

Application No: 22/2819M

Location: Land at Heatherley woods, ALDERLEY PARK, CONGLETON ROAD,
NETHER ALDERLEY, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE, SK10 4TG

Proposal: Full planning application proposing redevelopment of the Site to create a single Integrated Retirement Community (Use Class C2) comprising 159 no. Extra Care units; associated healthcare, wellbeing, support and amenity facilities; pedestrian and vehicular access; with associated parking, landscaping, utility infrastructure and other associated works.

Applicant: c/o Agent, Symphony Park Holdings Ltd and Alderley Park Ltd

Expiry Date: 01-Nov-2022

- **SUMMARY**

This application is for full planning permission (the time limit for submission of reserved matters under the outline having now expired) for this one remaining undeveloped parcel in the southern campus area of Alderley Park. The principle of development has been established by the outline approval, and it is considered that the proposals are appropriate development in the Green Belt and in line with the general policies in the Development plan, NPPF and the Alderley Park Development Framework.

This application is considered to be finely balanced, with the following issues counting against the proposals:

- This is a large building which will have some visual impact, in particular on the residents of the newly constructed Bellway properties
- There will be some tree losses and impacts, that can only be in part mitigated for
- The affordable housing provision does not meet the policy requirements

Largely neutral to the development are:

- Highway impacts
- Ecological impacts that can largely be mitigated for
- Environmental Impacts – Noise/Air Quality/Contaminated Land again which can be addressed via condition
- Flood Risk/Drainage again can be addressed via conditions

In support of the application are:

- A high-quality development that will contribute positively to Alderley Park
- The development will directly contribute to key worker housing
- The development will contribute towards new build life science accommodation - the unique contribution Alderley Park makes, and the reasons behind its Planning Policy allocation.

The contribution to the wider objectives associated the delivery of life science employment uses and the wider economic benefits tip the balance in favour of supporting this application.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to a Section 106 Agreement and conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION

This application relates to a cleared site at the north of an area referred to as Heatherley Woods. The site has clearly defined boundaries, with woodland to the north and east extending some distance to the boundaries of Alderley Park. To the west is a narrower woodland belt, with watercourse, separating the site from the main access road from the main A34 entrance. Finally, to the south is the Bellway housing development which is nearing completion. The two sites are separated by a boundary fence, and the houses closest to the boundary consist largely of 3 storey properties fronting the site.

The site, whilst adjoining residential properties to the south is in an area with a mixed character, with the Royal London offices and Leisure Centre to the west across the access road, and to the north the site lies the main commercial area of Alderley Park – Mereside. Glasshouse a recently refurbished office building and communal space is the closest building to the north.

The site itself has been the subject of extensive earthworks following the clearance of former Astra Zenica warehouse type structures, and although generally flat, there are piles of material towards the western boundary, and there is a distinct level change adjacent to the Bellway housing site, with this site being at a higher level.

Access to the site is provided to the north-west corner from an existing roundabout.

The whole of Alderley Park lies entirely within the North Cheshire Green Belt but is a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt. All the areas subject to this application are defined as being previously developed land in the Local Plan and Development Framework.

There are no heritage assets within the immediate vicinity of the site, and none would be impacted by the development. Woodland to the north, east and west of the site are covered by the Nether Alderley – Alderley Park No.3 Tree Preservation Order.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full permission for the redevelopment of the site to create a single Integrated Retirement Community (Use Class C2) comprising 159 no. Extra Care units; associated healthcare, wellbeing, support and amenity facilities; pedestrian and vehicular access; with associated parking, landscaping, utility infrastructure and other associated works.

The proposals consist of the following:

- 159 Extra care units in a building ranging from 3 to 6 storey's high in 3 linked "blocks"
- Two points of access utilizing the existing access, and a new secondary access through the woodland belt
- Car parking to the north of the site and servicing areas located off the secondary access
- A landscaped mound along the southern site boundary separating the site from the Bellway development
- Areas of communal space & incidental landscaping within the site area, mainly in an internal space and to the eastern boundary.

In addition to the usual plans/reports the application is supported by Environmental Statement & the following reports which are highlighted:

- Need Assessment
- Alderley Park Commercial Update

Additional information has been submitted since the initial submission, including updates to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations and lighting assessments. In addition, a Fire Statement has been submitted to address changes to the planning legislation, as the building is over 18m high.

The application is accompanied by another application (ref 22/3512M) for Life Science developments also on this agenda. Finally, as set out below there is a live application for Key Worker accommodation in the Mereside area to the north west of this site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Alderley Park has been the subject of a significant number of planning applications in recent years, including a series of applications associated with the residential development of the southern campus, re development of the Parklands office block (now occupied by Royal London), a new leisure complex and more minor developments in the Mereside area. Of particular relevance to this application are:

15/5401M Full planning permission for the demolition of a number of specified buildings; and outline planning permission with all matters reserved for a mixed-use development comprising the following: • Up to 38,000 sqm of laboratory, offices and light manufacturing floorspace (Use Class B1); • Up to 1,500 sqm of retail, café, restaurant, public house and / or crèche floorspace (Use Classes A1, A3, A4 and D1); • Up to 275 residential dwelling-houses, where up to 60 units could be for retirement / care (Use Classes C2 and C3); • Up to a 100 bed hotel (Use Class C1); • Sport and recreational facilities including an indoor sports centre of up to a 2,000 sqm (Use Class D2); • Up to 14,000 sqm of multi-storey car parking providing up to 534 spaces (sui generis); • A waste transfer station of up to 900 sqm of (sui generis); • Public realm and landscaping; • Other associated infrastructure – Approved June 2016

This application covered the whole of the Alderley Park Site, and the approval included land use and building heights parameters. It is important to note this permission has now expired. The southern part of the site subject to this application, has the benefit of outline planning permission:

19/3286M Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for a residential development of up to 25 dwellings with associated landscaping and infrastructure. Heatherley Woods, Alderley Park, Congleton Road, Nether Alderley – Approved 20 August 2020

