

Northern Planning Committee

Agenda

Date: Wednesday, 8th July, 2020

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Virtual Meeting

How to Watch the Meeting

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Please note that members of the public are requested to check the Council's website the week the Northern Planning Committee meeting is due to take place as Officers produce updates for some or all of the applications prior to the commencement of the meeting and after the agenda has been published.

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and in the report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision-making meetings are recorded and the recordings are uploaded to the Council's website.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest/Pre Determination

Please Contact: Sarah Baxter 01270 686462

E-Mail: sarah.baxter@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies or request for further information
Speakingatplanning@cheshireeast.gov.uk to arrange to speak at the meeting

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and for Members to declare if they have a pre-determination in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020 as a correct record.

4. **Public Speaking-Virtual Meetings**

A total period of 5 minutes is allocated for each of the planning applications for the following:

- Ward Councillors who are not members of the Planning Committee
- The relevant Town/Parish Council

A period of 3 minutes is allocated for each of the planning applications for the following individuals/groups:

- Members who are not members of the planning committee and are not the Ward Member
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicants

5. **20/1396M-Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of one new replacement two storey dwelling, 98, Altrincham Road, Wilmslow for Mr & Mrs Neil and Sarah Broomfield** (Pages 11 - 24)

To consider the above application.

6. **19/3036M-Proposed alteration and extension to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store, Mere Golf & Country Club, Chester Road, Mere for Mere Golf and Country Club Limited** (Pages 25 - 58)

To consider the above application.

7. **19/3037M-Listed Building Consent for alteration and extension to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store, Mere Golf & Country Club, Chester Road, Mere for Mere Golf and Country Club Limited** (Pages 59 - 68)

To consider the above application.

8. **19/5782M-Creation of new access onto Church Lane; change of use of part of garden of Mode Cottage to education use; installation of new fencing and new areas of hardstanding, Mode Cottage, Mobberley Primary School, Church Lane, Mobberley for Mr Nick Cook, Cheshire East Council (Pages 69 - 78)**

To consider the above application.

9. **20/0060M-Area for the temporary storage of material arising / required during / for the construction of Poynton Relief Road, providing a replacement area for a material storage area associated with the approved Poynton Relief Road (ref. 16/4436M), Land west of Adlington Business Park, Former Part of Adlington Golf Centre, London Road, Poynton for Chris Hindle, Cheshire East Council (Pages 79 - 88)**

To consider the above application.

Membership: Councillors L Braithwaite, C Browne (Chairman), T Dean (Vice-Chairman), JP Findlow, A Harewood, S Holland, J Nicholas, I Macfarlane, N Mannion, B Murphy, B Puddicombe and L Smetham

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Northern Planning Committee**
held on Wednesday, 17th June, 2020 at Virtual Meeting

PRESENT

Councillor C Browne (Chairman)
Councillor T Dean (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Braithwaite, JP Findlow, A Harewood, S Holland, D Jefferay (Substitute), I Macfarlane, N Mannion, B Murphy, B Puddicombe and L Smetham

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs S Baxter (Democratic Services Officer), Mrs N Folan (Planning Solicitor), Mr P Hooley (Planning & Enforcement Manager) and Mr N Jones (Principal Development Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Nicholas.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PRE DETERMINATION

In the interest of openness in respect of application 18/4540M, Councillor P Findlow declared that he was a former pupil and had been a Governor of The Kings School but had not held that position for over a year.

In respect of application 19/2254M, Councillor T Dean declared that he had called in the application and had pre-determined it and therefore in accordance with the Code of Conduct he exercised his right to speak as Ward Councillor under the public speaking procedure and then left the virtual meeting for the remainder of the application.

In respect of application 18/4540M, Councillor A Harewood declared that she had discussed the application as a member of Macclesfield Town Council's Planning Committee and had pre-determined the application, therefore would leave the virtual meeting prior to consideration of the application.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 18/4540M, Councillor N Mannion declared that he was a former pupil of King's School. Since he had left the school nearly 40 years ago he had not visited the premises until the site visit nor had he had any contact with the school since that time.

In the interest of openness in respect of application 18/4540M, Councillor B Puddicombe declared that he was married to the representative speaking on behalf of Macclesfield Town Council and she was also a representative of the same Ward, however he had not discussed the application nor had he pre-determined it.

It was noted that Councillors had received correspondence in respect of applications 19/5920M and 18/4540M.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(During consideration of the item, Councillor B Murphy arrived to the virtual meeting).

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING- VIRTUAL MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the public speaking procedure be noted.

5 19/5920M- ERECTION OF A PAIR OF 3 BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGS WITHIN AN INFILL PLOT OFF SHRIGLEY ROAD NORTH, LAND BETWEEN 18 & 26 SHRIGLEY ROAD NORTH, POYNTON FOR MS LINDSEY JONES

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Councillor Jos Saunders, the Ward Councillor, Town Councillor Laurence Clarke, representing Poynton Town Council, Hayley Whitaker, an objector and Bob Phillips, the agent for the applicant attended the virtual meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

RESOLVED

That for the reasons set out in the report the application be approved subject to the following conditions:-

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accord with approved plans
3. Submission of samples of building materials
4. Landscaping - submission of details
5. Submission of landscaping scheme
6. Landscaping (implementation)
7. Details of ground levels to be submitted
8. Parking to be provided and retained

9. Contaminated Land (scope of works for the addressing of risks posed by land contamination to be submitted)
10. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
11. Dust management Plan
12. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems
13. Surface water drainage scheme required
14. Contaminated Land (verification report)
15. Scheme of intrusive site investigations / remedial work to be submitted
16. Details of boundary treatments to be submitted
17. Contaminated Land (unexpected contamination to be reported)
18. Nesting birds
19. Breeding birds (incorporation of features)
20. Removal of Permitted Development Rights for Classes, A, B and E.

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

6 19/2254M- CONSTRUCTION OF 3 DWELLINGS FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING DWELLING, FERNLEA, STANLEY ROAD, KNUTSFORD FOR MR PHIL THEWLIS, PLT PROPERTIES LTD

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Councillor Tony Dean, the Ward Councillor, Town Councillor James McCulloch, representing Knutsford Town Council, Brian Chaplin, a Community representative on Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan, objecting and Georgina Daintith, representing the applicant attended the virtual meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

RESOLVED

That the application be refused for the following reason:-

The proposed dwellings would result in an overdevelopment of the site by virtue of their scale and form and would be overbearing to, and out of character with, the adjoining single storey properties on St Johns Road. The development would therefore be contrary to policies SD2 and SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy and policies D1, D2 and H2 of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan.

(This decision was contrary to the officers recommendation of approval).

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice

Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

(The virtual meeting was adjourned for lunch from 12.40pm until 1.00pm. Councillor Mrs A Harewood left the virtual meeting and did not return).

7 18/4540M- ERECTION OF RETIREMENT LIVING HOUSING (CATEGORY LL TYPE ACCOMMODATION) AND ERECTION OF EXTRA CARE RETIREMENT ACCOMMODATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE (USE CLASS C2), WITH ASSOCIATED COMMUNAL FACILITIES, LANDSCAPING AND CAR PARKING, SITE OF THE KINGS SCHOOL, WESTMINSTER ROAD, MACCLESFIELD FOR MCCARTHY & STONE RETIREMENT LIFESTYLES LTD AND YOURLIFE MANAGEMENT SERVICES LTD

Consideration was given to the above application.

(Town Councillor Fiona Wilson, representing Macclesfield Town Council and Chris Butt, the agent for the applicant attended the virtual meeting and spoke in respect of the application).

RESOLVED

That for the reasons set out in the report and in the written update to the Committee, the application be approved subject to the completion of a s106 agreement for a restriction of occupation for the future occupants of both the Retirement Living Housing (Category II type accommodation) and Extra Care Retirement Accommodation. The agreement to also include the provision of £100,000 as follows:

- 1. Age restriction of occupation of flats (55 years plus or spouse thereof)**
- 2. Affordable Housing comprising of:** a commuted sum of £85,000 towards off-site provision to be spent in Macclesfield
- 3. Public Open Space comprising of:**
 - Recreation Open Space - £15,000

And subject to the following conditions:-

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accordance with approved and amended plans
3. Construction of access and parking made available for use prior to first occupation
4. Landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved to include replacement planting
5. Landscaping scheme to be implemented
6. Details of boundary treatments to be submitted, approved and implemented including retention of boundary walls and re-use of stone from new access to close up existing access

7. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan
8. Details of ground levels to be submitted, approved and implemented
9. Foul and surface water drainage to be connected on separate systems
10. Scheme of surface water drainage and management plan to be submitted, approved and implemented
11. Details of external facing materials to be submitted, approved and implemented
12. Windows to be set behind a reveal of at least 100mm
13. Balcony detailing to be submitted, approved and implemented
14. Development to be carried out in accordance with submitted noise survey with mitigation provided prior to first occupation
15. Supplementary Phase II contaminated land investigation to be submitted and approved
16. Verification of remediated contaminated land to be submitted and approved
17. Details of bin / refuse storage to be submitted, approved and implemented prior to first occupation
18. Details of pile foundations to be submitted, approved and implemented
19. Travel Plan to promote alternative / low carbon transport options for staff and residents to be submitted, approved and implemented
20. Electric Vehicle Infrastructure to be provided prior to first occupation comprising of three Mode 2 compliant Fast Electric Vehicle Charging Points with cabling provided for a further three units (to enable the easy installation of further units)
21. Scheme of dust control to be submitted, approved and implemented
22. Submission, approval and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan
23. Obscured glazing on side elevations of upper floors
24. Accordance with Ecological Assessments
25. Nesting bird mitigation measures to be submitted, approved and implemented
26. Details of external lighting to be submitted, approved and implemented
27. Incorporation of features into the scheme for use by breeding birds to be submitted, approved and implemented
28. Details of cycle storage to be submitted, approved and implemented

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 3.00 pm

Councillor C Browne (Chairman)

Application No: 20/1396M

Location: 98, ALTRINCHAM ROAD, WILMSLOW, SK9 5NQ

Proposal: Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of one new replacement two storey dwelling.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Neil and Sarah Broomfield

Expiry Date: 10-Jul-2020

SUMMARY

The proposal lies within a residential area within Wilmslow, where the principle of development is acceptable. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area and is not within any designated character areas. The replacement dwelling would be of a contemporary design, which would be different from the houses surrounding it. However, both the NPPF and local policies support innovative design. The streetscene around the site is relatively varied. In this context, subject to conditions regarding materials, finishes, detailing, landscaping and boundary treatments, the development would not be harmful to the character of the area and would comply with the relevant national, local and neighbourhood plan policies.

The proposed development would have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties, taking into account the existing relationship. Subject to conditions the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of its impact on the mature landscaping.

Despite the objections received, the proposal would comply with relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are not considered to be material considerations that indicate a decision to be made otherwise. In the light of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REPORT

The application has been called in by the Local Ward Councillor. The call-in was requested for the following reason:

“Further to our chat last week and my detailed study of the area around this section of Altrincham Road it seems to me that this proposed development would not be sympathetic to the local character. It would not integrate into its surroundings and would be totally out of keeping with the street scene and general architecture of all other nearby properties.

The recently-adopted Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan’s Policy H2 “seeks to reinforce character and identity through locally distinctive design and architecture” – this very minimal, avant-garde, contemporary design would look completely alien with its very visual position on a prominent main gateway to Wilmslow where every neighbouring dwelling on both sides of Altrincham Road is of traditional Edwardian style with Cheshire brick walls and pitched slate tiled roofs.

I would like to call-in this Application to be discussed and debated by the Northern Planning committee.”

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is a detached house in a predominately residential area of Wilmslow. The existing property appears to date from the 1930s, like many of the other properties in the vicinity. There is a variety of architectural designs in the surrounding area and a mix of single and two storey properties.

There is mature landscaping along the boundaries of the site. The site backs onto an area of open space, Carnival Field.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing property and the construction of a new detached property. The house would be of a contemporary design. The scheme retains the landscaping along the boundaries of the site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

04/1178P – approved – 23 June 2004

Two storey rear extension & single storey side & rear extensions

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

PG 2 – Settlement Hierarchy

SD 1 – Sustainable Development Principles

SD 2 – Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SE 1 – Design

Appendix C – Adopted Parking Standards

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP)

DC3 – Design – Amenity
DC6 – Design – Circulation and Access
DC38 – Residential – Space, Light and Privacy

Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan (WNP)

LSP1 – Sustainable Construction
LSP2 – Sustainable Spaces
NE5 – Biodiversity Conservation
TA1 – Residential Parking Standards
H2 – Residential Design

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

Cheshire East Design Guide

CONSULTATIONS EXTERNAL TO PLANNING

Environmental Health No objections. Conditions relating to ultra-low emission boilers and electric vehicle charging points

Flood Risk No objections

Highways No objections

United Utilities No objections

Wilmslow Town Council Object on the grounds that it is out-of-keeping with the street scene and contrary to Policy H2 of the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Approximately 100 representations received, just over 70 objecting to the scheme, 2 neutral responses from the Wilmslow Civic Trust and Gorsey Bank Primary School, and over 25 in support of the scheme. The points raised are summarised as follows (the points made within the neutral comments were raised in both objections and support letters, so are covered in these sections):

Objections:

Character and Design

- Design and materials used for the proposed development would not be in keeping with the surrounding period Edwardian properties (flat roof, proportions, materials)
- Visually obtrusive and an eyesore from both Carnival Fields and Altrincham Road, which is a gateway into Wilmslow.

- Development does not address cultural and historic characteristics in proximity to the site – Friends Meeting House (grade II*) and Lindow Common
- Development conflicts with WNP policy H2 and the Cheshire East Design Guide
- The existing property is a period Edwardian property and should be retained and restored. Allowing its demolition would pave the way for the demolition of other historic properties
- The site is on the fringes of Pownall Park – it should be subject to the same planning considerations

Highways Safety

- The proposal would be dangerous to highway safety.
- The site is near to a crossing used by pupils attending Gorsey Bank Primary School. Construction vehicles backing out onto Altrincham Road and parking on the verge could cause a risk to highway safety.
- Tight space to the front of the dwelling would require vehicles to back out onto Altrincham Road

Environmental Considerations

- Increase in pollution from traffic caused by construction works
- Not environmentally friendly to demolish and rebuild the existing house.
- WNP supports re-use of buildings and requires demolition to be fully justified.
- Development does not include any evident renewable technologies
- Removal of the Magnolia tree to the front of the site
- Development would disturb the natural habitat of flora and fauna on Carnival Field.

Issues with plans and drawings

- Proposed plans and 3D models are misleading.
- Plans do not accurately show distances to neighbouring properties.
- No evidence of pre-application discussions.
- No Visual Impact Assessment submitted
- Design and access statement does not comply with the requirements of the design guide.
- Intention to demolish has not been posted

Amenity Concerns

Development would result in loss of privacy, outlook and light to neighbouring properties. It would not meet the minimum standards of policy DC38.

Other Matters

- Potential fire risk from cladding – Fire Services should be consulted
- Lack of notification for the public – no site notice posted.
- Application made during lockdown reducing opportunities to discuss the scheme with advisory bodies and people in positions of authority, such as local councillors
- No evidence of any pre-application discussions

Support:

Character and Design

- Houses along Altrincham Road are of varying designs and periods, examples of modern designs elsewhere in Wilmslow.
- Site is not part of a Conservation Area. The existing house is not of any particular significance
- Design is a modern interpretation of traditional styles and would add to the neighbouring 1930s and Art Deco Properties
- Development would look different but would not be any larger in comparison with footprint
- Objections are subjective and based on personal taste
- Cheshire East Design Guide is receptive to bespoke housing and NPPF states that planning policies should not seek to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.
- Great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design in an area.
- House would be lower in height than the original and surrounding properties. It would be set back from the road frontage. It would not impose in the streetscene.

Residential Amenity

- Development would not encroach on neighbouring properties

Other Matters

- Development which creates jobs and economic growth should be supported
- No increase in vehicles or movement as a result of the development
- Disruption during building works inevitable. LPA could control movements during key periods
- Established trees to be retained
- Dwelling focusses on sustainable and renewable sources

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The application site lies within a predominately residential area of Wilmslow. CELPS policy PG 2 identifies Wilmslow as being a Key Service Centre. Within Key Service Centres, Policy PG 2 supports development of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctiveness of the individual towns.

There is no objection in principle to a replacement dwelling in this location, subject to compliance with the relevant adopted policies of the development plan.

Character and design

NPPF paragraph 124 confirms that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. NPPF paragraph 127 states that amongst other matters developments should:

- function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)

NPPF paragraph 130 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. It also states that where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

At a local level, CELPS policy SE 1 requires developments to make a positive contribution to their surroundings. Amongst other matters, design solutions should achieve a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements. It also seeks to ensure sensitivity of design in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings. This policy also seeks to encourage innovative and creative design solutions that are appropriate to the local context.

WNP policy H2 also applies, which relates to residential design. This requires all new development to meet a high quality of design, by meeting a number of key principles. The following principles are of particular relevance to the application proposal:

- Reinforcing character and identity through locally distinctive design and architecture
- Delivering a scale, mass and density commensurate with the surrounding townscape (particularly for apartment proposals) with sufficient associated amenity space

Cheshire East Design Guide is an adopted supplementary planning document. The first volume sets out a number of key settlement design cues for Wilmslow. It notes that there is a predominance of two storey detached or semi-detached properties. There is a variety of Tudor, Georgian, Victorian and Edward architecture found throughout the town. In terms of materials, Cheshire brick is often used alongside engineering brick for trim detailing and coursing. There are also Tudor elements seen in buildings of various styles and ages.

The second volume focuses on how to implement best practice design. As a scheme for a single replacement dwelling, the chapter on 'working with the grain of the place' is most relevant to this application. It advises that even *"if a contemporary approach is adopted then cues around layout, massing, streets and spaces and even vernacular materials and colour palettes can still be used."*

The NPPF and local policy do not advocate pastiche and also encourage innovation, particularly in relation to sustainable design responses. Consequently, if the design is strong

enough in its context, then it being contemporary and different should not be reason to oppose it per se, especially in an area of already varied townscape character.

