terraced houses which terminate in 60 Crewe Road. There are obscure glazed ground floor windows in the end elevation of 60 Crewe Road which provide additional light to the lounge. These are screened from the development site by a mature boundary hedgerow. At the apex of the gable (side elevation) is a secondary window to a bedroom which is also lit by a dormer window in the rear elevation. There are a number of small and/or secondary windows in the rear projection at 60 Crewe Road and also a kitchen window at ground floor level, all of which face the development site. The kitchen window is also screened by the mature hedgerow. It is not therefore considered that the proposed apartment building would adversely impact on light to windows at 60 Crewe Road.

The apartment building would have small secondary windows to the lounge/ kitchen area in the ground, first and second floor apartments in the west elevation and windows to stairwells and bathrooms in the east elevation. Overlooking from ground floor windows could be prevented by boundary treatment. Overlooking from first and second floor bathroom and stairwell windows in the east elevation could be avoided by the use of obscure glass. This would prevent residents on the stairs looking into the rear yard/ garden of 60 Crewe Road. In the west elevation there would be two windows both of which would serve the kitchen end of the kitchen/ lounge. These could also be fitted with obscure glass to prevent residents looking directly down into the detached garden areas to 1 and 2 Brick Bank.

In terms of impact of the apartment building on residential amenities at adjacent dwellings, the building would stand 7.4m to the eaves and 11.5m to the ridge of the roof. The building would be sited 1.3m below the level of 60 Crewe Road so that the eaves of the two dwellings would be at a similar level when viewed in the street scene. The ridge of the roof of the apartment building would stand about one metre above the level of the adjacent dwelling but separated by a distance of 5.5m at the closest point. The proposed position of the apartment building is considered to be well away from the converted public house and dwellings in Brick Bank so as not to unreasonably overshadow these dwellings. Whilst the apartment building would cast shade in the morning across the detached gardens to 1 Brick Bank (and to a lesser extent 2 Brick Bank) this would be for a limited time in the day. The detached garden areas to dwellings 1 and 2 Brick Bank are 19m in depth and it is not considered that the presence of this three storeys high building one metre off the common boundary would unreasonably detract from the enjoyment of these garden areas. The site layout shows that the dwellings themselves are 25.8m away from the western elevation of the proposed apartment building.

The apartment building would be separated from the proposed dwellings at the public house by a minimum distance of 25m at the closest point. However, the windows in the rear elevation of the converted public house would be at first floor 3 bedroom windows and a bathroom window, and at ground floor a kitchen window, a small window to provide light to a staircase and glazed doors to two dining areas. Overlooking to the ground floor would be largely screened by boundary treatment. The first floor bedroom windows in the converted public house would be 26m from the first and second floor lounge windows in the apartments and in such circumstances it is not considered that the windows in the apartment building would result in unreasonable overlooking. There are no objections regarding potential overlooking from bedroom windows in the apartments to first floor windows in the converted public house. There would be a degree of overlooking from the lounge windows at one first floor and one second floor apartment to the private garden areas at the former public house. These windows would be 10m away from the boundary to the private garden areas. However to reposition the apartment block to avoid this would have a detrimental impact on the design aspects of the scheme. At these distances the proposed apartment building would not over dominate the new dwellings in the public house.

It is not considered that the proposed apartment building would adversely impact on dwellings which are further away such as the terraced houses at 46-54 Crewe Road or 62 Crewe Road.

Highways

Although the comments of the Strategic Highways Engineer have not been received at the time of writing this report the proposed development would result in the addition of one residential dwelling from the previous approval. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon highways safety whilst sufficient car-parking (163% provision) is proposed in this sustainable location.

Ecology

No evidence of roosting bats was recorded at the application site. The submitted Bat Survey states that a small part of the building was not accessible for internal survey, however, considering the condition of the building, its location and the survey effort

undertaken, the Council's Ecologist has advised that roosting bats are not reasonably likely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

As there was some bat activity recorded during the survey the Council's Ecologist recommends that as much existing vegetation as possible is retained and that native species or ornamental species of value for wildlife are included in the landscaping scheme for the site to ensure there is no loss of bat foraging habitat. In addition there should be no illumination of trees or boundary features that could be used by foraging commuting bats. Proposed lighting should therefore be low level and directional.

If planning consent is granted the Council's Ecologist also recommends that a condition is attached to ensure that bat roosting opportunities are provided as part of the proposed development.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed conversion of the public house into two dwellings would not result in the loss of a community facility with special value or significance to the local community.

The principle of conversion of the public house into two dwellings and the provision of an apartment building for nine units corresponds with policies for residential development in the locality. The proposed apartment building would not adversely impact on residential amenities at nearby properties nor would it adversely impact on the character and appearance of the area. The Transport Statement indicates that development of the site for residential purposes would generate less vehicle movements than the use of the former public house. The development is therefore considered to comply with policies in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions

- 1. Standard time limit 3 years**
- 2. Materials to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority**
- 3. Condition to specify the approved plans**
- 4. Obscure glazing to secondary windows in east and west elevations of apartments at first and second floor levels**
- 5. Provision of parking spaces for converted dwellings before first occupation**
- 6. Provision of parking spaces for the apartments before first occupation**
- 7. Landscaping scheme including open space for apartments, the landscaping scheme shall include native species or ornamental species of value for wildlife only**
- 8. Implementation and maintenance of landscaping and open space**
- 9. Provision of garden spaces for the two dwellings**
- 10. Withdraw all Permitted Development rights for the two dwellings**
- 11. Boundary treatment to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority**
- 12. Reveals to windows and doors to be a minimum of 100mm**
- 13. Drainage to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority**
- 14. Bin storage details to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority**
- 15. Cycle storage details to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority**
- 16. Details of bat roosting areas to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority**

17. Details of how the proposed development will secure at least 10% of its predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing.

Location Plan : Licence No. 100049045