The site was also subject to an application for a sports pitch

17/0530M Reserved matters application for demolition of existing waste transfer station and redevelopment for a Full-Sized Sports Pitch (Use Class D2) including ground engineering works, erection of site boundaries and landscaping. Alderley Park, Congleton Road, Nether Alderley – Withdrawn 6 April 2020

To the south of the site is the following Bellway site which is nearing completion:

18/0403M Reserved matters application following outline approval 15/5401M for detail of access, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance for a residential development comprising 50 residential dwellings in

addition to new internal roads, boundary treatments and associated landscaping and infrastructure. Land at Hatherley woods, Alderley Park, Congleton Road, Nether Alderley – Approved 20 April 2018

Finally, an application has been submitted for the Key Worker accommodation in the Mereside Area of the site:

22/3506M Full planning application for the change of use of Block 26 from office space (Use Class E(g) to residential accommodation (Use Class C3) (including key worker housing) and external works to facilitate the conversion. Block 26, Alderley Park, Congleton Road, Nether Alderley - Undetermined at the time of writing this report.

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – 2010-2030

PG 2	Settlement Hierarchy
PG 3	Green Belt
SC 5	Affordable Homes
SE 1	Design
SE 3	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4	The Landscape
SE 5	Trees, Hedgerows and woodland
SE 9	Energy Efficient Development
SE13	Flood Risk and Water Management
CO 1	Sustainable Travel and Transport

LPS 61 Alderley Park Opportunity Site

SADPD

GEN 1	Design principles
ENV 1	Ecological network
ENV 2	Ecological implementation
ENV 3	Landscape character
ENV 5	Landscaping
ENV 6	Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation
ENV 7	Climate change
ENV 14	Light pollution
ENV 16	Surface water management and flood risk
HOU 2	Specialist housing provision
HOU 8	Space, accessibility and wheelchair housing standards
HOU 12	Amenity
HOU 13	Residential standards
INF 1	Cycleways, bridleways and footpaths
INF 3	Highway safety and access
INF 9	Utilities
REC 3	Open space implementation

Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework

Alderley Park Development Framework

Alderley Park Design Principles – Addendum Revision A (Approved as part of the outline approval 15/5401M)

National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Health and Safety Executive – In this case have commented because of the requirement to consult them due to the height of the building. Whilst generally have no comments, they have raised the following matter:

External walls - The design and access statement states on p45 ‘A bronze coloured metal cladding has been added to the higher levels of the building to aid with the scale and mass of the building as well as provide an autumnal feel to connect with the surrounding woodland’.

On 1st December 2022, Building Regulations were amended and now state ‘Building work shall be carried out so that relevant metal composite material does not become part of an external wall, or specified attachment, of any building’.

It is unclear whether the proposed metal cladding components include the prohibited relevant metal composite materials. Any design changes necessary to ensure that only suitable materials are used in external walls may affect land use planning considerations such as the appearance of the building.”

As materials are not sought for approval as part of this development, it is considered this matter can be conditioned, to avoid “relevant” materials being used. The HSE will need to be consulted on the discharge of the condition.

United Utilities – No objections subject to a number of conditions/informatives

Highways – No objections

Environmental Protection – No objections subject to conditions/informatives

Housing – Object due to lack of affordable housing provision.

Flood Risk – No comments received at the time of writing this report.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCILS

Nether Alderley Parish Council – Nether Alderley Parish Council cannot support this application for the following reasons.

1. The mass, scale and size of this development is totally unacceptable and would constitute over development causing significant impact on neighbouring residents on Morris Drive and Hatherley Woods. Also, Loss of privacy from an overbearing development to neighbouring residents.

2. Environmental Impact - light pollution. This is already an issue to existing residents and can only increase with this development.

3. Lack of car parking facility. 52 onsite spaces are totally inadequate. All developments within Alderley Park have provided too little car parking provision. The use of the multi storey is appreciated, however, in reality it is far from ideal. The development site should provide more spaces.
4. Nether Alderley should not be forced to accept extra development purely to fund the Offices and Laboratories in the science park. The Science Park should be separate and self- funding.
5. The Duration of the construction will have a negative impact on local residents' amenity. Suggested hours of works are too wide.
6. IS CEC comfortable that the proposed development falls into a Class 2 category - It's an upmarket apartment block with minimal healthcare benefit?
7. Existing residents have invested in their homes with the belief that there would be 25 dwellings or a football pitch - not an overbearing development adjacent to them.

They then go on to ask that should CEC decide to approve this application The Parish Council asks that the following points be taken into consideration –

1. The Developer to re-address the height and mass of the site.
2. Re-address the car parking provision
3. Reduce the hours of working
4. All access to be via North Entrance
5. Monies procured from the development should help fund a Farm shop/Convenience store for the benefit of all Nether Alderley residents before it funds Science labs/buildings.
6. Opening-up of walkway, cycle paths links to all residents of the parish.
7. CIL money provision for NAPC.

Over Alderley Parish Council - They Object on the following grounds:

1. Impact on Green Belt - Light pollution:

That the proposed development site, which lies within the parish of Over Alderley, will have a significant impact upon the rural character of this Green Belt parish by further exacerbating unwelcome light pollution from the Alderley Park site.

A defining characteristic of the parish is the night-time dark landscape. The application documents (at the time of submission) fail to address the harmful impacts of light pollution providing only inconsistent and inconclusive information. The daytime/night time images to the development from the north and east do not contain the fully rendered verified images necessary to evidence the impacts. The scale and nature of the proposed development, being circa 7.0m taller than Royal London House, Use Class C2 and closer to the open countryside, make it inevitable that there will be unacceptable light pollution from the building and grounds when seen from the parish.

They question the accuracy and completeness of some of the submitted information.