This part of Altrincham Road does not lie within any particular character area designation. The existing house is not listed and while an attractive property is not considered to be of such importance to be a non-designated heritage asset. Consequently, while the concerns raised are noted, there would be no legitimate planning reason to object to its removal and replacement.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the impact of the development on the grade II* Friends Meeting House. This designated heritage asset is located around 200m from the application site. Given the distance and the sylvan frontage of the site and streetscene, the proposed would not result in any adverse impact on its setting.

The area around the application site is dominated by a mix of detached and semi-detached properties; most are two storeys, with some examples of roof extensions. The majority of these properties would appear to be contemporaneous with the application property. There are some later infills, such as the property opposite on the corner of Buckingham Road and Altrincham Road. Properties are predominately red brick, although there are examples of other brick types, render and some elements of dark wooden, horizontal cladding. Many of the road frontages include mature landscaping. Overall, this part of Altrincham Road has a pleasant and established character.

In terms of scale and massing, the proposed dwelling would not appear incongruous with its surroundings. It too would be two storey and of a width comparable with others in the vicinity. It would be set back from the road frontage to a similar level as its neighbours and would be screened by mature landscaping, which is shown to be retained. In these aspects, the proposed dwelling would complement the character and take its cues from the characteristics of the wider streetscene.

The most emotive aspect of the design is perhaps its modern form. This is demonstrated by the high number of representations on this application, predominately objecting. One of the main concerns appears to be the flat roof, or more correctly, a shallowly angled/pitched roof (in effect several shallow mono-pitches converging). Unquestionably this departs from the more traditional forms along this street, but given the varied townscape, it would not appear especially out of place or discordant, when viewed from either Altrincham Road or Carnival Field.

Modern architecture often sits better against a foreground or backdrop of mature landscape. The plans show the mature landscaping around the site to be retained. The retention of the landscaping would help to bed the proposed development into its setting. To ensure that landscaping is retained and enhanced, landscaping and boundary treatments will be required by condition.

The Design Officer has been consulted as part of the application. They are supportive of the scheme subject to conditions, including landscaping as mentioned above. They have however raised concerns regarding the materiality of the scheme at ground floor level. They have advised that a more traditional brick at ground floor level with timber cladding at the upper floors may be a more successful approach in this contemporary design. With

contemporary design, it is essential that the finishes are high quality. Conditions are therefore necessary covering large scale details, materials and finishes.

Taking these factors into account it is considered that the proposal complies with the design policies of the NPPF, CELPS and WNP. Of particular local relevance it is considered that the proposal complies with policy H2 of the WNP as a development that has a scale and mass commensurate to the surrounding townscape and by reinforcing character and identity through locally distinctive design.

Sustainability

Concerns have been raised regarding the sustainability of demolishing the existing house and replacing it. In particular, reference has been made to WNP policy LPS 1, which states that the re-use of existing buildings will be encouraged and the demolition of buildings with a view to redevelopment will have to be fully justified.

The design officer has advised that there is a broader sustainability argument around recycling/re-using existing buildings but that doesn't provide grounds to resist replacement with a new dwelling. However, it may be added justification to get a design that outperforms the original, and that in the longer term will offset the more immediate environmental impact of the building's replacement (i.e. a building with high levels of environmental performance offsetting the loss of embodied energy through demolition of the existing building).

The design and access statement states that the proposed dwelling would incorporate an air source heating system and will maximise the potential for solar gain. They have advised that design aspects such as solar control glazing and recessed window apertures to aid energy conservation.

A subsequent statement has been submitted, which explains the rationale behind the re-use; primarily that it will achieve a better energy rating in the long run. They have advised that even with upgrading the maximum EPC rating for the existing dwelling will be C. They have also confirmed that elements such as the foundations will be reused to limit the required for Portland cement. It is also proposed to re-use existing bricks where possible.

It is considered that the applicant has provided the justification required to comply with the requirements of WNP policy LPS 1.

Neighbour amenity

NPPF paragraph 127 states that developments should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers.

Saved MBLP policy DC3 states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property. This includes by loss of privacy, overbearing effect and loss of sunlight and daylight.

Saved MBLP policy DC38 provides guidelines of space between buildings.

96 Altrincham Road

The occupiers of this property have raised concerns that the development would reduce outlook and light to the windows along their flank elevation. At ground floor level there is a kitchen window, at first floor a bedroom and at second floor a study.

There is currently a garage along the boundary with this neighbour, which extends in front of the ground floor window. The sitting room has windows to the front and rear and a glazed roof. Given the existing relationship between the properties, this room would consequently not be materially harmed by the development.

The proposed first floor window serves a bedroom. Saved MBLP policy DC38 states that between windows serving habitable rooms and flank walls, there should be a guideline distance of 14m. Neither the existing relationship nor the proposed would achieve this distance of separation.

The replacement dwelling would move closer to the boundary. The distance between the built forms of the two properties would reduce from around 9.5m to around 7m.

The new dwelling due to its flat roof form would have a lower overall height of around 6m, compared to approximately 7.5m on the existing dwelling. However, the impact of its existing height is reduced by the hipped form, which slopes away from the boundary.

The proposed dwelling would have an overall height, broadly comparable with the eaves of the existing house. As a result, the second floor window of this neighbour, which sits above the roofline, would not be materially affected by the proposal.

The first floor window would face towards the flank wall of the replacement dwelling. This window serves a bedroom, which is a habitable room. As the built form would move closer to this window, there is the potential for it to impact on outlook and light. The outlook already falls short of the guidelines set out within MBLP policy DC38. However, the overall reduction in height would help to offset the harm caused by the increased proximity.

The existing house has a number of windows along the flank elevation, which face towards this neighbour. As such there is currently a degree of mutual overlooking between the properties.

The proposed dwelling does not include any windows the scheme does not propose any windows along the elevation facing this neighbour. As there are presently windows on the existing house, this would improve the relationship in terms of overlooking.

Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the development would not materially harm the living conditions of the occupiers of this neighbouring property and the proposal would comply with policy DC3 of the MBLP.

100 Altrincham Road

This neighbouring property does not have any flank windows which would be affected by the development. While the replacement dwelling would extend beyond the rear of this

neighbouring property, the plans show that it would not breach the 45 degree line in plan view when assessed from the closest window. No windows are proposed on the side elevation facing this neighbour.

The proposed scheme would not adversely affect the amenities of this neighbouring property.

Houses opposite

Concerns have been raised that the proposed development would harm the outlook of the houses opposite the site. Given the setback from the road and the distance of separation, there would be no adverse impact on the amenities of these neighbouring properties.

Parking and highway safety

CELPs Appendix C sets out the adopted parking standards. WNP policy TA1 also requires compliance with these standards. Within Key Service Centres, two spaces are required for dwellings with three or more bedrooms.

The proposed site plan shows two off street parking spaces to be provided. This would comply with the standards set out within Appendix C and required by WNP policy TA1.

Saved MBLP policy DC6 relates to circulation and access. It requires vehicle and pedestrian access to be safe and convenient. In particular it requires the adequate provision of visibility splays, provision for manoeuvring vehicle and for vehicles to enter and leave in a forward direction.

A number of concerns have been raised that the development would prejudice highway safety, primarily during construction works. There are concerns that construction traffic, parking on the verge or manoeuvring could prejudice the safety of school children using the crossing or vehicles turning out of Buckingham Road. There are also concerns that the building works could cause traffic to build up along Altrincham Road.

All construction schemes come with an element of temporary disruption. Given that construction works only continue for a finite period, any disruption caused would not provide justification to refuse the development.

The proposed development would use the existing access and space would remain on the site for parking in line with standards, as noted above. There would be no intensification of the access, as it is for a replacement dwelling.

The concerns raised with regards to highway safety are noted. However, the scheme has been reviewed by the Council's highways officer, who has raised no objections.

Nature conservation

The site lies to the west of Lindow Common SSSI. Concerns have been raised that the development does not satisfactorily address this designation. Concerns have also been raised about the impact on the natural habitat of Carnival Field to the rear of the site.

CELPs policy SE 3 relates to biodiversity and geodiversity. The proposal has been reviewed by the Council's Nature Conservation Officer in relation to this policy. They have advised that they do not anticipate there being any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development. The proposal would comply with the requirements of policy SE 3.

Forestry

CELPs policy SE 5 deals with trees, hedgerows and woodlands. Schemes which result in the loss of or threat to the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows and woodlands of amenity value would not normally be permitted.

There is mature landscaping and trees along the boundaries of the site. While not protected this landscaping makes a positive contribution to the established and sylvan character of the area.

The proposal seeks to retain the existing landscaping. While it has been noted that a magnolia tree is to be lost, overall, the scheme would retain the amenity value of the landscaping.

The Council's Forestry Officer has reviewed the scheme. They have advised that arboricultural information is required with regards to the impact on the retained trees. This relates primarily to the driveway. They have confirmed that this can be dealt with by condition. Subject to conditions regarding tree retention, protection and method statements the proposal would comply with the requirements of CELPs policy SE 5.

Other matters

Concerns have been raised regarding the potential fire risk from the proposed cladding. This is not a matter for planning. Fire safety would be considered as part of the building regulations assessment.

Concerns have also been raised that the application was made during the government lockdown, following the Covid-19 pandemic. The site notice was not posted until after the government lockdown was eased and the period for consultation was extended.

While the local planning authority recommends that applicants use the pre-application advice service, there is no statutory requirement for applicants to do so. The applicant did not engage in pre-application discussions. However, this is not a reason to refuse the current application. Similarly there is no statutory requirement for applicants to submit an LVIA or design and access statement for an application of this type. There is no requirement for the developer to post intention to demolish on a scheme of this nature. The demolition is included within the planning application.

The inaccuracies with the plans, related to the plan within the legend of some drawings. This has been updated and these plans now reflect what is shown on the proposed block plan.

The application site does not lie within the three parks character area. The policies which apply to developments in these character areas do not apply to the application scheme.

All applications must be judged on their merits. The redevelopment of this site would not necessarily mean that a contemporary design would be appropriate or supported elsewhere.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal lies within a residential area within Wilmslow, where the principle of development is acceptable. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area and is not within any designated character areas. The replacement dwelling would be of a contemporary design, which would be different from the houses surrounding it. However, both the NPPF and local policies support innovative design. The streetscene around the site is relatively varied. In this context, subject to conditions regarding materials, finishes, detailing, landscaping and boundary treatments, the development would not be harmful to the character of the area and would comply with the relevant national, local and neighbourhood plan policies.

The proposed development would have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties. Subject to conditions the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of its impact on the mature landscaping.

Despite the objections received, the proposal would comply with relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are not considered to be material considerations that indicate a decision to be made otherwise. In the light of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Three year time limit**
- 2. In accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Samples of materials and details of finishes**
- 4. Large scale details of windows, doors, roofs**
- 5. Submission of landscaping scheme (hard and soft landscaping)**
- 6. Implementation of landscaping scheme**
- 7. Details of finished levels (spot levels and site sections)**
- 8. Details of boundary treatments**
- 9. Tree retention**
- 10. Tree protection during works**
- 11. Arboricultural method statement**
- 12. Provision of car parking**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.



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Application No: 19/3036M

Location: MERE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, CHESTER ROAD, MERE, WA16 6LJ

Proposal: Proposed alteration and extension to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store

Applicant: Mere Golf and Country Club Limited

Expiry Date: 08-Jun-2020

SUMMARY

The proposed development involves an expansion and enhancement of existing facilities at the Mere Golf and Country Club.

The application proposes alterations and extensions to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store known as 'The Cube'.

The site is within the Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. As described in this report, the development is classed as inappropriate development. Following an assessment of the proposals along with the business case, the independent assessment of the commercial information, and all of the technical matters it is considered, on balance, that the proposed development does demonstrate the very special circumstances required to justify a grant of planning permission.

The application proposes a strong economic case for the development, which will enhance the existing tourism offer and make a contribution to the Cheshire East economy.

The proposals have been amended during the course of the application to address concerns in relation to residential amenity, trees, ecology and heritage.

It is considered that the key issues of objection raised by consultees have been resolved and, subject to no further objections from United Utilities and Natural England, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

PROPOSAL

The application is a major application for planning permission for the expansion of the Mere Golf Resort located in Mere. The application proposes alterations and extensions to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store known as 'The Cube' (as previously approved under 15/0141M).

The proposal includes significant extensions to the main hotel building to provide an additional 64 bedrooms, 41 of which would be located in the new extension. Giving the hotel a total of 145 bedrooms from the current provision of 81. The other extensions provide additional conferencing facilities which cover an area of 700sq.m. The extension providing enhanced conference facilities is located to the east of the building and faces the Mere and wraps around to the north. The extension provides enhanced conference facilities by providing extensions to the existing conference rooms. The extension includes the remodelling of the restaurant area externally, which will comprise brick to match the building. The conference area can be divided up or opened as one space. The extension to the west of the building includes the golf club reception, golf shop, female and male changing rooms, and storage. At first floor the extension includes a terrace area to the east, in addition at first floor a bar and golf club seating area. This replaces the existing facilities at ground floor and allows the existing club lounge to be converted to a larger formal restaurant area. The internal arrangement will be more open plan and legible for guests as a result.

The application proposes an extension to the south of the building, this provides additional hotel rooms. The extension is designed to match that of the existing hotel building. The extension will be constructed on an existing area of hardstanding and tennis court area. The remainder of the tennis courts to the south will become car parking area as the tennis courts are relocated to behind the spa building. The building known as 'the cube' was previously approved under a former application is located to the south of the site. This building will be extended slightly from that as approved and relocated away from a tree that has habitat value. This is proposed to be used as remote office space with ancillary comfort facilities. The application proposes a golf starter hut located to the front of the main building overlooking the Mere.

The Stable Building is the only Listed Building on the site and is Grade II. This building is currently used as the spa, offering treatments and contains wellness facilities and sits independently of the main building. Due to the sensitivities around this building, particularly in relation to its architecture and listed status, the scheme has been amended to reduce the harm to this building. The proposed changes to this building now include a dance studio to the rear which fills in an existing area which is used as an outdoor spin studio. The proposal includes an extended terrace area to the east elevation of the building at ground floor, adjacent to the existing indoor swimming pool. An existing small roof terrace area will be removed. The raised plateau area to the rear of the spa building will now include two tennis courts with floodlighting and a small tennis hut, for equipment. There will be a net loss of one tennis court. The third court will be a multi use area in the car park area to the hotel extension.

The proposal includes the provision of additional car parking spaces. There are currently 325 on site, and this proposal following amendments now proposes an additional 49 spaces, taking it to a total of 374. The access points to the site will remain as existing, with two accesses off Chester Road.

During the process of the application discussions have taken place with input from consultees, and a package of amendments has been submitted. This addresses a number of issues highlighted throughout the process.

The amendments include the following:

- Both remote parking areas have been removed to resolve amenity, heritage, ecology and arboricultural concerns..
- The main car park has been redesigned to resolve ecology and tree concerns
- The extensions to the Stables Building (spa) have been significantly reduced in size and it is proposed to raise the height of the bordering wall to reduce the impact of the remaining extensions
- The entrance to the conference area has been redesigned to reduce visual impact
- The entrance to the hotel has been redesigned to better reflect the character of the building
- The building known as 'The Cube' has been relocated by 2 metres, closer to the main buildings, in order to retain an ecologically important tree.

In addition to amendments to plans, an addendum to the planning statement has also been submitted, which further addresses Green Belt matters and addresses chapter 7 of the NPPF which was not included as part of the original submission.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is the Mere Golf and Country Club which covers an area of 3.4ha. The wider site golf course covers an area of approximately 69ha. The club has two access roads, the southern access, is used as ingress and the northern access is the used as the egress. The site includes the Grade II listed building, which is currently used as the spa building and was formerly stables. In addition, the lodge at the northern access is also a Grade II Listed Building, no alterations are proposed to this Listed Building. The main building was partially

destroyed by fire and has been rebuilt. The site has an extensive planning history and has evolved over time.

The site has the Mere to the east which is 'The Mere SSSI/Ramsar', the mere is bordered by private properties. There are properties along Chester Road located adjacent to the entrances to the site. The red line plan shows the proposed car parking areas. However, these have been omitted from the scheme.

The Golf Course is well established with many mature trees. The built area of the site contained within the red line does contain some trees along its boundaries.

RELEVANT HISTORY

The Mere Golf and Country Club site has been subject to several planning applications in the past.