2. Design sympathetic to the surrounding rural landscape and ancient woodland:

The proposed development is not sympathetic to the surrounding rural landscape, which includes ancient woodland. The proposed scale of the development introduces a new significant urbanising feature at the periphery of the overall Alderley Park development which does not demonstrate a sensitive approach to development within the rural setting nor provides an appropriate or sympathetic transition between the urban style science centre and surrounding rural landscapes.

The Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment refers to “the potential for discrete high quality residential development which responds to the woodland enclave, creating a positive relationship and edges between the proposed development and the woodland.” This development is based primarily on achieving a land value and not on addressing local and national policy or government guidance on design and placemaking. The scale of non-compliance is fully exposed through the submission documents. A scheme that has no justification in policy, guidance and best practice, but relies for mitigation on the cross-subsidy contributions that will be generated is flawed from the outset.

3. Detrimental impact on wildlife:

There is concern that the proposed development is likely to have a detrimental impact upon wildlife currently present in the surrounding rural area.

4. Impacts on the population, services and infrastructure:

There is concern that the proposed development will lead to a significant increase in population at the site. As a consequence, this will increase the number of vehicles within the wider development site further impacting on local wildlife together with general air quality. The proposal to include leisure, spa and beauty facilities together with a restaurant, bar and coffee lounge will also contribute to the cumulative impact of the development on wildlife and air quality.

They also question some of the information in the submitted Environmental Statement Chapter - Socio-economics and Health.

5. Removal of trees:

The scoping report refers to the need to remove trees to facilitate the development of a service access. Removal of trees from the site, for convenience purposes, is not considered acceptable.

6. Impact on neighbouring development:

The proposed development, due to the significant scale and massing, is likely to negatively impact upon the residential amenity of dwellings in the neighbouring development site (Bellway Heatherley Woods).

Over Alderley Parish Council endorses the concerns of the parishioners in the Heatherley Woods development. The Symphony Park development is set on rising ground rising six storeys higher than the adjacent residential development.

7. Artificial lighting:

Artificial lighting being used, “to enhance the environment by means of decorative and flood lighting of areas, features and buildings” is not considered to be an acceptable approach within the rural setting of Over Alderley. The use of non-essential external artificial lighting which will negatively impact upon the surrounding rural area, wildlife and residential amenity does not demonstrate a sensitive approach.

8. Impact on adjacent open landscape-viewpoints:

Previous concerns have been raised regarding the approach to assessing the impact of the development on the surrounding open landscape. Previous concerns included that the points chosen were not natural viewpoints

9. Socio-economics and health:

Quoting from ES Chapter 10 - Socio-economics and Health they believe there are many local societal impacts that are missing from this document. All figures used are either national or Cheshire East-wide. There is no mention of Over Alderley, the parish in which the development sits. This development will add 269 more (using Symphony Park's breakdown of occupancy). It will nearly double the adult population. Creating an exclusive community to which access is determined by wealth and age is not conducive to a diverse, inclusive and balanced community.

10. Affordable housing:

Affordable housing. As previously articulated, key worker housing and section 106 agreements do not contribute to local housing needs. If there was no suitable site for affordable housing provision within previous development applications at the site, it raises doubt as to the suitability of the site for a further 159 dwellings within this application.

11. Inconsistencies:

The current application refers to 159 units within the proposed development. The previously submitted scoping assessment (22/0518S) referred to approximately 170 residential units. Additional units should not be added to the proposed scheme by way of amendment.

12. CIL contribution:

The Cheshire East Council Public Map Viewer clearly shows that the proposed development site lies within the Parish of Over Alderley, therefore, should the application be approved, the associated CIL contributions must be allocated in accordance with national policy and Cheshire East Council policy.

13. Conclusion:

In summary, Over Alderley Parish Council objects to the proposed development on the grounds that the significant negative consequences on the surrounding rural landscape, wildlife and residential amenity cannot be justified. The intrusive scale of the proposed building, coupled with the associated light pollution and encroachment into the dark rural landscape are not considered acceptable. The lack of provision of affordable housing which would meet local needs, together with the creation of a distinct, retired, residential enclave is not considered to offer socio-economic benefits to the community of Over Alderley. Overall, the proposed development is considered to be out of character and an unwelcome intrusion into a highly valued rural area.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Five representations, including one from a resident of Morris Drive immediately adjacent to the site, and the Nether Alderley Rural Protection Association, have been received raising the following issues:

- Size, scale, design and exclusive nature of the proposal

- The development is outside the numbers set out in the local plan of 200-300 new homes
- The Park is being over developed having a negative impact on people's welfare
- The road infrastructure is under strain
- Harm to nature and the natural environment, destruction of Ancient woodland & protected trees
- Due to size, siting and design this development represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- The development does not accord with the Masterplan for Alderley Park which designated the northern section of the Heatherley Woods site as a green open space for sports recreation.
- Flooding concerns in local water courses
- A. Divergence from original Planning vision and obligations – lack of on-site amenities and unbalanced community
- Impact on building lighting
- The building is not considered to be designed sympathetically to blend in with its surroundings
- Overlooking/massing issues to adjacent properties
- Concerns about the impact during the construction period

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development/Green Belt

As mentioned above, the whole of Alderley Park falls within the Green Belt, but as set out in the policy section above, the built up areas of the site, which include the application site, are covered by policies LPS 61 Alderley Park Opportunity Site in the Cheshire East Local Plan. The Alderley Park Development Framework, which builds on the LPS policy, clearly identifies the site as Previously Developed Land, which under policy LPS 61 allows for the construction of new buildings (Criteria 3) so long as they meet the criteria set out at 1.

1. Development shall be:

- i. For human health science research and development, technologies and processes; or*
- ii. For residential (around 200 to 300 new homes) or other high value land uses demonstrated to be necessary for the delivery of the life science park and not prejudicial to its longer term growth; or*
- iii. For uses complimentary to the life science park and not prejudicial to its establishment or growth for this purpose.*

The use, whilst increasing the number of units beyond the 200-300 units, (some 242 units have to-date been approved, excluding the 25 approved on the southern part of this site) is not strictly residential (Class C3) being in Class C2, which is considered to constitute "other high value land uses demonstrated to be necessary for the delivery of the life science park." The economic arguments are set out below.

2. Development shall be in accordance with the Alderley Park Development Framework.

In the Alderley Park Development Framework, the site is clearly shown as "Potential Residential" in the indicative masterplan.

Representations have been received highlighting that the indicative masterplan indicated the site could be used for a sports pitch. Firstly, this document formed part of the outline application, which as indicated has now expired, and following the submission of a sports pitch application in 2019 it soon became

apparent it would not work on this site due to the level changes, and the close proximity of trees making a pitch unworkable. The application was withdrawn.

3. Construction of new buildings for uses in criterion 1 above shall be restricted to the Previously Developed Land (PDL) on the site unless:

- i. very special circumstances are demonstrated to justify use of other land on this site outside the PDL; and*
- ii. an equivalent amount of PDL on the site is restored to greenfield status, the restored land should be of an equivalent or better quality than the greenfield land that is used, so there is no overall increase in the developed footprint.*

This site is Previously Developed Land (PDL) so reverts back to criterion 1.

4. Development would not have a greater impact on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than existing development.

This is examined further below.

5. Development shall preserve or enhance the significance of listed buildings, the conservation area and other heritage and landscape assets on and around this site. A Heritage Impact Assessment must be undertaken to determine the level of development that can be achieved.

This is not considered a significant issue on this site.

These policies are reflected in the NPPF which at Paragraphs 147-151 considers development in the Green Belt. Whilst the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate development – which is by definition harmful, there are exceptions listed at Para 149 including:

- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.**

In summary then the proposed development of this site can be considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt, on condition that it does not have a greater impact on openness than existing development. In this case it needs to be seen in the context of the built form as was at Alderley Park, and it needs to be looked at in the overall context of all the sites in the southern quarter (which included the warehousing units on this site, together with the former Alderley House and AZ Sports club both of which have been demolished). The warehousing type units, whilst not as high as the proposed development, had a substantial footprint.

Condition 4 of the hybrid consent (15/5401M) restricted the total net increase in the volume of the built development across the entire site to be no more than 16% above the existing volume of built development. It is noted that as of August 2022 of the 16% only a 5.4% increase in volume has been built as a result of the reserved matters and separate applications since the hybrid consent. Whilst it is

acknowledged that consent has expired, it is still considered to be a material consideration. The overall volume of development proposed is significantly less than that it replaces, the overall impact on openness could be considered less in absolute terms. This assessment is only of the macro impact, the other individual material impacts (including of course visual impact) are examined in the report.

The NPPF advises that substantial weight must be given to the harm to the Green Belt. Any other harm additional to that of inappropriateness must also be considered. The proposal, due to its scale and nature, will have no significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and cause no other harm to the purposes of Green Belt (NPPF para. 143).

In conclusion then, the development is considered to constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt and to comply with the strategic policies in the Development Plan, and therefore there are no objections in principle to the site being developed for the proposed use.

Need for the use

The C2 use proposed would provide one, two and three bedroom apartments together with:

- Spa, pool, healthcare and restaurant facilities
- A landscaped setting and external amenity spaces
- Independent living, via a service charge, a range of primary healthcare, wellness and support services.

The applicant considers there is unmet demand for this private extra care facility (aimed at the over 75's) in their defined 7 mile catchment area of some 648 units.

As set out in the SADPD (para 8.8), there is likely to be a substantial increase in the number of people in older age groups in Cheshire East over the period to 2030. Most of these older people will already live in the area and whilst many will not move from their current homes, those that do are likely to be looking for suitable housing.

The 2019 Cheshire East Residential Mix Assessment estimates that the total required additional provision of specialist housing for older people up to 2030 is 12,435 units. It is important to note that it is unlikely that all of the identified needs for older people will be met by the delivery of specialist accommodation and many householders identified as need specialist accommodation will choose to remain in their own homes with appropriate assistance from social care providers, assistive technology and suitable adaptations; or downsize to more suitable accommodation. In addition, the health, longevity and aspirations of older people mean that they will often lead increasingly healthier lifestyles and therefore future housing needs may be different from current identified needs.

SADPD Policy HOU 2 'Specialist housing provision' supports the delivery of specialist housing where it meets an identified need. It also notes that schemes should contribute to maintaining the balance of housing stock in the locality (i.e. there should not be an over-concentration of specialist housing types in any particular area); and provide easy access to services, community and support facilities including health facilities and public transport.

In conclusion it is accepted there is a need for more elderly peoples accommodation in Cheshire East, and that this proposal will contribute to that provision. However, as the accommodation is very specialist, it cannot be given significant weight in this case.

Highways

Access

There is an existing roundabout which will provide a new arm to provide vehicular access to the building. There is also a secondary access to the site located on the site frontage about 60m south of the roundabout this would be for servicing and refuse collections.

Parking

There will be 52 on-site car parking spaces and an additional 116 spaces in the nearby Glasshouse MSCP. The disabled and EV charging spaces will be provided in the on-site car park for residents with mobility issues. The level of car parking provision overall conforms with CEC parking standards.

Accessibility

The site lies within Alderley Park that has a private network of internal roads and footpaths and this site will be connected to this network. Cycle parking has been provided in accordance with LTN 1/20, 8 short stay spaces at the entrance and 16 secure and covered spaces by the reception area.

A shuttle bus does operate within Alderley Park and peak times and residents will be able use this service, there is also an internal bus service 130 that residents are able to use.

It is proposed for two vehicles to be available for chauffeured trips that are local between the hours of 0800 and 2300hrs daily.

Summary

The proposed supported living residential units are not typically high peak trip generators and there are no concerns regarding capacity problems on the local road network. There is a need for car parking for residents and parking has been provided in accordance with CEC standards.