50071P, Temporary training centre, withdrawn 24.08.1987

71783P Extension to building (stable building), withdrawn 13.10.1992

71791P Renovation of existing outbuildings and infill to form a leisure area incorporating squash courts and changing facilities, withdrawn 13.10.1992

78451P, Refurbishment alteration & extension to form squash courts, Approved, 05.09.1994

81398P, Removal of existing grass area and laying of artificial grass surface, withdrawn, 16.08.1995

04/2341P, Construction of new tennis court, Approved, 03.11.2004

06/0785P, Alterations and extensions to new mere hall to provide 85 bedrooms. conversion and extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities, alterations to site access, off-site highway improvements and rationalisation of car parking facilities, withdrawn 20.06.2006

06/0786P, Conversion, alteration and extension of stable block to provide additional leisure facilities, Withdrawn, 20.06.2006

07/1518P, Alterations and extensions to new mere hall to provide 86 bedrooms, conversion and extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities, alterations to site egress arrangements (including demolition of north lodge) and rationalisation of car parking facilities (resubmission of 06/0785P), Withdrawn, 15.09.2007

07/1519P, Conversion, alteration and extension of stable block to provide additional leisure facilities (resubmission of 06/0786P), Withdrawn 15.09.2007

08/1262P, Conversion and extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities (listed building consent), Approved, 10.11.2008

08/1263P, Alterations & extensions to new mere hall to provide 86 bedrooms, conversion & extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities. alterations to site egress arrangements (including demolition of north lodge) and rationalisation of parking facilities (full planning), Approved, 18.03.2009

09/3549M, Variation of condition 3 on application 08/1263p relating to various external alterations, Approved, 22.03.2010

09/3818M, Variation of condition 2 on application 08/1262p (LBC) to include some external and internal alterations, Approved, 07.01.2010

10/3745M, Non material amendment to 09/3549M - variation of condition 3 on application 08/1263P relating to various external alterations, Approved, 19.10.2010

10/4444M, Replacement of 1990s front door with glass and minor non-material working amendment relating to application number 09/3549M (variation of condition 3 on application 08/1263P), Approved, 01.02.2011

15/0141M, Re-development of existing ground store/helicopter hanger and addition of new circulation area to house a gym and cafe, and conversion of existing temporary car park to permanent car park, Approved, 18-Aug-2015

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

By virtue of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 July 2017

MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

PG2 Settlement hierarchy – Other Settlements and Rural Areas

PG3 Green Belt

PG7 Spatial Distribution of Development

SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

IN1 Infrastructure

EG1 Economic Prosperity

EG2 Rural Economy

EG4 Tourism

EG5 Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce

SC1 Leisure and Recreation

SC3 Health and Well-being

SE1 Design

SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity

SE4 The Landscape

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE6 Green Infrastructure
SE7 The Historic Environment
SE9 Energy Efficient Development
SE12 Pollution, Land contamination and land instability
SE13 Flood risk and water management
CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport
CO4 Travel plans and transport assessments

Macclesfield Local Plan (January 2004) (saved policies)

Policy GC1: Green Belt – New Buildings
Policy NE11: Protection and enhancement of nature conservation interests
Policy NE12: SSSIs, SBIs and Nature Reserves
Policy NE14: Nature Conservation Sites
Policy BE15 Listed Buildings
Policy BE17: Preservation of Listed Buildings
Policy BE18: Design Criteria for Listed Buildings
Policy DC3: Amenity
Policy DC6: Circulation and Access
Policy DC8: Landscaping
Policy DC9: Tree Protection
Policy DC13: Noise
Policy DC14: Noise
Policy DC15: Provision of Facilities
Policy DC17: Water Resources
Policy DC33: Outdoor Commercial Recreation
Policy DC63: Contaminated Land
Policy DC64: Floodlighting

There is no neighbourhood plan for Mere.

National Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework
The National Planning Practice Guidance

Other Material Considerations:

Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010
Circular 6/2005 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System

CONSULTATIONS (External to planning)

Sport England - The proposed development does not fall within either our statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595), or non-statutory remit (National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Par. 003 Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306), therefore Sport England has not provided a detailed response in this case.

United Utilities – Initial comments in relation to original scheme. Following our review of Flood Risk Assessment / Drainage Strategy (Ref: 068742 - CUR -00-XX-DR-C 92500, dated 17/06/19 we can confirm the proposals are unacceptable in principle to United Utilities. We request full extent/details of proposed drainage to be provided.

United Utilities has been consulted on amended drainage plans which are now acceptable to the Lead Local Flood Authority. Updated comments will be provided by way of an update to members.

Conditions have been recommended in the event of an approval, in relation to surface water drainage and foul water.

Lead Local Flood Authority – No objections subject to conditions. Comments based on amended plans.

Economic Development – No objections. The comments are considered in detail in the main body of the report.

Highways – No objection. The comments are considered in detail in the main body of the report.

Environmental Protection – No objections subject to conditions.

Natural England – As originally submitted, the application could have potential significant effects on The Mere, Mere Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar Site. Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

The following information is required:

- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Without this information, Natural England may need to object to the proposal.

Natural England requested re-consultation once this information had been obtained. Additional information has since been submitted by the applicant. Natural England have been consulted. Although the consultation period has since expired, their comments on the additional information are expected and will be reported in an update.

Cadent Gas – The information is related to Low and Medium Pressure Assets. Cadent have identified operational gas apparatus within the application site boundary. This may include a legal interest (easements or wayleaves) in the land which restricts activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The Applicant must ensure that proposed works do not infringe on Cadent's legal rights and any details of such restrictions should be obtained from the landowner in the first instance.

If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the gas apparatus then development should only take place following a diversion of this apparatus. The Applicant should contact Cadent's Plant Protection Team at the earliest opportunity to discuss proposed diversions of apparatus to avoid any unnecessary delays.

If any construction traffic is likely to cross a Cadent pipeline then the Applicant must contact Cadent's Plant Protection Team to see if any protection measures are required.

All developers are required to contact Cadent's Plant Protection Team for approval before carrying out any works on site and ensuring requirements are adhered to.

The above requires an informative on any decision notice.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Mere Parish Council – Members of Mere Parish Council have studied the proposal and welcome the investment in the area that the Mere Resort is prepared to make. Due to economic circumstances changing dramatically Mere Parish Council now supports the proposal which will enhance Mere and provide more local employment. However, Mere Parish Council still has serious concerns regarding the lack of parking. We believe there is ample parking for the extra bedrooms but not enough for the overflow on the conference facilities, spa and golf members and the anticipated increase in business.

Mere Parish Council has had discussions with the Management and proposers and have been assured that they have permanent contingency plans to cover this problem.

REPRESENTATIONS

Petition – 335 signatures. The petition on Change.org and was entitled 'Stop the proposed cutting down of trees and protect The Mere's ecosystem'.

A large number of signatures were from international locations or not local to the region. A number of signatures also stated UK or another country of origin as their address with no further detail.

Individual letters of representation

1 letter of representation has been received following the reconsultation on amended plans – which relates to procedural matters only, stating that the reconsultation period was inadequate to review the amendments, and also requiring hard copies of plans.

For the original consultation exercise 9 letters of objection were received and 22 letters of support.

The objections raised are set out below:

- Traffic increase, cars already drive quickly along Chester Road
- Increased demand for more parking
- Noise pollution, outdoor loud music played until 2am large firework and pyrotechnic displays, detrimental to residents health through lack of sleep and that of pets and disruption to wildlife
- Outdoor smoking and seating areas currently cause huge disturbance as noise travels across the mere to neighbouring properties

- Proposals will bring conference facilities and disturbance closer to properties
- Noise is worse over summer months
- For the past 3-4 years helicopters regularly land at the site causing noise and disturbance to residents
- Concerns over disruption to bats due to noise
- If approved the expansion would destroy neighbours' ability to enjoy their homes
- Amenity concerns over satellite car park immediately adjacent to neighbouring property, due to loss of privacy, noise and disturbance.
- The site has grown too much already especially in Green Belt location
- Loss of trees, habitat and wildlife
- Overdevelopment of the site

The letters of support raised the following points:

- Well designed and would be a big improvement
- Demand for additional/better facilities
- The site is growing more popular
- Supporting of health and wellbeing and there aren't many options locally
- Enhancement for Cheshire region
- Benefit to Manchester region as a whole
- In danger of losing its appeal if it doesn't get investment
- Would like Mere to host international events
- Planning application has taken too long raising concerns over outcome

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- Planning Statement
- Planning Statement Addendum
- Framework Travel Plan
- Transport Statement
- Revised Design and Access Statement
- Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Lighting Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment/Drainage Strategy
- SuDS Report
- Landscape Strategy
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Survey
- Bat Survey Report
- Addendum Bat Survey Report
- Air Quality Assessment
- Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Commercial Needs Assessment
- Supporting Statement

APPRAISAL

Principle of development

Green Belt

The site is located within the settlement of Mere, the site is a golf club with additional facilities including hotel, spa and wellness centre, tennis courts. The extremities of the wider golf course site are curtailed mainly by residential development along the roads surrounding the site. The site is located within the Green Belt and The Mere, although not within the red line edge, is a SSSI Ramsar site which is directly connected to the development as it forms part of the grounds. The site has two listed buildings. One, The Gate House is no longer affected by the development following the received amended plans, the second the Stable Building contains the spa and wellness facilities within.

The site is predominantly a leisure facility which provides a large outdoor sport offering in the golf course, which is very well established both physically and historically.

Due to the site's location within the Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development. The application proposes extensions to the existing spa and main hotel/golf club building, extensions to the previously approved (however not built) Cube building, tennis hut, ancillary buildings and the construction of two tennis courts.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Within the Green Belt certain forms of development are considered to be not inappropriate and these are set out within PG3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

The construction of new buildings is inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are

- i. buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- ii. provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- iii. the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- iv. the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- v. limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
- vi. limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

The development proposed includes a number of elements.

Based on the policy, it is considered that the proposed tennis courts to be located behind the spa building although at a higher level than the building, would be an acceptable form of development, as they are appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and will

preserve openness. The tennis courts will have floodlighting, however this will only be used during the months when bats are hibernating, it is not considered that the light posts will have an impact on openness, in addition it means that the facility can be used all year round. The proposal also includes a small tennis hut.

The proposed tennis hut will measure 2.4x5m and will measure 3.8m in height. It will be constructed from timber with a brick base and tile roof. The proposed hut is considered to be modest in size and will contain an accessible toilet and storage for tennis equipment.

The application also proposes a golf starter hut which will be designed mainly from glass with a tile roof, and timber frame. The hut measures 5.6x6.5m and 3.8 to the ridge of the roof, a clock is proposed on top with a weather vane. The building is ornamental in design as it will be positioned between the main frontage of the building overlooking the lake.

It is considered that both buildings are ancillary to the tennis court and golf course use and are both considered to be an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt. It is considered that the buildings due to their modest form, especially in the context of the scale of other development on the site, preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Therefore they are acceptable.

The main proposals include the extensions to the main hotel building and the stable building which contains the spa.

The buildings due to their scale and use go beyond what is considered to be ancillary to outdoor sport and recreation, therefore the extensions must be assessed under part iii of policy PG3 of the CELPS.

The policy requires that extensions and alterations do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building. The main building was destroyed by fire in the 1970s and was largely rebuilt. The modern planning history for the site goes back to 1987 which includes various additions. The most extensive approved in 2009 which included alterations & extensions to new mere hall to provide 86 bedrooms, conversion & extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities, alterations to site egress arrangements (including demolition of north lodge) and rationalisation of parking facilities. This application was approved following a case was put forward for Very Special Circumstances as it introduced significant additions which were disproportionate and resulted in 121% extensions to floor area.

The extensions proposed as part of this application take the additions further and propose a 246% increase in floor area to the main building from the pre-2009 additions (i.e. from the "original" position). For the purposes of Green Belt policy, any further extensions to the building would be considered as inappropriate development and that is clearly the case with this application.

'The Cube' building which received planning permission in 2015 has not been built, one condition in relation to this permission has been discharged, however from visiting the site the development has not commenced on the ground. The principle of development has been established, however this application proposes a larger version, which sees an increase in volume of 143 cubic metres resulting in a volume percentage increase of 11.35%. The extension to the previously approved original scheme is not considered to be disproportionate and is considered to be acceptable.

To help gauge the impact on the openness of the Green Belt from the overall scheme, the extent of the extensions in relation to the existing building on site are also included below.

In terms of the additions to the existing buildings these would result in a 55% increase in floor area over existing for the main building.

For the stable/spa building the increase would represent a 23% increase in floor area from the existing situation.

A series of volume calculations have been provided by the applicant based on the amended plans which break down the individual elements of the site.

Element	Existing Volume (m3)	Proposed Volume (m3)	Difference (m3)	% Increase
Hotel	19700	30370	10670	54.16%
Conferencing	5770	8372	2602	45.10%
Golf Club	2608	3052	444	17.02%
Spa	5105	6566	1461	28.62%
Cube (already approved under 15/0141M)	1260	1403	143	11.35%
Total	34443	49763	15320	44.48%

The impact on the openness of the Green belt as a result of the extensions is discussed in more detail below. In summary the proposals amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This is definitional harm. There will also be a loss of openness and some limited encroachment of built development to the east that would conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Substantial weight must be given to this identified harm to the Green Belt. Any additional harm resulting from the scheme must then be considered, before considering whether other considerations in favour of the development exist that clearly outweigh the identified harm.

Consideration of additional harm and the case for Very Special Circumstances

Paragraph 144 of the NPPF states that: When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Following revisions to the proposals, an addendum to the planning statement has been provided which sets out the case for Very Special Circumstances.

In terms of openness, the applicant considered that the development would cause only limited harm to openness, due to development being focussed around existing significant built development. The design ensures that any additional buildings are seen as part of the

existing development and none extend above the current height parameters. No key vistas through the site are interrupted.

With regard to this point, whilst the development is focused around the main building, this would be the case for any extensions to the building. It is true that the proposal does not increase heights across the entirety of the site, however openness has both spatial and visual aspects. The two extensions to the main building in particular as can be seen from the plans are significant and it is difficult to argue that these only have limited harm to openness. The proposed design does not appear subservient to the main building. The conference building and new golf club area design introduces additional bulk and through the bold design and materials and would actually become a key feature of the building and appears as a main focal point of the development as it wraps around the corner of the building providing a conference facility grand entrance. This extension would also slightly encroach to the east towards the lake, however this is considered to be within the main developed site as it currently forms circulation space around the building.

The extension to the hotel whilst mimicking the design and materials of the existing building, is not modest in proportion and will dominate an area which is currently laid to hardstanding and partially tennis courts.

It is considered that both large extension elements would have a significant impact on openness within the site. The loss of openness is contained to the parkland setting within the site itself, this is covered within the landscape section and it should be acknowledged that the development itself will not be prominent from public vantage points outside the site which does help to temper the overall impact on the Green Belt.

Matters relating to other harm have been set out in the addendum planning statement, this includes Landscape and Visual Impact, Ecology, Trees, Heritage/Design, Amenity and Environmental Protection, Flood Risk and Drainage and Highways. It is accepted that these matters are no longer making a contribution to 'other harm' as all issues have been resolved as a result of the amended plans and additional information. The matters are discussed in detail within the report.

The main case for Very Special Circumstances is based on the commercial need for expansion.

This case set out by the applicant argues the following:

- There is a compelling need for expansion given the fully mature nature of the current business;
- This need is supported by the strategic objectives of the Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy (2016-2020)
- Significant benefits will be realised to the local economy, including the creation of jobs and a significant increase in GVA;
- The proposals deliver material heritage benefits; and
- The scheme as amended will secure ecological and landscape benefits.

An independent commercial needs assessment review was carried out by Colliers International. This was commissioned by the Council to fully assess whether the business requires the extensions and multi million pound investment to make it viable for the future and whether the commercial case is robust. The assessment was completed in April during the Covid 19 restrictions however the assessor completed a site visit prior to restrictions coming into place. The assessment was carried out based on pre-pandemic conditions of trading and trading potential.

The initial business case for the development stated that the business would not be as profitable into the future and whilst the business is making a healthy profit, this fluctuates. Further due to the size of less than 100 bedrooms and modest conference facilities, cannot compete on the same level as larger hotels and function spaces. The proprietors routinely turn away large parties due to lack of capacity, which can be damaging. Many nights are sold out due to the facility being at full capacity and the business estimated that £1.5m of events business has been lost due to the small size of the conference facilities since 2015.

The independent commercial needs assessment review states that the revenue has fluctuated over the past four years and the revenue split has remained broadly static although there has been a steady decline in green fee revenue which has been offset by an increase in accommodation revenue.

The room occupancy rate has grown over the past four years, which does demonstrate the popularity of the site with occupancy at the end of 2019 at 83.9%.

Wage costs are considered to be the highest cost to businesses such as these, with a wage percentage in 2019 of 39.7%. This coincides with the business providing a high level of service and an increase in labour costs and the introduction of the National Living Wage. The assessment considers this percentage however to be at the upper end of what might ordinarily be expected for this type of business.

The overheads for the business have remained steady, which is typical of a mature business. The EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest Tax Depreciation Amortisation (and Rent)) value was seen in the assessment to be something the market would view as attractive.

With regard to proposed staffing numbers the figures provided by the business shows an increase in FTE 60 which has an increase in 27% over current staff levels. Based on the experience of the assessor the projected increases in staff which are proposed by the existing management, given the current head count seems high, especially with a wage cost running at nearly 40% of revenue.

The conclusions state that there is no doubt that the proposed development would enhance the product offer, making the Mere one of the finest resorts in the UK which would open up new markets and business opportunities. There is also no doubt that the development would provide opportunities to significantly increase revenues and profit. In addition, the report accepts the applicant's argument that a significant uplift in GVA for the local economy would result, and the reasons why it would be desirable to undertake the development from a business enhancement point of view.

Setting aside the desirability of the scheme the conclusion states that in the view of the independent assessment, should the Mere Resort come to the open market in its current form it would generate significant interest from investors and existing operators who would view the

current profitability as sustainable and may well see opportunities to enhance this through further cost savings.

Therefore from the independent review above the proposed development is considered to be a desirable rather than essential expansion. On this basis it is for the desirability for the development within Cheshire East, and the benefits this would likely have on the local economy, to be assessed in the planning balance. It is also important to highlight that it has never been the applicant's case that the existing business will fail in the absence of this proposal coming forward.

The applicant's supporting statement sets what they consider to be the benefits to the local and visitor economy, which are:

- The Mere attracts golf and spa breaks from much further afield than a number of competitors and outperforms them. The business has a good reputation and the site's proximity to Manchester and Manchester Airport, enhance its performance, to the benefit of Cheshire East.
- The proposal would meet a number of objectives set out in the Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy.
- The proposals would increase the size of conference facilities from a maximum of 550 delegates to 950, attracting larger conferences, and will no longer have to turn away larger conferences.
- The proposals will create 60 FTE positions and an estimated 32 additional through the supply chain. Which will result in a GVA to the region of £5.9m.
- The increase in bedrooms and improvements to the spa will enhance the hotel/resort offer within Cheshire East and will add to the reasons to visit the area.
- The expanded facilities would allow the business to sell more bedrooms (which are currently oversubscribed) which will create an additional £7m in annual revenue.