The site is reasonably accessible with links to public transport and the internal footway network and also to nearby cycling facilities. Whilst not a highly sustainable location, Alderley Park have been making strides to improve its accessibility by bus and cycle/foot access including a new cycling facility within the Mereside complex. Clearly the latter is less relevant to this particular application.

The internal roads within Alderley Park are all private and not the responsibility of the Highway Authority, the main road within the park is subject to an advisory 20mph speed limit and has traffic calming in place to reduce traffic speeds.

The application is considered to be acceptable in regard to its highway impact and no objections are raised.

Landscape and visual Impact

The proposed development is a large-scale retirement apartment scheme within Heatherley Wood. The site is previously developed land sited within the Green Belt, the Alderley Edge & West Macclesfield Wooded Estates Local Landscape Designation Area (LLDA) and the non-designated Historic Parkland. To the north and east the site is bounded by ancient woodland, to the west by a narrow belt of TPO woodland, and to the south by the Bellway residential housing area comprising two and largely three storey dwellings.

The site is within the Alderley Park Opportunity Site LPS 61 which requires that all development shall be in accordance with the Alderley Park Development Framework (2015). The site is in the Parklands East Character Area and the Framework states:

There is potential for discrete, high quality residential development within Parklands East which responds to the woodland enclave, creating a positive relationship and edges between the proposed development and the woodland, whilst drawing woodland planting into the site.

The Maximum Building Heights Parameter Plan approved under the previous outline planning consent (15/5401M) set a general height parameter for Heatherley Wood of 10.5m (above FFL) to Ridge Height, with a small block on the western side of the area with a maximum height parameter of 14.5m (above FFL) to Ridge Height. The outline consent has now expired but the original vision for this site is worthy of consideration given the height and scale of this proposal.

The proposed development is described as a 'transitional scheme' between the high, large-scale commercial buildings at Mereside and the domestic scale Bellway dwellings. Measured in isolation building heights vary considerably, with 22m being typically the tallest structures, 13m being the smaller on the southern boundary. However, in addition to the step change in building heights from six storeys on the northern part of the site to three storeys near to the southern boundary there are also ground level changes such that above ground heights range from 127m AOD to 109m & 113m AOD). The layout of the apartment building would allow views from the Bellway site through the central open space and along the eastern side of the building to the higher parts of the development.

The Glass House and a tall chimney within Mereside are currently visible to the north west of the site beyond the main entrance from parts of the Bellway site. In the winter months there are filtered views of the leisure centre through the western boundary tree belt. The large-scale Parklands building is also prominent from the entrance area of the estate. The proposed development would however introduce a large building into the wooded enclave and in close proximity to the Bellway dwellings.

The potential visual impact on the Bellway residents was raised during pre-application discussions. At that stage, the proposals included a narrow tree belt along the southern boundary. The applicant was asked to consider reducing the footprint of the building and moving it further north in order to provide a better off-set and a wider tree belt to improve screening but this was not considered feasible.

The current landscape proposals submitted with the application include a narrow tree belt along the southern boundary that is generally 6.5 metres in width - increasing to about 12 metres at the easternmost end. The tree belt comprises a 1.8m high evergreen hedge with tree planting in front, plus dispersed blocks of native scrub planting. The trees would include evergreen and deciduous species planted as semi-mature specimens with initial heights of between 4.5 to 7.5 metres

Following initial landscape comments additional details, including elevations and cross sections through the tree belt to illustrate the likely growth over a 15 year period, and Updated Accurate Visual Representations (AVR's) were requested.

Elevations and Cross sections

The Southern Elevation Drawing shows the full extent of the development viewed from the south and the large array of windows and balconies facing onto the Bellway development. It illustrates the likely height and width of the trees at planting, after 7 years and after 15 years. The elevation shows that after

15 years growth the taller trees would potentially reach the top of the third storey and would filter views of the development.

The cross sections illustrate the width of the belt, its proximity to the Bellway dwellings and to the proposed apartments, and the likely height and width of the trees over the same time periods.

Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs)

Two additional wireframes/building outlines have been provided as requested:

- The wireframe from within the parkland area shows that the building would be conspicuous above the trees from this point - with the large Parklands building in the foreground.
- The wireframe from Birtles Lane to the east shows that the building is likely to be screened by the landform and tree cover from that area.
- Additional AVR from Morris Drive has been provided showing daytime and night-time views.

Night-time views

Information submitted indicates there are no significant issues

Long-distance view and openness

Visual openness is a planning matter, but the AVR from viewpoint 8 in Chelford shows that if implemented this development would increase the number of Alderley Park buildings that are visible in the Green Belt landscape from this area.

Landscape Proposals

Updated landscape proposals have been received, and although there is not a great deal of communal open space around the building the hard and soft landscape scheme would be high quality. The residents would also have access to the extensive parkland and woodland.

A large proportion of the northern parking area and the eastern communal gardens are shown to encroach into the 15m ancient woodland buffer on the Tyler Grange Tree Retention & Removal Plan in the AIA document. The drawing states that all pathways and parking areas within this 15m buffer should utilise grassgrid/cellweb construction. Full construction details would be required by condition to ensure compliance.

Lighting Proposals

The latest Landscape External Lighting Strategy includes lighting on 5m columns around the northern car park area, low bollard lighting along the footpaths, uplighters on feature trees and wall mounted lights around the building.

Night-time Amenity Assessment

A night-time visual amenity assessment has been included in the LVIA. The potential night-time residual effects on all identified Landscape and Townscape Character Areas were assessed as Minor adverse/negligible.

The potential night-time residual visual effects on receptor groups were mostly Minor adverse/negligible effect - with no change to the zone category, with the exception of the Bellway residential receptors beyond the southern boundary which were assessed as Moderate Adverse effect.