Based on the findings of the commissioned report there is no reason to disagree with the benefits outlined above, although the employment offer shown may be slightly inflated and may not be fully sustainable due to cost.

There are clear benefits to the proposals and the impact this will have on the economy of Cheshire East and have a knock-on effect in the locality and wider region.

The Cheshire East Visitor Economy Team has commented on the proposals.

Cheshire East's visitor economy is worth £921m per year; employing over 11,500 fte's. It is an important economic sector that contributes to jobs, growth and prosperity, both in its own right and in its contribution to Cheshire East's 'Quality of Place'. The ambition is focussed around continuing to maximise growth of the visitor economy, whilst ensuring greater prosperity across the widest number of communities that will lead to greater wellbeing for both residents and visitors. Tourism can be a force for good both in economic terms but also as an essential contributor to the excellent quality of life and place Cheshire East offers. This is a key factor not only in decisions to visit but also in decisions to settle and to invest.

Cheshire East is well positioned to access markets from other parts of Cheshire and surrounding areas, with the highest proportion of visitors being day visitors. Whilst day visitors are welcome, overnight visitors spend more per head, putting more money into the local economy. They also create more job opportunities in the area, meaning Cheshire East

Council's aim is to get our visitors to stay longer. It means giving reasons for day visitors to dwell longer or stay on into the evening and overnight, as well as actively pursuing high level conferences as well as weddings from those parties based outside of Cheshire. Once here the aim is to encourage conference delegates and wedding guests to stay longer or to return to enjoy Cheshire at their leisure.

Working with Marketing Cheshire, the sub-regional place marketing board, Cheshire East Council is promoting the region as a short breaks destination as well as a location for business tourism, activity related tourism, food tourism and weddings. The Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy (2016-2020) articulates strategic themes that help to guide the identification of priorities in seeking to maximise the contribution of the visitor economy; including investment in quality attractions and accommodation provision. It also identifies strategic priorities including developing a distinctive rural tourism offer and profiling a quality food & drink offer in Cheshire East. This means attracting more high-spending 'Cosmopolitans', and to meet their high standards and expectations, we need to improve the quality and choice of accommodation and attractions.

There are a number of key priorities related to this proposed development that are set out within the Cheshire East Council Visitor Economy Strategy (2016-2020)

- Encourage investment in quality tourism product and services in Cheshire East to the benefit of jobs and economic growth
- Investment in hotel development
- Position Cheshire East as a convenient and desirable Business Tourism location
- Significantly increase leisure and business visits from International visitors

A crucial area in relation to the above strategy is Business Tourism; which can have a huge impact on the value of the visitor economy, as well as profiling Cheshire East as a place to do business. The proposed increase in the size of the conference facilities from a maximum of 550 delegates to a maximum of 950 delegates is crucial in Cheshire East attracting larger conferences. Mere Golf & Country Club is already the largest conference facility provider in Cheshire East and the additional capacity will mean the Borough and the County will be able to market itself as a prime conference location; no longer automatically turning away many larger and lucrative conferences. Cheshire East is also currently part of a consortium along with surrounding areas, to interact with and attract high quality science association conferences to the area; and the proposed development will allow for the area to offer an expanded offer.

In relation to the proposed increase in bedroom numbers, it is worth noting that Cheshire East's occupancy levels at key accommodation providers have increased by 14% over the past seven years; showing increases year on year. There has also been an increase of 28% in a key performance measure where room revenue is divided by rooms available to give the price received per room. Additionally and especially for hotels in the North of the Borough it is noted that the ability to welcome additional large parties on top of normal occupancy is becoming increasingly difficult with in most occasions potential customers choosing to stay in Manchester rather than Cheshire.

In the context of Marketing Cheshire's strategic vision for the sub-region there are a number of relevant points to note including:

- Identification of the need to improve the quality of the destination product offering.
- The key target markets in terms of profile, behaviour and spend for Cheshire include 'independent' market segments – especially traditionalists and cosmopolitans.
- Marketing Cheshire say that developments such as The Mere Golf & Country Club require significant private sector investment. Their delivery will make a massive statement about Cheshire as a place to invest. Cheshire is passionate about quality – quality of facilities, experience and service. We want quality to define the experience at every stage in the visitor's journey. Quality is not about price – it is about exceeding visitor expectations.

It is also becoming clear that the 'experience' economy is growing as consumers seek out memories in favour of material possessions. The developments planned at The Mere Golf & Country Club will increase the quality offer of experiences within Cheshire East and will add to the reasons to visit the area.

The consultation response above from Cheshire East Visitor Economy Team supports the proposals and states that clearly the proposals and the investment would meet a growing need in the area for bedrooms leading to overnight stays and for larger conference facilities that would attract international conferences. This proposal would accord with a number of aims of the Cheshire East Council Visitor Economy Strategy (2016-2020).

Policy EG4 of the CELPS states that the Local Plan will protect and enhance the unique features of Cheshire East that attract visitors to the area, including their settings whilst encouraging investment.

This will be achieved through various means, two of which are appropriate in this case:

ii. Protecting visitor attraction sites

iii. Protecting the enhancement and expansion of existing visitor attractions and tourist accommodation, and the provision of new visitor and tourism facilities, in sustainable and appropriate locations.

The policy goes on to state that proposals for tourist development outside of the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will be supported where:

Either c. There is evidence that the facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction.

And a. The sales, design and use of the proposal is compatible with its wider landscape or townscape and would not detract from the character or appearance of the area; and

- It would not be detrimental to the amenities of local residential areas; and
- The proposals are served by adequate access and infrastructure; and
- The site has access to local services and employment.

As the site is an existing site which provides an attraction through the hotel, spa and championship golf course it is considered that the policy is applicable to this case. As the site is not within a principal town or key service centre, there needs to be evidence that the facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction. The facilities are to enhance the offer provided at the golf course which is well established and is considered to

be an attraction particularly for its hospitality offering. The proposals would not detract from the character or appearance of the area, which is discussed in the heritage and landscape sections of the report. The access and infrastructure is adequate which is addressed in the highways section of the report. The site is existing, and currently provides employment, and the town of Knutsford is a short distance away where there is good access to local services and transport links.

It is considered that the proposal is supported through policy EG 4 and for the reasons mentioned would accord with policy EG 2 which focuses on the enhancement of the Rural Economy outside of Principal Towns, Key and Local Service Centres.

Sequential Assessment

Due to the scale of the proposals which could accommodate up to 950 conference delegates and providing a total of 145 bedrooms, there is a concern that this could take revenue away from town or local centres where development of this scale is encouraged, in order to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres.

Policy EG5 promotes a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce, and states that Principal Towns will be the main focus for among other things, leisure and tourism, and that town centres will be promoted as the primary location for leisure uses.

Paragraph 86 of the NPPF states that:

Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.

The glossary defines main town centre uses as:

*Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and **tourism development** (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, **hotels and conference facilities**).*

The proposed development is not in accordance with an up-to-date plan as it proposes inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Therefore paragraph 86 of the NPPF is engaged.

The hotel and resort is existing and therefore the offer it provides along with the golf course are locational reasons why expansion of the existing conference and hotel facilities are proposed to take place on this site.

A sequential assessment has been carried out by the applicant and includes a review of sites in Knutsford, Wilmslow and Altrincham which are the closest town centres to the site.

The following criteria were used to search for alternative sites:

- At least 1.5ha in size, in order to accommodate a similar scale form of development (the totality of the floorspace, bedrooms and required ancillary development)

- To be within walking distance to a train station
- To be within a visible and prominent location for visitors to the town for both leisure and business purposes.

Based on the criteria, no sites were currently deliverable within Knutsford. The sites that met the criteria were both green spaces, The Moor and Knutsford Heath where built development is restricted.

No suitable sites were deliverable in Wilmslow, the land part of Wilmslow Cricket Club and fields associated with Wilmslow High School are designated as open space and are protected.

No suitable sites were deliverable within Altrincham. No sites met all criteria, further it does not fall within the drive-time area and was included for robustness. The assessment states that the location within Greater Manchester proximity to sporting venues, the M56, close to the city centre and airport means that in reality it serves a different tourist accommodation market and catchment.

It is considered that based on the information set out above there are no alternative sites suitable for the level of development within or on the edge of the main towns within close proximity to the site. The findings from the information provided are acceptable.

It is considered therefore that the location of the expansion is acceptable and would not detract from local Town Centres due to the nature of the development and what it currently offers on site. The proposal meets the requirements of policies EG2 and EG4 as set out earlier in the section and will therefore make a positive contribution to the Cheshire East Economy.

Very Special Circumstances Conclusion

In order for the proposals to be acceptable the harm to the Green Belt through disproportionate additions resulting in a loss of openness, and minor encroachment of built development which conflicts with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, and any other harm, must be clearly outweighed.

In terms of “other harm”, the loss of trees has been largely mitigated for through a landscape scheme and through amendments to the proposal, as such this is no longer weighing against the proposals. The impact on the heritage asset is now considered to be neutral as the scheme provides some heritage benefits through the design which compensates for any minor impact to its setting. As noted in the report, all other site planning issues such as residential amenity have been addressed and do not add any further additional harm.

The harm caused to openness is considered to be significant due to the growth of the site in recent years and the proposed further growth, which is well in excess of what could be considered proportionate. Whilst this carries substantial weight the harm is largely limited to the spatial dimension of openness.

In terms of visual aspects of the Green Belt and the impact of the development, the harm is more limited. The landscape officer has concluded that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape. The site is clearly visible from private properties, as are the private properties from the site. However, the site is not readily visible from public vantage points, due to its location along a long driveway and within a parkland setting.

It is considered that whilst the extensions are significant and the new entrance and wrap around extension would dominate the northern corner of the building, the design would give a greater sense of arrival, which is currently not experienced due to the current arrangement which is not particularly legible. The extensions to the bedrooms area would be significant, however would be located on an existing area of hardstanding so would not encroach beyond the built development of the site. The design compliments the existing hotel building.

The economic benefits of the scheme are a considerable factor in the planning balance. The proposal would enhance the visitor experience, would provide facilities suitable for international conferences, and provide a level of accommodation to support this, in addition further improvements to the spa offer and golf club offer are proposed through enhanced facilities. The proposal would create full time employment of around 60 jobs. It is considered that this site presents a unique opportunity to enhance the leisure and tourism offering locally, which would be of regional significance. The site would make a significant contribution to the local economy which has support of the Council's visitor economy team, stating that the amount and type of development is required within the borough.

It is concluded that the proposed opportunity to enhance the site and the economic and social benefits arising from it clearly outweighs the definitional harm by way of inappropriateness and the identified harm resulting from loss of openness and encroachment. As such it is considered that very special circumstances do exist to justify a grant of planning permission.

Highways/Accessibility

The site is currently in use as Hotel & Spa and also Golf, the proposal is to increase the number of bedrooms by 64 and provide additional conference areas by 643 Sq.m.

A number of objections have been raised in relation to car parking and current problems occurring at the site.

A revised plan has been submitted that has removed some of the parking areas within the site, the total number of spaces is now 374 spaces across the site. The total number of bedrooms is 145 including the additional 64 and the number of spaces far exceeds the CEC standard of 1 space/bedroom as set out in the Cheshire East Local Plan.

Appendix C (Parking Standards) of the Cheshire East Local Plan states that for hotels, other uses within should be accounted for.

The proposal therefore requires 145 car parking spaces for the hotel use and in addition, due to the other facilities on site including the restaurant, retail, leisure areas an additional 134 parking spaces are required.

This gives an excess of 95 spaces which is considered to be acceptable for the remaining uses on the site.

This is an established use and the proposed additional facilities on the site would not result in material traffic impact problems on the local road network.

There are no objections raised to the proposals.

Heritage and Design

The site contains 2 listed buildings - the gate house and the stables. These are designated heritage assets.

The first is the Gate House a Grade II Listed Building with the following list description:

4/47 Entrance arch and gates to Mere Country Club and golf course, Mere New Hall

Entrance arch and lodge. c1840. Red, Flemish bond brick with stone dressings and tile roof. 2-storey gateway with single storey lodges to either side. Road frontage: stone plinth with stone quoins and caps to turrets and surrounds to windows, some diapering in blue brick. Central Tudor-arched gateway. Tudor-arched passenger walkways to either side in slightly projecting square turrets which die to octagonal turrets with domed caps. Lancets to first floor of turrets with a 2-light casement window over central archway with shaped gable above. Lateral one-storey wings have 3-lights casement windows, with shaped gables above. Cast iron gates to central and pedestrian arches of diamond lattice pattern with armigerous shields imposed. Rear: similar to road frontage save that pedestrian walkways exist under the central archway instead of under the turrets on this side. C20 single storey additions to left and right.

The second listed building is the Stable Block used as the spa a Grade II Listed Building with the following list description:

4/48 Stable block at Mere Country Club and Golf 5.3.59 Course at Mere New Hall

Stable block. c1834. Red Flemish bond brick with stone dressings and blue brick diapering. Single storey courtyard plan with tower over entrance arch. East front: central Tudor archway. Square turrets to either side with stone quoins, dying to octagonal turrets. Slightly recessed tower stage above with stone quoins. One-light casement window with hood mould and stone surround. Circular clock face above, the lower half embedded in brick wall, the upper half in a lead cupola which is square in plan and of two moulded quadrant stages with a small semi-circular cap and weather vein above. To either side are brick walls divided by pilaster buttresses with stone quoins and cornices with octagonal domed tops. Central bays to either side have single-light casements with stone surrounds and small decorative gables. Small octagonal turrets to left and right-hand corners also with stone quoins, cornices and domed caps.

The hotel itself has a historic core, which has been extended and remodelled following fire damage in the 1970s. This can be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. The impact of the proposed development/works on the designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting based on the revised scheme has been assessed by the Heritage Conservation Officer.

With regard to the Gate House, following the removal of the car parking area there is now no concern as there is no adverse impact.

For the Stables Building, following the reduction in height and mass, the proposals have a neutral impact. The elegant stables building with its imposing main elevation depicting diaper brickwork features, a clock tower and stone details to the elevation creates historical context to the site along with a remaining 19th Century element to the hotel.

The revised proposal seeks to extend the leisure and spa facilities by enclosing more of the open elements at the rear and extended it sideways to create more usable indoor space.

However, it excludes the first floor café element of the previous scheme, which is an improvement. There are no concerns regarding the proposed rear alterations/extensions.

The applicant has suggested an increase in wall height and a reduction in the proposed extension to the stable block such that the wall would now screen any impact of the extension. This part of the stable building is a modern addition and the impact of this when seen from the car park would be neutral.

For the Hotel, part of the hotel is made up of historic fabric. This has been extended and modernised to adapt to hotel use. The proposed 3-storey extension is large and would create a very large building that would dominate the setting of the stable block. Whilst this building would have always been subservient, the original hall would not have extended as far.

For the landscaping, the proposals include the creation of a path and reinstatement of a wall to divide the spaces of the car park. The suggested illustrations appear acceptable and the council would seek quality natural materials to ensure that the landscape design does.

The applicants have submitted details of walls dividing the large expanse of car parking area located between the listed stable building and the hotel to 'break up the area' and this would generally reflect the historic layout. It is noted that there would have been a form of enclosure from the stable block to the original Mere new hall. This is evident from the historic maps as lines/broken lines. In my view this would improve the appearance of the car park and reduce the dominance of the car park on the setting of the listed buildings. This is a positive impact subject to a condition matching materials to the stables and using traditional bond, mortar mix and natural stone details.

In conclusion, the revised design is an improvement on the previous scheme.

In terms of the impact of the hotel extension on the setting of the listed stables, it does have a slight negative impact when viewed in context with the stables as one enters the car park as it is much bigger, however this is considered to be outweighed by the improvements to the car park which will have a positive impact on the setting of the listed building, therefore the proposals overall would have a neutral impact on the setting of the listed building and paragraph 196 of the NPPF is not engaged.

In terms of the proposed changes to the listed building itself, the extension would have a minimal impact over and above the existing extension that has had permission. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Cheshire East Local Plan policy SE7.

The proposed design of the extensions is considered to be acceptable. The proposals come as a package of remodelling, therefore the main focal point of the building will change. The proposed design will give more legibility to the scheme as patrons will have a greater sense of arrival, which is currently toned down and confusing due to several entrance points including a service entrance. The materiality of the main extension providing the conference facilities and golf facilities is very important. The materials must be submitted to the LPA for approval, as the design is bold and therefore must be finished to a high quality standard, this includes the screening for the terrace and balcony areas.

With regard to the extension to the hotel, this mimics the existing design of the hotel bedroom extensions in terms of materiality, proportions and fenestration. This is acceptable however, again, materials must be submitted for approval to ensure that the match is acceptable. The design is considered to accord with policy SE1 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

Landscape Impact

As part of the application a Landscape and Visual assessment has been submitted, the assessment indicates that it has been undertaken in accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact assessment – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013 (Third Edition).

The application site is located in Mere to the north of the A50 Warrington Road, the Chester Road forms the western boundary and further to the east by Mereside Road; there are residential properties along each of these boundaries. The wider application site includes a golf course and two meres, Little Mere and The Mere, the application site also contains a number of listed buildings, a Site of nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), in addition the site is located within the boundary of The Green Belt and is also located within the Rostherne/Tatton Park Local Landscape Designation Area (LLD), Formerly ASCV. The assessment identifies the National Character Area (NCA61) and that the application site is located with the area identified in The Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment (2018) as Woodland Estates and Meres Character Type, and specifically the Tatton & Rostherne 5d Character Area.

The Landscape Assessment identifies a number of broad character area descriptions, Parkland Estate, Farmland, Residential and the site itself – Golf Course, the sensitivity of these is identified as high, medium, low and medium to low respectively. The magnitude of change for the Parkland Estate, Farmland and Residential areas is identified as negligible, as is the magnitude of effect for the site itself (Golf Course). The assessment indicates that landscape effects would be slight-moderate.