The proposed development & lighting strategy aims to reduce both glare and light spill. Much of the on-site light sources will be screened by intervening residential properties. A moderate change is predicted when considered against the baseline scenario. The illuminated backdrop associated with the surrounding Alderley Park Estate urban uses and the existing construction area compound and street lighting reduces the extent to which the proposed lighting would be considered uncharacteristic.

The lighting experience would be notable for adjoining north facing residents and result in some direct light spill and glare from upper storeys but this is not uncharacteristic and no different to inter-house lighting experienced in a residential street. Overall moderate effects are predicted and effects would not result in the creation of statutory nuisance.

The night-time assessment concludes that overall, no significant night-time effects have been predicted.

Residential Visual Impact Assessment

Daytime and night-time visual impacts of the proposed development would be experienced by the Bellway residents to varying degrees depending on the location of their property within the estate and whether they have views from windows, garden areas, driveways and access roads.

In conclusion there will be visual impacts from the development, especially from within Alderley Park, however those impacts are not considered to be so significant as to warrant refusal. If the application is approved, it is recommended that a number of conditions are applied.

Trees/Woodland

The application site is bordered by established protected woodland on 3 sides, woodland W5 to the west and woodland W6 to the north and east which are afforded protection by the Cheshire East Borough Council (Nether Alderley – Alderley Park No.3) Tree Preservation Order 2018, also recorded as Ancient Replanted woodland on Defra's Magic Map. A new residential development is located to the south of the development area.

The application has been supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment 2. The survey has considered 1 individual and 2 woodlands recorded as high quality A Category trees, 14 individual moderate quality B Category trees, 31 individuals, 1 group and 2 woodlands of low-quality C Category trees and 2 poor quality U Category trees unsuitable for development irrespective of the development proposal. Of these, 2 individual moderate quality trees and 2 individual low-quality trees are proposed to be removed to accommodate the proposal.

With regards to impacts on existing trees, the proposed new access route will affect protected tree cover within linear woodland bordering the west of the site and arise in losses of 2 moderate quality trees (T18 & T21) and the requirement to undertake extensive pruning (not considered to accord with best practice recommendations) to a moderate quality Oak (T30). The losses and pruning works can be anticipated to have a detrimental impact on the amenity and appearance of this section of established woodland. The removals and pruning works are described as necessary to provide a secondary access point and also to create working space for the piling rig during installation of the proposed bridge. It is unclear what additional impacts may arise to other trees in close proximity to the bridge given that little levels information or technical detail could be located regards the manner in which it would be installed. If a service access is demonstrated to be essential, the Tree Officer considered that an alternative secondary route should be identified which would have a less significant impact on moderate quality and mature high canopy trees such as T21 and T30.

The footprint of Block 2 of the proposal places it in close proximity to the woodland cover along the western boundary with the western elevation of Block 2 sited at approximately 2 metres from high quality A Category tree T7. It was recommended that the footprint of the block requires greater separation from the trees in this location as there is a risk that the long-term amenity of the trees could be prejudiced through pressures to prune or even remove by new occupants, and the flat roof nature of the design has the potential to arise in maintenance issues given the reasonably foreseeable likelihood of build-up of leaf litter in guttering and on the flat roof surface. BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations at section 5.2 - *Constraints posed by existing trees*, and 5.3 - *Proximity of structures to trees*, acknowledges the importance of design and the relationship of trees with new development. The standard places importance on buildings and structures being positioned in such a way that they will not dominate a property or its outdoor space in such a way as to cause apprehension which could result in pressure to prune or remove trees in the future, and these issues need to be designed out.

With regards to the drainage indicated on the Tree Retention and Removal Plan it is unclear what the installation of the drainage through G1 will involve in terms of trench width and depth and how this will impact on adjacent trees in particular mature moderate quality Sycamore T24, although thrust boring is proposed in the AIA. Having viewed the drainage strategy there also appears to be some incursion into RPAs of tree cover to the west which has not been fully appraised.

As originally submitted, it was considered that the application would result in both tree losses and an unsatisfactory relationship with trees which are the subject of the Cheshire East Borough Council (Nether Alderley – Alderley Park No.3) Tree Preservation Order 2018 and that the long-term protection of these trees would be prejudiced. It was recommended that the development proposal is amended to remove these impacts and improve the developments relationship with protected tree cover.

From the above discussions were held with the applicant consider the primary areas of concern outlined above.

Secondary Access Route and Impact on trees

The applicants state justification for the secondary access is absolutely necessary to enable provision for a route for larger vehicle movements including HGV vehicles, fire and refuse vehicles and removal vans to be discreetly segregated to 'back of house' areas, mobility of future residents and minimise the impacts on trees.

To mitigate and compensate for the loss of trees, as a consequence of the proposed secondary access, landscape proposals and a tree planting strategy have been submitted which propose in the region of 34 small multi-stemmed trees and 121 larger trees.

Having regard to Policy SE 5, should the justification and need for the secondary access be considered unavoidable, the Tree Officer is of the opinion that the tree planting strategy and landscape proposals, will provide the necessary compensation for the loss of trees.

The applicant has also undertaken a Biodiversity Metric calculation which shows the proposed development would result in a net gain for biodiversity.

Pruning of Oak (T30)

The tree officer is of the opinion that whilst the extent of the tree work does not comply with current best practice, the potential impact of this pruning is restricted to the site and immediate surroundings and consequently only presents only a slight adverse impact on the wider woodland as a whole.

The applicant advised there was little scope to amend the size of the footprint of Block 2 and that moving the Block to allow for greater separation from the Oak (T7) and woodland would impact on other site constraints in particular the constraint of the Ancient Woodland to the east of the site, the Tree Officer concur with this.

Tree T7 will require periodic pruning to maintain a suitable physical clearance but this is not considered excessive owing to the building being positioned 1.5m beyond the current T7 eastern canopy extent.