The Visual assessment identifies nine viewpoints (Fig 9), five are residential and these range from no visual effect to a moderate effect, the remaining viewpoints are from paths and road and range from no effect to a moderate effect.

The landscape officer broadly agrees with the landscape and visual assessment. Mitigation as shown on the submitted Detailed Landscape Plans (Drawings 07, 08 and 09) will reduce the overall landscape effects. Therefore no objections to the proposals are raised on landscape grounds.

Trees

The land surrounding the Golf Club is listed on the national inventory as Priority Wood-Pasture, Deciduous woodland and Parkland habitat. There are no designated Ancient Woodland within the application site, nor are any trees listed in the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory, however it is noted in the Arboricultural Statement that there are a number of substantial trees, some of which from their description and characteristics may have potential veteran status.

Trees within the Mere Golf and Country Club grounds are currently not afforded protection by a Tree Preservation Order or lie within a designated Conservation Area.

The revised Arboricultural Assessment has identified 20 individual trees to be removed to support the development. T62 is to be removed due to its condition.

Following the submission of amended plans, a number of trees set out to be lost will now be retained and there has been sufficient mitigation for the loss put forward through a landscape scheme. The proposal also retains older trees that have a high ecological value for habitat, which is a positive amendment.

The proposal is now considered to be acceptable in arboricultural terms subject to conditions.

Ecology

Statutory Designated Sites

This application falls within Natural England's SSSI impact risk zones associated with the nearby The Mere SSSI/Ramsar.

It is noted that Natural England have made further comments on the application indexed on the 28th February 2020. Natural England are requesting a copy of the Habitat Regulations Assessment for the site, and confirmation the drainage proposals.

It is advised that the required information must be submitted to NE and their further advice obtained and considered prior to the determination of the application.

Natural England has been consulted on the revised proposals and the additional information supplied.

Wood Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitats

The landscape around the golf club is listed on the national inventory of Priority Wood-Pasture and Parkland habitats. The inventory acknowledges that the park has been re-landscaped and used as golf course. I advise that this is however not to the long term detriment of the parkland.

Habitats of this type receive protection under Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SE 3.

The main nature conservation interest of the parkland is the presence of mature trees with deadwood which in turn supports a range of wildlife.

The earlier proposals at this site resulted in the loss of six trees with significant deadwood habitats which made a major contribution to the ecological value of the parkland habitats on site. The proposals have now been revised to ensure that all of these trees are now retained. No additional trees would be lost as a result of the revised proposals.

The proposed development would still result in the loss of a number of trees. Many of the trees lost are ornamental plantings and/or are too immature to contribute significantly to the existing ecological value of the parkland habitats present on site. The loss of maturing trees, such as T56 and T53 would, however, have an impact on the future nature conservation interest of the parkland as these trees have the potential to support significant habitats in the medium term.

Suitable compensatory tree planting is therefore required for the loss of T56 and T53. It is advised that from a nature conservation perspective the proposed planting would be sufficient to compensate for the loss of trees resulting from the proposed development. The revised proposals would not therefore have a significant adverse impact upon Wood Pasture and Parkland Priority Habitats.

Advice should also be sought from the Council's tree officer on the acceptability of the proposed replacement planting.

Hedgerows

Native species hedgerows are a priority for nature conservation. The hedgerows present on site are largely non-native species or defunct and so of limited nature conservation value.

Roosting Bats – Trees

Five trees have been identified on site as having potential to support roosting bats.

Inspection surveys of these trees have been undertaken, and recently a single bat activity survey has been undertaken, no evidence of roosting bats was recorded, it is therefore advised that roosting bats associated with trees are not reasonable likely to be directly affected by the proposed tree removal.

Roosting Bats – Buildings

Three buildings on site were identified as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. Further bat surveys were undertaken of these buildings to establish the presence of roosting bats. Temperatures were slightly low during the second bat activity survey, but on balance, it is advised that the level of survey undertaken is acceptable to determine the level of bat roosting taking place at the surveyed buildings.

A single bat was recorded as emerging from buildings B01 (the main hotel building) during the surveys. The submitted report states that the bat emerged from a part of the building not affected by the proposed extensions. The location where the bat emerged was subsequently confirmed by the applicant's consultant. It is advised that roosting bats are unlikely to be directly affected by the proposed alterations to the existing buildings.

Lighting

Any additional lighting associated with the proposed development has the potential to have an adverse effect on bats and other wildlife.

The application is supported by a detailed lighting strategy. It is advised that there is relatively limited light pollution of ecological receptors resulting from the proposed lighting scheme. The exception to this is the proposed lighting of the tennis courts which will result in light spill onto adjacent trees which is likely to be significant enough to have a localised effect on foraging bats. Whilst the applicant has made attempts to minimise the extent of light spill from the lighting of the tennis courts, the applicant has also proposed that the tennis courts only be lit

during the bat hibernation season. It is advised that this would be an acceptable means of addressing this issue.

If planning consent is granted a condition would be required to secure the submission of a detailed lighting scheme ensure to ensure that the tennis courts only be lit between the period between the 1st November and the 15th March

Great Crested Newts

Surveys of ponds within 250m of this application have not recorded any evidence of great crested newt. It is therefore advised that this species is not reasonable likely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

Badger and reptiles

No evidence of badgers or reptiles was recorded on site and it is advised that these species are not reasonably likely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

Bluebell

This priority plant species was recorded on site associated with an overgrown hedgerow. The proposed car park extension would result in the loss of a small area of bluebells. It is advised that this would have a minor impact upon this species. To reduce the impact on this species the applicant has proposed to relocate the bluebell plants prior to the construction of the car park.

Breeding Birds

A breeding bird survey report has been submitted in support of this application. The bird survey undertaken was not a systematic breeding bird survey undertaken in accordance with best practice, but rather a series of observation undertaken on site during other ecological surveys on site together with pre-commencement nesting bird checks undertaken on small areas of the site.

It is advised that the application site is likely to support a number of breeding birds, including those species which are considered to be a priority for nature conservation. The proposed development is likely to have a localised adverse effect on nesting birds. This impact would be reduced through further tree retention as described above.

If planning consent is granted standard condition would be required to safeguard nesting birds.

Invasive Non-native plant species

The applicant should be aware that Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is present on the proposed development site. Under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 it is an offence to cause Japanese Knotweed to grow in the wild. Japanese knotweed may be spread simply by means of disturbance of its rhizome system, which extends for several meters

around the visible parts of the plant and new growth can arise from even the smallest fragment of rhizome left in the soil as well as from cutting taken from the plant.

Disturbance of soil on the site may result in increased growth of Japanese Knotweed on the site. If the applicant intends to move any soil or waste off site, under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 any part of the plant or any material contaminated with Japanese Knotweed must be disposed of at a landfill site licensed to accept it and the operator should be made aware of the nature of the waste.

Himalayan Balsam another non-native invasive plant species is also present on site.

The applicant has submitted a method statement for the eradication of these species. The submitted method statement includes a number of suggestions including the use of herbicide for the control of these species. Consent is likely to be required from both the EA and Natural England for the use of any herbicide treatment in the vicinity of the SSSI. It is advised that the submitted method statement is currently too vague to be enforceable.

Therefore in the event that planning permission is granted a planning condition is required to secure the submission of a revised method statement for the control of non-native species.

Ecological enhancement

This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development in accordance with Local Plan Policy SE 3.

The revised ecological assessment includes outline proposals for the provision of bird boxes for priority species that would contribute to this policy aspiration. However, more detail on the number and location of boxes on site is required.

It is therefore recommended that the applicant submits an ecological enhancement strategy prior to the determination of the application or if planning permission is granted a condition should be attached which requires the submission of an ecological enhancement strategy.

Subject to the satisfaction of Natural England with regard to the HRA and additional details which have now been submitted in support of the application, the Council's ecologist does not raise objections to the proposal, subject to a suite of conditions.

Sports Facilities

As part of the application for the remodelling of the site, the site will lose the provision of one tennis court. There are two permanent tennis courts to be provided behind the spa building, and one tennis court will be laid out in the proposed car parking area adjacent to the hotel extension, and will be used for car parking when not in use.

Sport England has commented on the application and stated that it does not fall either within their statutory remit or non-statutory remit. However the loss of any sports facility must be assessed against paragraph 97 of the NPPF which states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

As the site is a private facility, the loss of the tennis courts could occur at any time. However in this case the applicant has stated that during the early stages of the design process, the Mere undertook an assessment of the sports facilities and deemed that 4 tennis courts are not required, hence the proposal for only 3. This meets the existing demand and proposing 4 would be surplus to requirements.

Due to the private ownership and membership of the club, it is accepted that the operator understands the needs of the business and demand for the facilities within. Therefore it is considered that the proposal does not conflict with paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

Amenity

In order for the proposals to be acceptable, it is important that they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of existing residents and that the development is not located within an area which would harm the amenities of future residents, or the proposals would not cause undue harm by overlooking, loss of light or loss of privacy to neighbouring residents.

Objections have been raised by neighbouring properties with regard to noise pollution, this relates to the existing situation and relates to frequent firework and pyrotechnic displays, noise from helicopters, and loud music played externally up until 2am. This is anticipated by objectors to be exacerbated through the expansion of the site.

An objection was raised in relation to the remote car parks at the entrance to and exit from the site prior to the receipt of amended plans. Due to amenity concerns the remote car parks have been removed. It is not considered that the loss of the car parks have had a detrimental impact on car parking provision, as the provision remains acceptable to the Highways Officer.

With regard to noise, an objection was raised by the Council's Environmental Protection team. As a result a noise impact assessment was prepared relating to the potential for noise associated with conferences and events to cause a disturbance to local existing receptors. The statement and conclusions of the report were accepted. For the prevention of public nuisance; the premises operator currently is required to adhere to a site specific Noise Plan. In order for the site to effectively manage their noise output – the Noise Plan shall continue to be applied.

Concerns were also raised with regard to floodlighting as insufficient information was provided with the application. Following initial comments a lighting impact assessment was submitted in support of the application. The methodology and conclusions of the report have been accepted and it is considered that proposed illumination scheme shall not result in light

spillage onto adjoining properties. This concern related to the remote car parking areas which have now been omitted from the scheme.

Therefore following the receipt of amended plans and additional information with regard to noise and light pollution, it is considered that the proposed additions to the golf and country club will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Air Quality

Policy SE12 of the Local Plan states that the Council will seek to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality. This is in accordance with paragraph 181 of the NPPF and the Government's Air Quality Strategy.

When assessing the impact of a development on Local Air Quality, this office has regard to (amongst other things) the Council's Air Quality Strategy, the Air Quality Action Plan, Local Monitoring Data and the EPUK Guidance "Land Use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality January 2017)

This proposal is for the extension and alterations of a golf and country club. In support of the application the developer has submitted a qualitative assessment written by BWB Consulting Ltd dated June 2019, reference MCP2171. The report states that a detailed assessment into the impacts of NO₂ and PM₁₀ during the operational phase is not required in accordance with EPUK and IAQM criteria based on the predicted development flows, and concludes that the development impacts on local air quality will be insignificant. The report also concludes that the potential dust impacts during construction will also not be significant subject to appropriate dust mitigation measures.

That being said, there is still a need for the Local Planning Authority to consider the cumulative impact of a large number of developments in a particular area. In particular, the impact of transport related emissions on Local Air Quality.

Poor air quality is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the public and also has a negative impact on the quality of life for sensitive individuals. It is therefore considered appropriate that mitigation should be sought in the form of direct measures to reduce the adverse air quality impact.

Mere has an Air Quality Management Area and, as such, the cumulative impact of developments in the area is likely to make the situation worse, unless managed.

Modern Ultra Low Emission Vehicle technology (such as all electric vehicles) are expected to increase in use over the coming years (the Government expects most new vehicles in the UK will be ultra low emission). As such it is considered appropriate to create infrastructure to allow charging of electric vehicles in new, modern, sustainable developments.

In order to ensure that sustainable vehicle technology is a real option for future patrons at the site a condition is required to ensure that electric vehicle charging points are installed at the site.

Contaminated Land

The application area has a history of commercial/leisure use and therefore the land may be contaminated.

A Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment (Report Ref: MGR-BWB-ZZ-XX-YE-RP-0001_Ph1_P3, BWB Consulting Ltd., June 2019) has been submitted in support of the application.

The Phase I report recommends a Phase II ground investigation be undertaken in order to further assess identified potential contaminant linkages.

It is noted from the report that there has been a fire on site in the past. Depending on the extent and nature of the fire, risks to Controlled Waters from firefighting chemicals should be further assessed, in addition to the potential contaminants of concern listed within the report, we would expect risks from PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) to also be considered. It would be prudent for the applicant to consult with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service for further information and for the Conceptual Model to be updated as a result of these enquiries.

As such, and in accordance with the NPPF, this it is recommended that conditions be added to the permission should it be granted.

Therefore the proposals accord with policies in the development plan and the NPPF.

Flood Risk

The site within the red edge is located within Flood Zone 1 indicating that the site is not at risk from fluvial or tidal sources.

The application was accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and some drainage details, further information has been submitted as part of the amendments. The FRA has been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority and as a result conditions are required and no objections are raised.

United Utilities (UU) initially commented on the application raising an objection to the initial FRA and drainage strategy and requested that full extent/details of proposed drainage were to be provided. This has now been provided, following re-consultation revised United Utilities comments have not been received at the time of writing the report. Based on the LLFA comments it is expected that the revised FRA and Drainage Strategy are acceptable, however an update will be provided to members on receipt of any further UU comments. If no further comments are received from UU it is considered that this issue has been addressed by the applicant.

It is concluded therefore that the proposals accord with policy SE13 of the CELPS and the NPPF.

Representations

A number of representations have been received in relation to the application, both in objection and support of the application.

With regard to the objections relating to residential amenity for the property directly affected by the satellite car parking area, this area has now been omitted, therefore the concerns raised have now been dealt with.

A large number of objections were from properties located along Mereside Road whose gardens back onto the Mere. These objections related to noise and disturbance through loud music played externally until the early hours, particularly during the summer, catering for weddings and parties. In addition to music, frequent firework and pyrotechnic displays cause nuisance and sleep disturbance to residents and their pets and frequent helicopter activity at the site.

Following the initial submission a noise impact assessment was required by Environmental Protection. Following the receipt of this and the mitigation measures set out currently in the site's Noise Plan, the Environmental Protection Team has removed their objection. This is providing the Noise Plan is strictly adhered to. Should matters of noise and disturbance arise this should be reported to Environmental Protection for investigation and to ensure that the site operates within its licensing parameters and does not cause a statutory nuisance.

Objections also raised in relation to loss of trees and disturbance to wildlife have been addressed in the ecology and tree sections of the report, where both the Council's Ecologist and Arboricultural Officer are satisfied that the proposals are now acceptable following the submission of amended plans, subject to conditions.

A number of objections related to traffic impact of the proposed development, which will arise due to the increase in facilities at the site. The highways officer has commented on the initial and revised proposals and is satisfied that there is adequate car parking to ensure that the proposal is acceptable and the development as a whole will not have a detrimental impact on the wider highway network.

Comments in relation to overdevelopment and Green Belt are addressed in the main body of the report.

A number of letters of support were received for the application. The comments mainly relate to the economic development opportunity for the immediate area and the region, and support to health and wellbeing. A number of the letters were generic text, and several were from members of the club. There is a desire for the facility to be improved and to be able to cater for international events and the investment is welcomed.

Comments relating to this scheme and its merits have been addressed in the main body of the report. Having taken into account all of the representations received including internal and external consultation responses, the material considerations raised have been addressed within the main body of the report.

CONCLUSIONS

The site is within the Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. As described in this report, the development is classed as inappropriate development. Although the visual impact of the development is acceptable, additional harm is

identified in terms of loss openness and encroachment. Any harm to the Green Belt carries substantial weight.

The application proposes a strong economic case for the development, which will enhance the existing tourism offer and make a contribution to the Cheshire East economy.

The proposals have been amended during the course of the application to address concerns in relation to residential amenity, trees, ecology and heritage.

Following an assessment of the proposals along with the business case, the independent assessment of the commercial information, and all of the technical matters it is considered, on balance, that the social and economic benefits arising from the proposed development do clearly outweigh the identified harm. As such the very special circumstances required to justify a grant of planning permission are considered to exist in this case.

The development is considered to comply with all other requirements of Development Plan policy.

It is considered that the key issues of objection raised by consultees have been resolved and, subject to no further objections from United Utilities and Natural England, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

SUBJECT TO

- No further objection from United Utilities and Natural England.
- Referral to the Secretary of State. As a development including inappropriate development in the Green Belt and comprising new floor space greater than 1,000 square metres the decision to approve the application would be subject to referral to the Secretary of State prior to the grant of planning permission.