Installation of foul and surface water drainage (Group G1 and Sycamores T24 and T47)

The applicant has confirmed that both foul and surface water drainage routes will avoid moderate category B Sycamores T24 and T47 and are intentionally located within a low C category group (G1). The Tree Officer is satisfied that this can be adequately dealt with by a suitably worded condition

Summary

It is therefore concluded that should the principle and need for the secondary access be considered unavoidable, the loss of the two protected Moderate (B) quality trees, an Early mature Yew (T18) and mature Oak (T21) can be adequately mitigated and compensated by the proposed tree planting strategy and landscape proposals

If the principle of the secondary access be acceptable, construction shall need to be carried out in accordance with an agreed method statement in accordance with the Heads of Terms.

The pruning of Oak (T30) does not accord with current arboricultural best practice; however the impact presents only a slight adverse impact on the woodland as a whole.

The position of Block 2 to the adjacent protected woodland, and Oak (T7) presents a relatively poor relationship. The position and footprint of Block 2 is apparently fixed and moving the footprint to improve this relationship has to be balanced against the greater impact this would have on the Ancient Woodland to the east

The position and installation of foul and surface water drainage is acceptable subject to appropriate conditions.

Design

The Symphony Park development is set within a transitional area within the periphery of the site. The ground level is varied across the site, with main entrance sitting at level with the neighbouring larger scale office, science, and technology buildings science park buildings (of 6-7 storeys in height) and then stepping down to the domestic scale of the Bellway development (2-3 storeys) at the southern end of the site. The mixed-use nature of Alderley Park means the surrounding buildings to Heatherley Woods vary quite significantly. The Symphony Park development provides built form ranging from 3 storeys to 6 storeys. This development will be largest residential offering of the site in terms of scale and mass and therefore raises challenges in terms of design quality and landscaping to ensure the scheme provides a

strong sense of place and add to the overall quality of the area to be consistent with national policy and guidance for new developments.

The proposed Symphony Park development reflects the transition in scale and massing from the commercial developments to the north of the park down towards the Bellway development. 26 metres separates the development with Bellway at its closest point for habitable rooms to habitable rooms. The transitional design means that the proposed development is greater in height but will not appear overbearing to the domestic scale of the Bellway development.

The design officer had a number of concerns relating to the exact materials to be used and the elevations could certainly benefit from softening through living walls. The principal entrance would benefit from some softening in terms of green walling or more active elevational design. The Design officer thinks this would be a key place to introduce this, signifying that the development is transitioning to the natural back drop of the parkland too form the harder urban treatment of the Alderley Park buildings around it.

The applicant has confirmed that they would be keen to work with the Council's Design Officer regarding the comments on the incorporation of green/living walls and of course materials generally. Their suggestion is that this could be integrated with the workstream to agree the external facing materials palette. Where green walling is to be utilised in certain locations (they agree the main arrival point is a key location) they could provide a plan/drawing and specification to secure this through the discharge of the materials condition. The southern boundary (eastern block) will not be a naked elevation as there is going to be a significant landscaping buffer here with Bellway but again the materiality is key, so it is proposed that this addressed via the materials condition as an overall study/workstream.

The scale and mass remain a concern, but the Design Officer does agree with the supporting documentation that this is a transitional area, supported by high quality design and landscaping will minimise impacts where the development moves from the larger scale science buildings to the domestic scale of the Bellway scheme. The main concern has been the inter relationship with Bellway, and how this massing and scale impacts on these residents. The sections and elevations do give a degree of comfort that what the residents will see would be not too dissimilar in scale, with the much larger elements of the building set significantly far back that the impact should be vastly reduced. There is a varied scale and mass across the site. As stated, the importance of the high quality design and landscaping conditions will ensure these concerns are alleviated, if the high quality is not assured, the scale of development would have a very different impact.

There is the need to ensure light pollution, this development will create as a 24 hour building as opposed to the day time uses of neighbouring large scale buildings on the park with large sections of glazing. It is important the lighting strategy is consistent with policy and can be carefully considered via condition, in line with the comments on the retention and proximity to the trees as losses on the boundary could make some of the impact identified greater than predicted. This is important to protect and to reinforce the rural periphery which this site sits within.

Subject to the appropriately worded conditions to cover landscape and external materials the Design Officer supports the proposal.

Residential Amenity

The building proposed is relatively close to recently constructed Bellways properties to the south, and as such it is necessary to assess what impact the development will have on the occupiers – over and above those matters discussed in the design section and landscape sections above. SADPD policy HOU 13 Residential standards, as set out in Table 8.2 Standards for space between buildings, sets out the required separation distances.

Table 8.2 Standards for space between buildings

Position/height of building	Standards for space between buildings from the centre line of any window
1. Habitable room facing habitable room or facing non-residential buildings	
1 or 2 storeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 metres front to front of buildings • 21 metres back to back of buildings
3 storeys or upwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 metres front to front of buildings • 24 metres plus 2.5 metres per additional storey back to back of buildings
2. Habitable room facing non-habitable room	
1 or 2 storeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 metres
3 storeys or upwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5 metres per additional storey
3. Allowance for differences in level between buildings	
All cases where 1 and 2 (above) are applied and difference in level exceeds 2 metres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add 2.5 metres to distance
Each further 2 metres difference in level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add additional 2.5 metres per 2 metres difference in level

Firstly, the Bellway properties front the site, and it could be argued that the new development fronts the Bellways development, albeit it is a side elevation of the building, but for completeness it is also assessed as a rear elevation i.e. front to rear relationship. The Bellway properties are 2-storey, but largely 3-storey and the new development would be 3 or 4-storeys high depending on the location closest to these properties.

The plans indicate that at the closest point there is a separation distance of 23.4 m and that is to a blank wall of the new development, closest window to window would be 26.7m. Whichever standard is applied (1, 2 or 3 above) the development exceeds the required distances.

This of course is only part of the potential impact and only covers privacy standards, there is still the issue of massing, which is particularly important here as clearly the proposed development is of a much larger scale overall than the existing individual properties, and the height overall significantly greater.