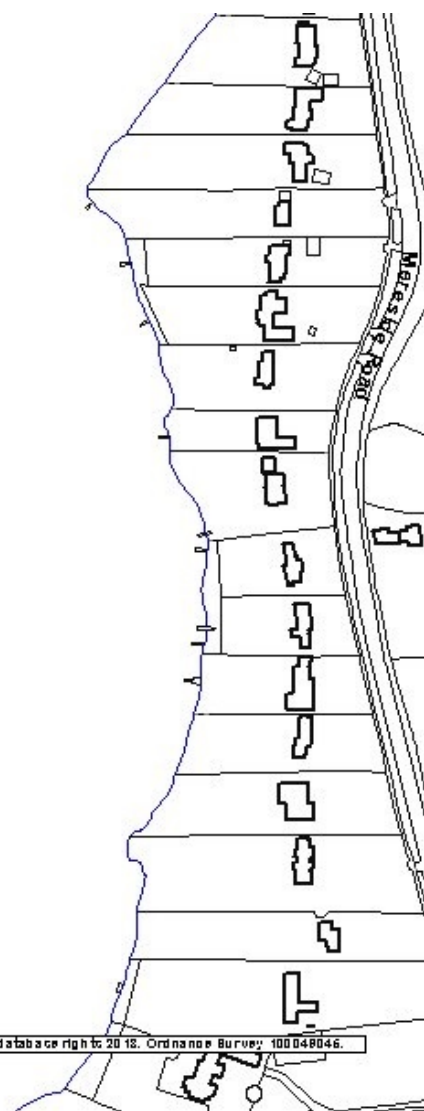
RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. **Time Limit**
2. **Development in accord with approved plans**
3. **Submission of materials**
4. **Matching materials to the stables and using traditional bond, mortar mix and natural stone details**
5. **Tree Retention**
6. **Tree Protection**
7. **Arboricultural Method Statement**
8. **Levels Survey**
9. **Hard and Soft Landscaping – Submission of Details**
10. **Landscaping (Implementation)**
11. **Implementation of submitted landscaping plans**
12. **Submission of detailed lighting scheme**

13. **Restriction of lighting of tennis court to the period between the 1st November and the 15th March.**
14. **Implementation of submitted bluebell method statement.**
15. **Safeguarding of nesting birds.**
16. **Submission of method statement for the control of non-native invasive plant species.**
17. **Submission of ecological enhancement strategy.**
18. **The development in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment.**
19. **Drainage strategy prior to commencement.**
20. **Foul and surface water to be drained on separate systems.**
21. **The noise plan shall continue to be implemented in full.**
22. **Prior to first occupation of each unit, an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the LPA.**
23. **Updated Conceptual Model and Phase II ground investigation to be submitted.**
24. **Verification report to be submitted**
25. **Imported soils to be tested for contamination**
26. **Unexpected contamination to be reported to LPA**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.



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Application No: 19/3037M

Location: MERE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, CHESTER ROAD, MERE, WA16 6LJ

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for alteration and extension to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store

Applicant: Mere Golf and Country Club Limited

Expiry Date: 08-Jun-2020

SUMMARY

The application is for Listed Building Consent for alterations and extensions to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store known as 'The Cube'.

Initial objections raised by consultees have been resolved through the submission of amended plans and the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

PROPOSAL

The application is for Listed Building Consent accompanying the application for the expansion of the Mere Golf Resort located in Mere. The application proposes alterations and extensions to provide additional bedrooms, conferencing and clubhouse floorspace, extension of the Stable Block (Spa) to provide additional leisure and spa facilities, creation of a tennis hut and golf starter hut and other ancillary buildings, alteration and rationalisation of the wider site and car park to provide more parking spaces and additional landscaping and re-development of existing ground store known as 'The Cube' (as previously approved under 15/0141M).

The proposal includes significant extensions to the main hotel building to provide an additional 64 bedrooms, 41 of which located in the new extension. Giving the hotel a total of 145 bedrooms from 81. The other extensions provide additional conferencing facilities which cover an area of 700sq.m. The extension providing enhanced conference facilities is located to the east of the building and faces the Mere and wraps around to the north. The extension provides enhanced conference facilities by providing extensions to the existing conference rooms. The extension includes the remodelling of the restaurant area externally, which will comprise brick to match the building. The conference area can be divided up or opened as one space. The extension to the west of the building includes the golf club reception, golf shop, female and male changing rooms, and storage. At first floor the extension includes a terrace area to the east, in addition at first floor a bar and golf club seating area. This replaces the existing facilities at ground floor and allows the existing club lounge to be converted to a larger formal restaurant area. The internal arrangement will be more open plan and legible for guests as a result.

The application proposes an extension to the south of the building, this provides additional hotel rooms. The extension is designed to match that of the existing hotel building. The extension will be constructed on an existing area of hardstanding and tennis court area. The remainder of the tennis courts to the south will become car parking area as the tennis courts are relocated to behind the spa building. The building known as 'the cube' was previously approved under a former application is located to the south of the site. This building will be extended slightly from that as approved and relocated away from a tree that has habitat value. This is proposed to be used as remote office space with ancillary comfort facilities. The application proposes a golf starter hut located to the front of the main building overlooking the Mere.

The Stable Building is the only Listed Building on the site and is Grade II. This building is currently used as the spa, offering treatments and contains wellness facilities and sits independently of the main building. Due to the sensitivities around this building, particularly in relation to its architecture and listed status, the scheme has been amended to reduce the harm to this building. The proposed changes to this building now include a dance studio to the rear which fills in an existing area which is used as an outdoor spin studio. The proposal includes an extended terrace area to the east elevation of the building at ground floor, adjacent to the existing indoor swimming pool. An existing small roof terrace area will be removed. The raised plateau area to the rear of the spa building will now include two tennis courts with floodlighting and a small tennis hut, for equipment. There will be a net loss of one tennis court.

The proposal includes providing additional car parking spaces. There are currently 325 on site, and this proposal following amendments now proposes an additional 49 spaces, taking it to a total of 374. The access points to the site will remain as existing, with two accesses off Chester Road.

During the process of the application discussions have taken place with input from consultees, and a package of amendments has been submitted. This addresses a number of issues highlighted throughout the process.

The amendments include the following:

- Both remote parking areas have been removed to resolve amenity, heritage, ecology and arboricultural concerns. This has resulted in a loss of proposed car parking spaces, but there will still be an increase across the site.
- The main car park has been redesigned to resolve ecology and tree concerns
- The extensions to the Stables Building (spa) have been significantly reduced in size and it is proposed to raise the height of the bordering wall to reduce the impact of the remaining extensions
- The entrance to the conference area has been redesigned to reduce visual impact
- The entrance to the hotel has been redesigned to better reflect the character of the building
- The building known as 'The Cube' has been relocated by 2 metres, closer to the main buildings, in order to retain an ecologically important tree.

The amendments submitted have addressed a number of issues listed above particularly in relation to the Listed Buildings.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is the Mere Golf and Country Club which covers an area of 3.4ha. The wider site golf course covers an area of approximately 69ha. The club has two access roads, the southern access, is used as ingress and the northern access is the used as the egress. The site includes the Grade II listed building, which is currently used as the spa building and was formerly stables. In addition, the lodge at the northern access is also a Grade II Listed Building, no alterations are proposed to this Listed Building. The main building was partially destroyed by fire and has been rebuilt. The site has an extensive planning history and has evolved over time.

The site has the Mere to the east which is 'The Mere SSSI/Ramsar', the mere is bordered by private properties. There are properties along Chester Road located adjacent to the entrances to the site. The red line plan shows the proposed car parking areas. However these have been omitted from the scheme.

The Golf Course is well established with many mature trees. The built area of the site contained within the red line does contain some trees along its boundaries.

RELEVANT HISTORY

The Mere Golf and Country Club site has been subject to several planning and listed building consent applications in the past.

50071P, Temporary training centre, withdrawn 24.08.1987

71783P Extension to building (stable building), withdrawn 13.10.1992

71791P Renovation of existing outbuildings and infill to form a leisure area incorporating squash courts and changing facilities, withdrawn 13.10.1992

78451P, Refurbishment alteration & extension to form squash courts, Approved, 05.09.1994

81398P, Removal of existing grass area and laying of artificial grass surface, withdrawn, 16.08.1995

04/2341P, Construction of new tennis court, Approved, 03.11.2004

06/0785P, Alterations and extensions to new mere hall to provide 85 bedrooms. conversion and extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities, alterations to site access, off-site highway improvements and rationalisation of car parking facilities, withdrawn 20.06.2006

06/0786P, Conversion, alteration and extension of stable block to provide additional leisure facilities, Withdrawn, 20.06.2006

07/1518P, Alterations and extensions to new mere hall to provide 86 bedrooms, conversion and extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities, alterations to site egress arrangements (including demolition of north lodge) and rationalisation of car parking facilities (resubmission of 06/0785P), Withdrawn, 15.09.2007

07/1519P, Conversion, alteration and extension of stable block to provide additional leisure facilities (resubmission of 06/0786P), Withdrawn 15.09.2007

08/1262P, Conversion and extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities (listed building consent), Approved, 10.11.2008

08/1263P, Alterations & extensions to new mere hall to provide 86 bedrooms, conversion & extension of stable block and squash courts to accommodate leisure facilities. alterations to site egress arrangements (including demolition of north lodge) and rationalisation of parking facilities (full planning), Approved, 18.03.2009

09/3549M, Variation of condition 3 on application 08/1263p relating to various external alterations, Approved, 22.03.2010

09/3818M, Variation of condition 2 on application 08/1262p (LBC) to include some external and internal alterations, Approved, 07.01.2010

10/3745M, Non material amendment to 09/3549M - variation of condition 3 on application 08/1263P relating to various external alterations, Approved, 19.10.2010

10/4444M, Replacement of 1990s front door with glass and minor non-material working amendment relating to application number 09/3549M (variation of condition 3 on application 08/1263P), Approved, 01.02.2011

15/0141M, Re-development of existing ground store/helicopter hanger and addition of new circulation area to house a gym and cafe, and conversion of existing temporary car park to permanent car park, Approved, 18-Aug-2015

18/3759D, Discharge of Condition 8 on approved application 15/0141M, Approved, 07.08.2018

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 July 2017

SE7 The Historic Environment

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004 (saved policies).

Policy BE15 Listed Buildings

Policy BE17: Preservation of Listed Buildings

Policy BE18: Design Criteria for Listed Buildings

There is no neighbourhood plan for Mere.

National Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS (External to planning)

None received

VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Mere Parish Council – Comments received however these do not relate to matters of the Listed Buildings.

REPRESENTATIONS

Individual letters of representation

1 letter of representation has been received which does not discuss matters relating to the listed buildings, and relates to objections with the impact of the planning proposals.

APPRAISAL

Heritage and Design

A heritage impact assessment was submitted with the application which was updated following revisions to the original proposals, which came about as a result of initial objections from the council's Conservation Officer. The heritage impact assessment complies with the requirements of policy SE7 which requires the significance of the heritage asset to be described and reported as part of the application.

The site contains 2 listed buildings - the gate house and the stables. These are designated heritage assets.

The first is the Gate House a Grade II Listed Building with the following list description:

4/47 Entrance arch and gates to Mere Country Club and golf course, Mere New Hall

Entrance arch and lodge. c1840. Red, Flemish bond brick with stone dressings and tile roof. 2-storey gateway with single storey lodges to either side. Road frontage: stone plinth with stone quoins and caps to turrets and surrounds to windows, some diapering in blue brick. Central Tudor-arched gateway. Tudor-arched passenger walkways to either side in slightly projecting square turrets which die to octagonal turrets with domed caps. Lancets to first floor of turrets with a 2-light casement window over central archway with shaped gable above. Lateral one-storey wings have 3-lights casement windows, with shaped gables above. Cast iron gates to central and pedestrian arches of diamond lattice pattern with armigerous shields imposed. Rear: similar to road frontage save that pedestrian walkways exist under the central archway instead of under the turrets on this side. C20 single storey additions to left and right.

The second listed building is the Stable Block used as the spa a Grade II Listed Building with the following list description:

4/48 Stable block at Mere Country Club and Golf 5.3.59 Course at Mere New Hall

Stable block. c1834. Red Flemish bond brick with stone dressings and blue brick diapering. Single storey courtyard plan with tower over entrance arch. East front: central Tudor archway. Square turrets to either side with stone quoins, dying to octagonal turrets. Slightly recessed tower stage above with stone quoins. One-light casement window with hood mould and stone surround. Circular clock face above, the lower half embedded in brick wall, the upper half in a lead cupola which is square in plan and of two moulded quadrant stages with a small semi-circular cap and weather vein above. To either side are brick walls divided by pilaster buttresses with stone quoins and cornices with octagonal domed tops. Central bays to either side have single-light casements with stone surrounds and small decorative gables. Small octagonal turrets to left and right-hand corners also with stone quoins, cornices and domed caps.

The hotel itself has a historic core, which has been extended and remodelled following fire damage in the 1970s. This can be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. The impact of the proposed development/works on the designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting based on the revised scheme has been assessed by the Heritage Conservation Officer.

With regard to the Gate House, following the removal of the car parking area in this vicinity of the site there is now no concern as there is no material impact arising from the proposed development.

For the Stables Building, following the reduction in height and mass, the proposals are considered to have a neutral impact and will preserve the historic interest. The elegant stables building with its imposing main elevation depicting diaper brickwork features, a clock tower and stone details to the elevation creates historical context to the site along with a remaining 19th Century element to the hotel.

The revised proposal seeks to extend the leisure and spa facilities by enclosing more of the open elements at the rear and extending it sideways to create more usable indoor space. However, it excludes the first floor café element of the previous scheme, which is an improvement. There are no concerns regarding the proposed rear alterations/extensions.

The applicant has suggested an increase in wall height and a reduction in the proposed extension to the stable block such that the wall would now screen any impact of the extension. This part of the stable building is a modern addition and the impact of this when seen from the car park would be neutral.

For the Hotel, part of the hotel is made up of historic fabric. This has been extended and modernised to adapt to hotel use. The proposed hotel extension is large and has the potential to dominate the setting of the stable block. Whilst this building would have always been subservient, the original hall would not have extended as far.

The proposals come as a package of remodelling, therefore the main focal point of the building will change. The proposed design will give more legibility to the scheme as patrons will have a greater sense of arrival, which is currently toned down and confusing due to several entrance points including a service entrance. The materiality of the main extension providing the conference facilities and golf facilities is very important. The materials must be submitted to the LPA for approval, as the design is bold and therefore must be finished to a high quality standard, this includes the screening for the terrace and balcony areas.

With regard to the extension to the hotel, this mimics the existing design of the hotel bedroom extensions in terms of materiality, proportions and fenestration. This is acceptable however, again, materials must be submitted for approval to ensure that the match is acceptable.

For the landscaping, the proposals include the creation of a path and reinstatement of a wall to divide the spaces of the car park. The suggested illustrations appear acceptable and the council would seek quality natural materials to ensure that the landscape design achieves a high standard.

The applicants have submitted details of walls dividing the large expanse of car parking area located between the listed stable building and the hotel to 'break up the area' and this would generally reflect the historic layout. It is noted that there would have been a form of enclosure from the stable block to the original Hall. This is evident from the historic maps as lines/broken lines. It is considered that this would improve the appearance of the car park and reduce the dominance of the car park on the setting of the listed buildings. This is a positive impact subject to a condition matching materials to the stables and using traditional bond, mortar mix and natural stone details.

In terms of the impact of the hotel extension on the setting of the listed stables, it does have a slightly negative impact when viewed in context with the stables as one enters the car park due to its scale. However, this is considered to be offset by the improvements to the car park which will have a positive impact on the setting of the listed building. Overall it is considered that the development would have a neutral impact on the setting of the listed building and the proposals would comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and national guidance.

In terms of the proposed changes to the listed building itself, the extension would have a minimal impact over and above the existing extension that has had permission. The revisions to the proposals secured are such that the historic interest of the building is preserved. The proposals are therefore in accordance with the relevant Development Plan policies seeking the protection and enhancement of heritage assets in Cheshire East.

Representations

The Council's Conservation Officer has been involved in discussions regarding the amendments to the scheme in order to make them acceptable with regard to the Listed Buildings on site. The amendments have removed concerns and the scheme is considered to be acceptable and will not harm the heritage assets on the site.

One letter of representation was received from a member of the public, however this relates to the principle of the scheme overall and does not reference the heritage assets. This also applies to the initial comments received from the Parish Council which related to the initial scheme and did not discuss the heritage assets.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposals are considered to preserve the special architectural interest and setting of the heritage assets on site and would be in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listed Building Consent is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

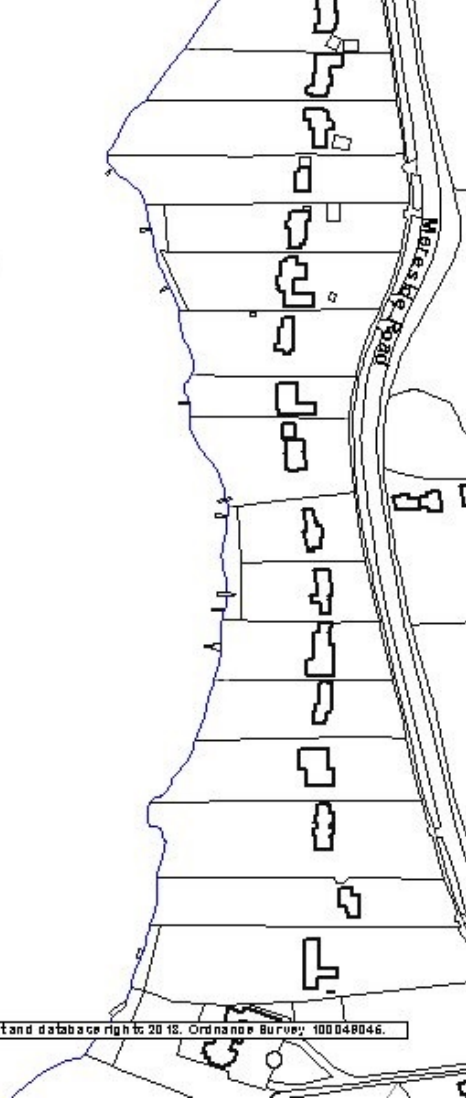
APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. **Time Limit**
2. **Development in accord with approved plans**
3. **Submission of materials**
4. **Matching materials to the stables and using traditional bond, mortar mix and natural stone details**
5. **Hard and Soft Landscaping – Submission of Details**
6. **Landscaping (Implementation)**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.



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Application No: 19/5782M

Location: MODE COTTAGE, MOBBERLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHURCH LANE,
MOBBERLEY, WA16 7RA

Proposal: Creation of new access onto Church Lane; change of use of part of
garden of Mode Cottage to education use; installation of new fencing and
new areas of hardstanding

Applicant: Mr Nick Cook, Cheshire East Council

Expiry Date: 05-Jun-2020

SUMMARY

The proposal seeks relatively minor alterations to this existing residential property, including a new access arrangement.

The site lies within the Green Belt, where there are restrictions on the types of development which may be carried out. The proposed development would not be inappropriate within the Green Belt and would not adversely affect openness. The proposed development complies with Green Belt policy.

The proposal is not considered to have any adverse impact on highway safety.

Subject to conditions, issues of landscaping, heritage and trees would be satisfactorily dealt with.

The proposals, as amended, would comply with relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are not considered to be material considerations that indicate a decision to be made other than in accordance with the Development Plan. In the light of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should be granted.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REPORT

The applicant is Cheshire East Borough Council. As objections have been received to the application, it needs to be determined by the Northern Planning Committee.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

Mode Cottage is a detached property within the Green Belt. It lies immediately to the west of Mobberley Primary School and currently shares its access with the school. There is mature landscaping along the boundaries of the site.

Mode Cottage appears to be present on the tithe maps. It is a non-designated heritage asset and lies within the Mobberley Conservation Area.

It lies within the Manchester Airport Safeguarding Area and an area affected by aircraft noise.

The cottage has an unrestricted residential use

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The description has been amended during the lifetime of the application to reflect what was being proposed on the plans. More details are within the background section of the main appraisal. The scheme includes the change of use of part of the garden to playing field, the widening of the existing access to create two separate accesses and new boundary treatments.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

14/4981M – approved - 25 March 2015

Variation or Removal of condition 11 on application 14/0729M

Condition 11, which restricted the occupation of Mode Cottage, was removed by this planning permission.

14/3913M – approved - 4 October 2014

Variation of Condition 5 to Approved application 14/0729M - Play equipment details; remove brick shed; Add bin store fence; Add low fence.

14/0729M – approved – 17 April 2014

Proposed 2 Classroom single storey modular building with wc's and storage areas. Kitchen extension built onto existing kitchen involving removal of existing wall. Widening of existing access onto Church Lane to form 8 staff car parking areas with tarmac finish. External tarmac play areas with metal fencing. Relocation of existing entrance canopy and relocation of existing play equipment.

ADOPTED PLANNING POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy

MP 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
PG 3 – Green Belt
SD 2 – Sustainable Development Principles
SC 1 – Leisure and Recreation
SC 2 – Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities
SE 1 – Design
SE 3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4 – The Landscape
SE 5 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
SE 7 – The Historic Environment
SE 12 – Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
CO 1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport
Appendix C – Adopted Parking Standards

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan

GC1 – Green Belt (new buildings)
DC3 – Amenity
DC6 – Circulation and Access
DC9 – Tree Protection
T18 – Aircraft Noise

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

CONSULTATIONS (EXTERNAL TO PLANNING)

Mobberley Parish Council – Initially objected to the original proposal. No objections to the revised scheme.

Environmental Health – objection due to the impact of aviation noise on Mode Cottage

Highways – no objections

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

10 objections received to the original consultation. The main points raised are summarised as follows:

- Primary School is already struggling for space and is oversubscribed. The cottage should be used for educational purposes
- Access to Cottage is currently through a classroom. Accessing the Cottage could disrupt lessons
- Other places more suited to housing
- Existing parking issues
- Issues of safeguarding due to proximity to the school

No further comments have been received following the amendment to the description and the re-consultation exercise.

Officer Appraisal

Background to application

In April 2014 planning permission was granted by the Northern Planning Committee for the construction of a new classroom building, extensions to the school and external works including new fencing, the widening of the access and the creation of play areas (14/0729M refers). As part of this application, the residential use of Mode Cottage was restricted to a person working at the school. This condition was imposed, due to the proximity of the house to the school. Prior to this permission, Mode Cottage had an unrestricted residential use.

In March 2015, the Northern Planning Committee approved an application to remove the condition restricting the occupancy of Mode Cottage (14/4981M refers). As such, Mode Cottage has an unrestricted residential use.

Condition 20 of this planning permission required the details of acoustic fencing to be submitted and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. This put a maximum height of 2.5m on the fencing between Mode Cottage and the school. This permission is extant and required the submission of these details prior to the first residential use of the cottage to protect amenity.

The current planning application came in with the original description of:

“Mode Cottage change of use from educational to residential. After the change of use, removal of planning condition ref 14/0729M condition 11. Entrance to the site reconfigured to allow separate access to education and residential plots from Church Lane”

The submitted plans did not match the description, which showed alterations to the access, new fencing and the removal of part of the garden of Mode Cottage and its incorporation into the school grounds.

The planning officer advised the applicant that planning permission was not required for the change of use of Mode Cottage to residential, as it already had an unrestricted residential use. The description of development was amended to reflect the works shown on the submitted plans:

“Creation of new access onto Church Lane; change of use of part of garden of Mode Cottage to education use; installation of new fencing and new areas of hardstanding”

Green Belt – Principle of Development

The application site lies within the Green Belt. National and local policies attach great importance to green belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The two essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Green Belts serve the following five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

To achieve this, there are restrictions on the types of development which may be carried out. These are detailed within NPPF paragraphs 145 and 146 and reiterated within CELPS policy PG 3.

Development not falling within one of the listed exceptions is inappropriate. NPPF paragraph 143 confirms that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

NPPF paragraph 144 directs Local Planning Authorities to give substantial weight to any harm to the green belt. It confirms that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

NPPF Paragraph 146 states that the change of use of land and engineering operations may not be inappropriate. This is subject to the proviso that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Change of use to playing field

The change of use of a small area of garden land to a school playing field would not materially alter the character or appearance of the land. Given that the land currently has a lawful use as garden; it would not encroach into the open countryside. There would be no conflict with this element of the proposal and the purposes or characteristics of the Green Belt.

Extended access

The creation of a new access and hardstanding is considered as an engineering operation for the purposes of the NPPF. In this case, the works would simply extend the existing access and lay a new hardstanding for the dwelling. These works would be seen in the context of the existing school grounds, buildings and existing areas of hardstanding. The access and hardstanding would not encroach into the open countryside and there would be no conflict with the purposes or characteristics of the Green Belt.

New fencing

Class 2 of the GPDO 2015 allows for the installation of fences, walls, gates and other means of enclosure up to 2m in height, where they are not adjacent to a highway. For schools, means of enclosure can be up to 2m high adjacent a highway, provided that does not create

an obstruction to the view of persons using the highway as to be likely to cause danger to such persons.

The proposed plans show the new fencing to be less than 2m in height. While details of the fencing will need to be clarified to ensure that appropriate privacy is achieved for school users and the new occupiers of Mode Cottage, this element of the scheme does not need planning permission and therefore would not conflict with Green Belt policy.

The elements of the proposal which require planning permission would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. There would be no adverse impact on the spatial or visual characteristics of openness. The development would comply with the requirements of NPPF chapter 13 and CELPS policy PG 3.

Impact on Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets

The application site lies within the Mobberley Conservation Area. Within Conservation Areas the 1990 Act requires Local Planning Authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

For the purposes of the NPPF and CELPS policy SE 7, Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets.

NPPF paragraph 193 states that *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'*

Any harm to the significance of a heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Mode Cottage is a building of local interest and is a non-designated heritage asset. NPPF paragraph 197 and CELPS policy SE 7 apply.

NPPF paragraph 197 states that: "The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

The existing timber five bar gates along the frontage would be retained. While the area of mesh fencing would be extended, in the context of surrounding boundary treatments any harm would be extremely limited. Details of the boundary treatments and their colour will be required by condition. An appropriate landscaping plan would ensure that the new fencing and hardstanding assimilate satisfactorily into its surroundings.

The plans indicate tarmac to be laid. Tarmac could appear as incongruous surfacing material next to Mode Cottage and within the Conservation Area. Details of an alternative surfacing material will be required as part of the landscaping plan.

The Council's Heritage Officer initially raised concerns with the proposal. However, this was on the basis of the incorrect description of development. They raised no objections to the scheme, once the description has been amended. Subject to the above conditions, it is considered that the development would not result in harm to either the affected designated or non-designated heritage assets.

It is considered that subject to conditions, the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The supporting statement advises that the works to create the separate access and install fencing are proposed to enable Mode Cottage to be occupied. They have advised that it has lain vacant for a decade. Due to its low height, feasibility studies have not found it suitable for educational use.

The proposed works would facilitate the viable future use of a non-designated heritage asset within the Mobberley Conservation Area. This is a public benefit, which weighs in favour of the development.

Amenity

NPPF paragraph 127f requires developments to ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers.

Planning permission 14/4981M established that Mode Cottage could be occupied separately from the school, subject to the provision of acoustic fencing.

The current proposal would reduce the garden area available to this residential property. However, a garden area would still be retained to the south and west of the house. The existing mature trees and hedging along with the proposed fencing would ensure that this remains sufficiently private.

Subject to the provision of the acoustic fencing along the northern and eastern boundaries, the residential amenities for the future occupiers would be acceptable.

Environmental Health initially raised concerns about the impact on aircraft noise on the occupiers of Mode Cottage. Given that this scheme does not relate to the use of the dwelling, these concerns are not relevant.

Parking and Highways Safety

MBLP policy DC6 requires vehicular and pedestrian access to be safe and convenient, particularly be the adequate provision of visibility splays. The highways officers initially raised concerns. These concerns were reviewed. The highway officer has advised that the level of traffic generation from the cottage would be low. Consequently, they have updated their

comments to advise that vehicle conflicts would not cause a problem at the access and that there are no highways objections.

CELPS Appendix C sets out the adopted parking standards. The scheme would not alter the existing parking arrangements for the school. There would be sufficient off-street parking to meet the standards set out within the CELPS.

Trees

The Primary School benefits from established boundary hedgerows and trees to the front roadside boundary with Church Lane. The trees located on the verge and within the school grounds are afforded a level of protection by the Conservation Area status of the area.

CELPS policy SE 5 deals with tree, hedgerows and woodlands. It states that Development proposals resulting in the loss of, or threat to, the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows or woodlands (including veteran trees or ancient semi-natural woodland), that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historic character of the surrounding area, will not normally be permitted, except where there are clear overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives.

The Council's Forestry Officer has reviewed the scheme. They have advised that the development would result in the removal of one section of hedgerow and a small low quality tree to widen the existing access to create a new driveway to Mode Cottage. They have raised no objections to the proposal, but have advised that the installation of the access and areas of new hardstanding would result in some disturbance around the retained trees. To minimise any harm during construction works, they have advised that tree protection should be required by condition. Subject to this, the proposal would comply with the requirements of CELPS policy SE 5.

Playing Fields

The proposal would increase the area of open space and playing fields available for the children attending Mobberley Primary School. While the increase would be modest, it is still a benefit in favour of the scheme.

Landscaping

The Council's Landscaping Officer has advised that there would be visual amenity issues between the school property and the proposed private residential property. They have that separation fencing is required to ensure visual privacy for school users and the residents of Mode Cottage. This was largely dealt with by planning permission 14/4981M, which required the installation of an acoustic fence. Details of revised boundary treatments for the northern and eastern elevations can be dealt with by condition.

They have also advised that hardstanding should be permeable and visually in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and that excavated soils should be reused. These matters along with details of replacement vegetation can be dealt with through the landscaping condition.

CONCLUSION

The proposal seeks relatively minor alterations to this existing residential property, including a new access arrangement.

The site lies within the Green Belt, where there are restrictions on the types of development which may be carried out. The proposed development would not be inappropriate within the Green Belt and would not adversely affect openness. The proposed development complies with Green Belt policy.

The proposal is not considered to have any adverse impact on highway safety.

Subject to conditions, issues of landscaping, heritage and trees would be satisfactorily dealt with.

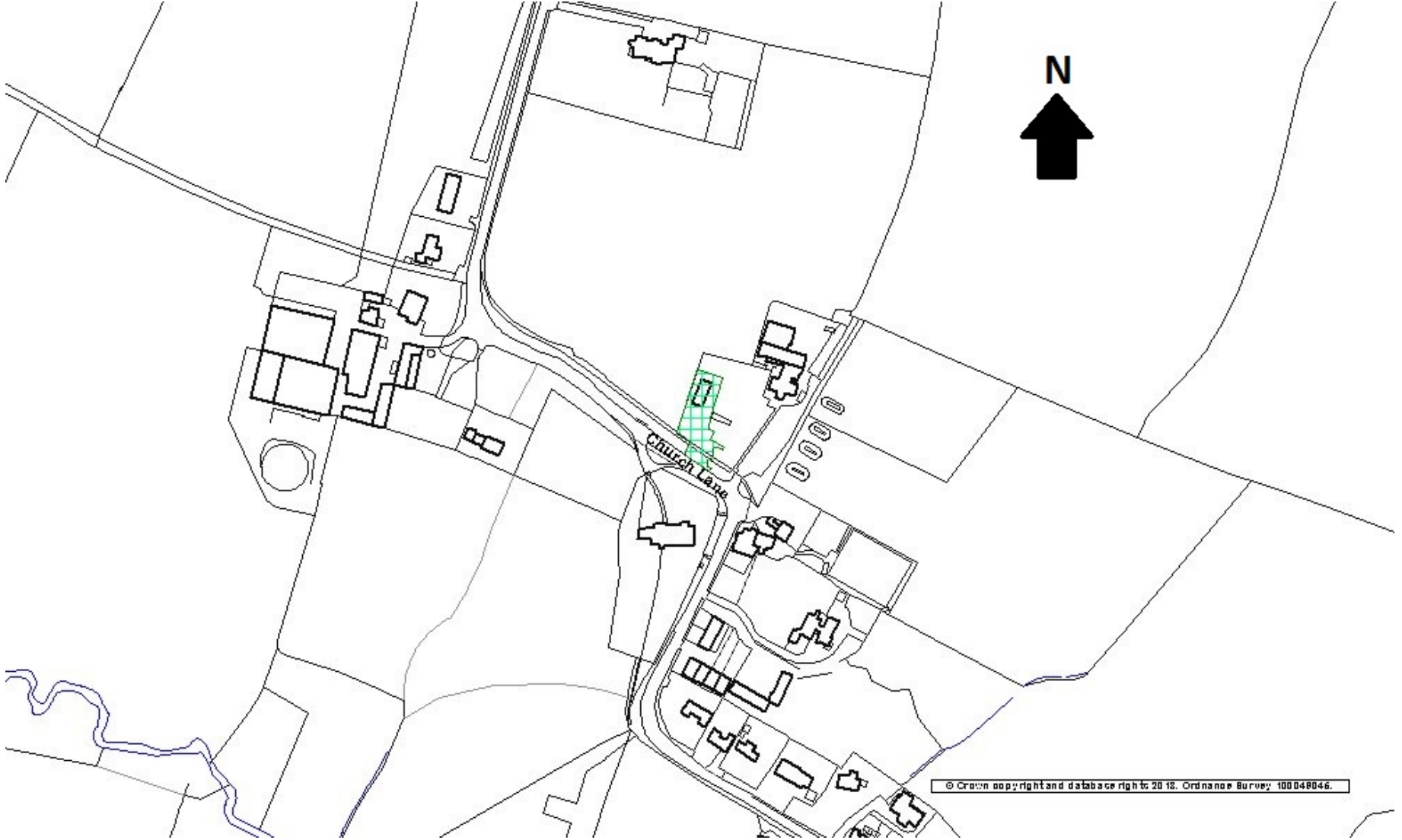
The proposals, as amended, would comply with relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are not considered to be material considerations that indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the Development Plan. In the light of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Three year time limit**
- 2. In accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Submission of Tree Protection Plan (prior to commencement)**
- 4. Submission of Landscaping Plan (hard and soft landscaping)**
- 5. Implementation of Landscaping Plan (first planting season following installation of fencing)**
- 6. Details of acoustic fencing for northern and eastern boundaries – colour and height up to a maximum of 2.5m.**
- 7. Installation of acoustic fencing prior to first occupation**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.



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Application No: 20/0060M

Location: Land west of Adlington Business Park, Former Part of Adlington Golf Centre, London Road, Poynton

Proposal: Area for the temporary storage of material arising / required during / for the construction of Poynton Relief Road, providing a replacement area for a material storage area associated with the approved Poynton Relief Road (ref. 16/4436M)

Applicant: Chris Hindle, Cheshire East Council

Expiry Date: 08-Apr-2020

SUMMARY

Full planning permission is sought for the temporary storage of materials during the construction of Poynton Relief Road (PRR) approved under planning ref. 16/4436M. It is intended to be used throughout the construction period 2020 to 2022. Once construction is completed the area will be restored to open grassland.

The proposed development would technically constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt which by definition would be harmful. However, in this case it is considered that very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm caused namely:

- i) the impact of the scheme on the Green Belt would be tempered considerably on the basis that the harm will persist only for a temporary period (2020-2022).
- ii) the proposal is required for the delivery of a key local transport infrastructure project
- iii) there is already consent in place for a similarly sized materials storage area to the west, albeit the consented scheme is slightly larger
- iv) there are no preferable alternative sites available, and all alternatives are in the Green Belt having equal or greater harm on openness

There are no objections on the grounds of landscape impact / trees, residential amenity, ecology, highways, public rights of way, flood risk or heritage assets.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION

This application relates to an area of land measuring approximately 1.93 ha in size located to the west of Adlington Business Park and to the south west of Poynton. The site is part of Adlington Golf Centre but has recently been purchased by Cheshire East Council. The land sits directly to the east of the proposed Poynton Relief Road which would run on a north to south alignment. The site remains fairly open with some variance in levels across the site. Adlington Bridleway No.42 runs along the northern boundary to the site providing access to Shirdfold Farm which is located approximately 140 metres to the west. The site lies entirely within the North Cheshire Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the temporary storage of material arising / required during / for the construction of Poynton Relief Road (PRR) approved under planning ref. 16/4436M. This is a replacement for the storage area on the western side of the PRR and is intended to be used throughout the construction period 2020 to 2022. Once construction is completed the area will be restored to open grassland.

The applicant is seeking a 3 year temporary consent which allows for some flexibility as the timescales for the project are not yet fixed as the scheme design is in the process of being finalised and consultation is due to start shortly. Whilst the scheme should be complete in 2 years, 3 years is requested to allow for unforeseen delays and to allow for the materials storage area to be returned to a suitable state.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

16/4436M – Construction of Poynton Relief Road, incorporating: a two way single carriageway; combined cycleway and footway on the western side of the carriageway; modifications to existing road junctions; new public rights of way/accommodation bridges; balancing ponds for drainage purposes; and associated landscaping, lighting; ancillary operations, engineering and infrastructure works.

Within Cheshire East the scheme comprises construction of the proposed Poynton Relief Road from the A523 London Road, at its southernmost point, continuing in a generally northerly direction before its interception with the Cheshire East/Stockport Boundary (located approximately 800m south of the A5149 Chester Road). The relief road within Cheshire East would incorporate: A two way single carriageway; Combined cycleway and footway on the western side of the carriageway; Modifications to existing road junctions; A new road junction; A new structure over the road; New public rights of way; A pedestrian and cycle route adjacent to the road; Balancing ponds for drainage purposes; off site works; and associated ancillary, landscaping; lighting; engineering and infrastructure works – Approved 08-Jun-2017

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – 2010-2030

PG3 – Green Belt

SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles

IN 1 - Infrastructure

SE 1 - Design
SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4 - The Landscape
SE 5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE 7 – Heritage Assets
SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management
CO2 – Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure

Macclesfield Local Plan (Saved policies)

BE.1 – Amenity
BE.3 – Access and Parking
BE.4 – Drainage, Utilities and Resources
NE.5 – Nature Conservation and Habitats
NE.9 – Protected Species
NE.17 – Pollution Control
NE.20 – Flood Prevention
GC1 – Green Belt
T1 – General Transportation Policy

Poynton Neighbourhood Plan (made on the 21 November 2019)

EGB 2 Surface Water Management
EGB 5 Access to the Countryside
EGB 7 Landscape Protection and Enhancement
EGB 8 Landscape Enhancement
EGB 9 Protection of Rural Landscape Features
EGB 10 Nature Conservation
EGB 23 Development within the curtilage or setting of a listed building
TAC 1 Walking and Cycling
HEWL 8 Poynton to become a non- charging clean air zone

Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework
The EC Habitats Directive 1992
Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010
Circular 6/2005 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System
National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Flood Risk Manager – No objection

Highways – No objection

Public Rights of Way (PROW) – No objection - Although the proposed development appears to be adjacent to a Public Right of Way, namely Bridleway No.42 in the parish of Adlington, it is unlikely the

development will impact on the adjacent PROW it is recommended that an advice note be attached to any approval reminding the developer of their obligations.

Environmental Protection – No comments received.

VIEWS OF ADLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Adlington Parish Council is concerned that approval of this application would be inconsistent with previous planning decisions, including most recently 18/3178M which was an application relating to the opposite side of the site referred to in 20/0060M. One of the main reasons that 18/3178M was refused planning permission was on the grounds of highways safety in respect of the access route, which is the same route to be used in 20/0060M. The Decision Notice for 18/3178M stated that 'no evidence had been provided to demonstrate that the existing narrow single track leading to the site would be able to safely accommodate HGVs which would be contrary to advice in the recently adopted 6 C's Design Guide' and the Planning Officer's Report stated that 'the access road is a narrow private road at approximately 5m wide and is well below the design standards of a 7.3m wide road for a B8 use. Although the applicant has indicated that the largest vehicle that will use the site is to be limited to a 10m rigid vehicle, this cannot be satisfactorily enforced. Additionally, there are sections on the road where two HGV's would not be able to pass one another'.

Planning Application 18/3178M was also turned down on appeal, the Planning Inspector stating in Paragraph 8 of that report 'part of the access road would be well below the Council's minimum standard of 7.3 metres, which is intended to allow 2 commercial vehicles to safely pass each other on the same stretch of road. From what I saw, tall roadside hedgerows and the curvature to the highway would also hinder forward visibility of oncoming users. As this access road is also the route of a bridleway, users could include pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders as well as other drivers, not all of which would necessarily be familiar with local highway conditions. Taken together, these factors clearly indicate that the access road to serve the proposed development is not well suited for use by large commercial vehicles.'

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

One representation has been received expressing the following concerns:

- Neighbouring landowner not consulted
- Neighbouring landowner had an application refused (ref; 18/3178M) because the road was not suitable for HGV'S, the same road proposed to use to facilitate the construction of the Poynton Relief Road

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The National Planning Practice Guidance affords the Green Belt significant protection stating at para 144:

"When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the

potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

NPPF Para 146 states that certain forms of development are not inappropriate development provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The forms of development specified include both ‘engineering operations’ and ‘local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location’.

Consequently, the provision of the proposed materials storage area as part of the proposed road scheme could be considered as being ‘appropriate development’ in the Green Belt. However, a view must be reached as to whether or not there would be any other harm in terms of openness.

The proposal, due to its scale and nature, will have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt for the construction phase of the development. Whilst there are no buildings proposed, the above ground storage of materials and associated construction activities will affect openness and cause encroachment into the countryside contrary to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Any such harm is attributed significant weight. There would also be additional harm to the landscape, which carries moderate weight against the proposal. As such, whilst the development does by definition constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt, owing to the impact on openness, the proposed development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

For this scheme to be granted planning permission, the identified harm to the Green Belt (and any other harm) must be *clearly outweighed* by other considerations and whether there are any ‘very special circumstances’ which exist to outweigh the identified harm. It is considered that in this case, the following very special circumstances exist:

- i) the impact of the scheme on the Green Belt would be tempered considerably on the basis that the harm will persist only for a temporary period (2020-2022).
- ii) the proposal is required for the delivery of a key local transport infrastructure project
- iii) there is already consent in place for a similarly sized materials storage area to the west, albeit the consented scheme is slightly larger
- iv) There are no preferable alternative sites available, and all alternatives are in the Green Belt having equal or greater harm on openness

In short, the materials storage area is required for the construction of the Poynton Relief Road, which has already been demonstrated to require a Green Belt location. This proposal will have the same, if not lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt as the consented materials storage area is slightly larger in area. It is considered that these factors, in combination, do clearly outweigh the other harm identified and therefore very special circumstances exist to outweigh the identified harm. This is subject to the condition that the use is temporary and the site is restored to agricultural use when the works are finished. On this basis, the principle of development is found to be acceptable and in accordance with the advice of the Framework, CELPS Policy PG 3 and saved MBLP Policy GC1.

Landscape Impact and Trees

Whilst the proposal would have some limited landscape harm, this is limited by the temporary nature of the proposals, which would allow the land to be returned to grassland following the completion of the Poynton Relief Road. The Council’s Landscape Officer has raised no objections to a temporary consent.

Similarly, the Council's Principal Forestry and Arboricultural Officer has confirmed that the proposal does not raise any significant arboricultural implications and therefore the scheme is acceptable with regard to its impact on trees. The scheme accords with PNP policies EGB 7 / 8 and 9 and CELPS policies SE 4 and SE 5.

Residential Amenity

The nearest residential property, 'Shirdfold Farm', is located some 140 metres to the west of the proposed materials storage area. The consented materials storage area would have sat alongside the boundary to this neighbouring property and therefore this proposal to site it further away would not raise any further amenity concerns. The scheme accords with CELPS Policy SD2 and saved MBLP Policy BE 1.

Ecology

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer (NCO) has reviewed the application and has commented that in terms of biodiversity, the existing habitats on site form part of the golf course and are of limited nature conservation value. The applicant proposes to restore the site to 'open grassland' which would be less intensively managed and so be of marginally more value than the existing habitats. The proposed development would therefore deliver a minor gain for biodiversity.

The scheme has also been assessed by the NCO with regard to the following species:

Great Crested Newts and Common Toad - Two ponds are known to support breeding great crested newts located immediately adjacent to the application site. Common Toad, a priority species is also known to occur in this locality. The proposed development will result in the temporary loss of a significant area of low quality terrestrial amphibian habitat and also pose the risk of killing or injuring any animals present on site when the works are undertaken.

It should be noted that since a European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development the planning authority must have regard to whether Natural England would be likely to subsequently grant the applicant a European Protected species license under the Habitat Regulations. A license under the Habitats Regulations can only be granted when:

- the development is of overriding public interest,
- there are no suitable alternatives and
- the favourable conservation status of the species will be maintained

In order to mitigate the risk of amphibians being killed or injured during the construction phase, the applicant proposes to trap and exclude newts from the footprint of the proposed works. Captured newts would be transferred to the adjacent ecological mitigation area created as part of the road scheme. The loss of habitat associated with the proposals would be compensated for through the creation of ecological mitigation areas as part of the Poynton Relief Road scheme and the re-instatement of terrestrial habitat on the application following the cessation of use of the land as a storage area.

The applicant is also in the process of negotiating the entry of the road scheme and temporary storage area into Natural England's District Licencing Scheme for great crested newts.

On the basis of the above, The Council's NCO has advised that both the proposed on site mitigation and the entry of the scheme into Natural England's District licencing scheme would be sufficient to maintain the favourable conservation status of great crested newts.

The NCO has also confirmed that there is not a significant difference between the impacts of the consented temporary storage area (to the west) and the currently proposed site on great crested newts. The creation of the ecological mitigation areas associated with the road scheme and the re-instatement of habitats following the completion of works would be sufficient to address the potential impacts of the proposed development upon common toad. Given that the proposal is for a local transport infrastructure project for which there are significant benefits which has been demonstrated to require this location, the development is of overriding public interest and there are no suitable preferable alternatives. The tests in the Habitat Regulations are therefore met.

Badgers - The submitted Environmental Assessment advises that no habitat for badgers was identified on site during the surveys undertaken in support of the consented relief road scheme. However, the surveys to inform the original application for the relief road were undertaken a number of years ago. Having regard to the transient nature of the species the survey has been updated and the NCO has advised that no evidence of badgers was recorded during that survey. Badgers are not reasonable likely to be affected by the proposed development.

Conditions are recommended requiring the submission and implementation of a 25 year habitat management plan for this area and accordance with proposed great crested newt mitigation measures. Subject to this, the scheme is found to be acceptable in terms of nature conservation and compliant with PNP Policy EGB 10, CELPS Policy SE 3 and saved MBLP Policy NE 5.

Highway Implications

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI - Highways) has confirmed that no highways objections are raised on the basis that the proposal would be a like for like replacement of the already approved materials storage area which would have been to the west of the proposed Poynton Relief Road.

Adlington Parish Council and objectors have referenced a recently dismissed appeal which involved the use of the access / Bridleway to Shirdfold Farm to serve a proposed B8 storage and distribution unit (planning ref; 18/3178M refers). Each case must be assessed on its own merits. In this case, it must be noted that this proposal would only be for a temporary period whereas the referenced appeal scheme would have generated a number of HGV and associated vehicular movements on a permanent basis. Further, this proposal, whilst requiring early access via the existing track to setup, will only be required for the materials storage area and once construction phases progress, internal access from the proposed road scheme will reduce these movements. It is recommended that a temporary Traffic and Bridleway Management Plan be secured by condition which includes:

- traffic management and control measures for all users of the Bridleway;
- the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- loading and unloading of plant and materials

Subject to this, there are no material highway implications associated with the proposal.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

The proposed development lies adjacent to a Public Right of Way, namely Bridleway No.42 in the parish of Adlington. The Council's Public Rights of Way Unit has confirmed that it is unlikely that the development will impact on the adjacent Bridleway. However, it is recommended that an advice note be attached to any approval reminding the developer of their obligations.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 where flooding from rivers and the sea is very unlikely with less than a 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year. As part of the proposal, the topsoil would be stripped and some levelling works would be undertaken to facilitate its use as a materials storage area. A localised area of hardstanding would be created for a crane. However, this proposal would replace the existing materials store and would be of the same size but in a different position. Consequently, the impact on surface water drainage would be no greater than the consented scheme which has already been taken into account. Added to this, the proposal would be for a temporary period only and the land would be returned to its former state. On this basis, the Council's Flood Risk Manager has offered no objection and therefore the scheme is found to accord with PNP Policy EGB 2, Policy SE 13 of the CELPS and saved Plociy NE 20 of the MBLP.

Heritage Assets

The closest designated heritage asset is the Grade II Listed Lostock Hall Farmhouse to the north. However, the proposed site is far enough away from the building and its curtilage not to directly affect its setting and therefore will be acceptable in this regard. The proposal accords with PNP Policy EGB 23 and CELPS Policy SE 7.

CONCLUSIONS

Whilst the provision of the proposed materials storage area can be considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt, under the exceptions of it being required for the construction of 'local transport infrastructure' and comprising of 'engineering operations', owing to the impact on openness and the landscape that will be brought about by the above ground storage of materials and construction activities, the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development. However in this case it is considered that very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm caused namely:

- i) the impact of the scheme on the Green Belt would be tempered considerably on the basis that the harm will persist only for a temporary period (2020-2022).
- ii) the proposal is required for the delivery of a key local transport infrastructure project
- iii) there is already consent in place for a similarly sized materials storage area to the west, albeit the consented scheme is slightly larger
- iv) there are no preferable alternative sites available, and all alternatives are in the Green Belt having equal or greater harm on openness

There are no objections on the grounds of landscape impact / trees, residential amenity, ecology, highways, public rights of way, flood risk or heritage assets.

Whilst there are requirements to refer certain Green Belt departure applications to the Secretary of State, in this case, whilst the site is a significant size, the impact on openness is limited by virtue of the

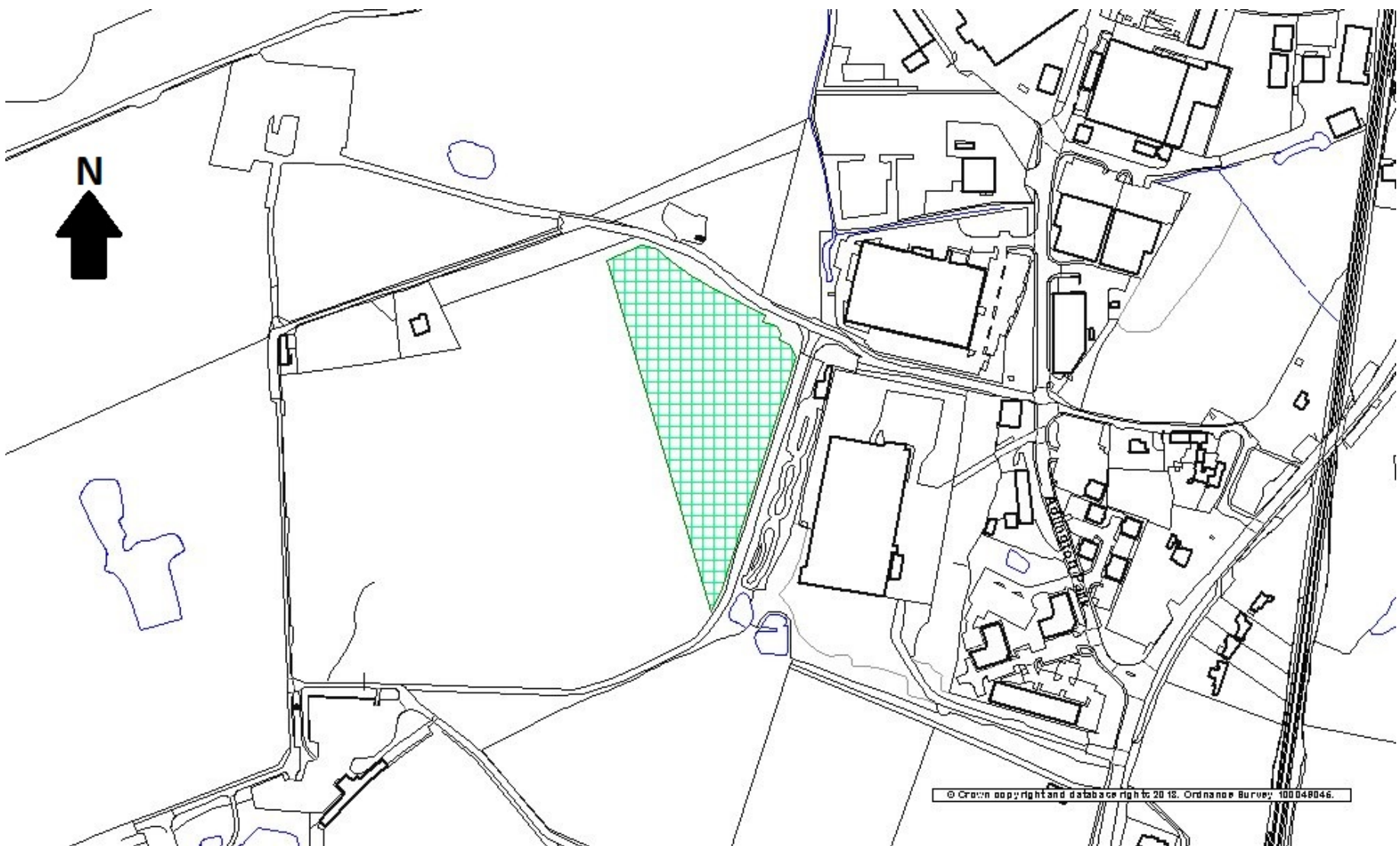
temporary nature of the use, and as such it is not considered necessary to refer the matter. Members will also note that the Secretary of State granted the original Consent Order which included the materials storage area that this one would replace.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions

- 1. Temporary 3 year consent**
- 2. Land to be reinstated to agricultural land at the end of the approved period with any hard-surfaces being removed**
- 3. Development to proceed in accordance with the approved plans**
- 4. Before taking any HGV access to the land via the Access Track to Shirdfold Farm a Temporary Traffic and Bridleway Management Plan - with detailed method statements shall be submitted to, approved and implemented**
- 5. Development to proceed in accordance with the great crested newt mitigation measures**
- 6. 25 year Habitat Management Plan for the site to be submitted, approved and implemented**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) of Northern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.



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