Whilst there are elements of the development that are 6 or 7-storeys high, they are located to the northern part of the site – furthest away from the Bellway properties, and the development is stepped down to the south. In addition, the development is arranged in “wings” so the mass, whilst still significant is not constant with open areas breaking it up. Finally, a landscaped mound is proposed along the boundary to filter views of the development further reducing its mass.

In conclusion then, whilst the new development by virtue of its sheer scale and size will have an impact on the occupiers of the Bellway properties it is considered that there will be an acceptable relationship between the two.

Ecology

Ancient Woodland/Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

The 'Radnor Mere and Woods Local Wildlife Site (LWS) occurs immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the site and the Alderley Park LWS is located immediately adjacent to the site's eastern boundary. Sites of this type receive protection through Local Plan policy SE3.

Both of these Local Wildlife sites support ancient woodland habitats. Ancient Woodland receive specific protection through the NPPF as irreplaceable habitats.

It is advised that the proposed development will not result in the direct loss of habitat within the ancient woodland Site. The proposed development, however, has the potential to have an adverse impact upon the ancient woodland in a number of well evidenced ways:

- The tipping of garden waste from adjacent residential properties.
- Direct loss of habitat due to the unauthorised extension of gardens into the woodlands.
- The introduction of non-native invasive species from adjacent gardens.
- Contamination resulting from garden pesticides and herbicides.
- Disturbance associated with increased road traffic.
- Hydrological changes.
- Increased predation from domestic cats.
- Light pollution.
- Disturbance impacts occurring during the construction phase.

Current best practice guidance specifies an undeveloped buffer zone of a minimum of 15m consisting of semi natural habitats/informal open space should be provided adjacent to the ancient woodland to address the potential adverse impact of the development upon it.

In this instance a maximum width buffer of only 7m is proposed along the northern boundary and a buffer of between 17m and 4.5m to the east.

It is therefore advised that the buffer as proposed is less than required by best practice.

It is however acknowledged that the application site formally supported building and hard standing up to the boundary of the ancient woodland/LWS.

The Ecologist has received confirmation of the drainage scheme for the site. It is intended that the proposed site discharges surface water the west. This is the same as the drainage for the previous development that occupied the application site. No impacts on the ancient woodland associated with changes in the site's hydrology are therefore anticipated.

If planning consent is granted, it is recommended that a condition requiring the submission and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, which includes measures to safeguard the adjacent woodland/LWS from noise, dust, lighting during the construction phase.

Priority Woodland (outside the of a Local Wildlife Site)

There is an area of priority woodland located along the site's eastern boundary. Habitats of this type are a material consideration for planning and receive protection through Local Plan Policy SE3. The proposed development will result in the loss of 0.03ha of this habitat to facilitate the secondary site access. It is advised that this loss of habitat will result in an adverse impact which is significant at the Local Level. It is therefore recommended that the development proposals be revised to avoid this impact.

In the event that the impacts resulting from the secondary access are considered unavoidable then compensatory habitat creation will be required. A very similar area of replacement woodland planting is proposed in relation to that lost. The proposed woodland planting does therefore not fully compensate for the loss of the existing woodland on a like for like basis in terms of biodiversity units delivered. Other planting associated with the development does however lead to an overall net gain for biodiversity (as discussed below).

Native Bluebells

This priority plant species, which is a material consideration for planning, is present within the area of priority woodland affected by the proposed secondary access. It is advised that the proposed development would have a minor adverse impact upon this species.

Great Crested Newts and other amphibians

A number of ponds are located within 250m of the proposed development. The nearest known GCN population is however some distance from the application site. The application site however offers very limited habitat for great crested newts and does not support any features likely to be utilised by newts for shelter and protection and the proposed development would not result in the fragmentation or isolation of great crested newt habitat.

The potential impacts of the proposed development are limited to the low risk of any newts, or other amphibians, that venture onto the site being killed or injured during the construction process. In order to address this risk the applicant's ecological consultant has recommended a suite of 'reasonable avoidance measures'

It is advised that provided these measures are implemented the proposed development would be highly unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitat Regulations. Consequently, it is not necessary for the Council to have regard to the Habitat Regulations during the determination of this application.

If planning consent is granted, then a condition should be attached requiring the development to proceed in strict accordance with the Reasonable Avoidance Measures detailed.

Hedgehog

It is advised that there is a Low risk that this priority species may be present on site and affected by the construction of the secondary access through the priority woodland.

Bats

A number of trees are proposed for removal to facilitate the secondary access through the priority woodland. These trees have been subject to a further bat activity survey. No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the surveys.

Precipitation is recorded as 'heavy' during the 27th July emergence survey, the applicants ecological consultant has however confirmed that the rain stopped by the time bat emergence would be expected

to peak. It is therefore advised that the proposed tree removals are not reasonable likely to affect roosting bats.

Badgers

A badger survey has been undertaken in support of this application. No evidence of badgers was recorded, and I advise that this species is not reasonable likely to be present or affected by the proposed development.

Nesting birds

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

Lighting

The application is supported by a lighting strategy. To allow an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed lighting to be made a plan has been submitted showing the 1lux contour line and measurements of light spill onto the tree line on the sites eastern and part of the northern boundary.

There is likely to be some light spill of 1 lux within the edge of the adjacent woodland, but this is at a low height and so is not reasonable likely to have a significant effect upon foraging and commuting bats.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Local Plan Policy SE 3(5) requires all development proposals to seek to contribute positively to the conservation of biodiversity. In order, to assess the biodiversity losses and gains resulting from the proposed development the applicant has undertaken a calculation using the Biodiversity Metric methodology.

This calculation, as submitted, shows that the proposed development would result in a net gain for biodiversity. There is however a minor deficiency in the like for like planting required to address the loss of the existing High Value woodland (discussed above).

The condition target for the proposed woodland planting appears optimistic, however as only a small area of this habitat is proposed, the lowering of the target does not have a significant effect on the overall result of the calculation, with the scheme still delivering a net gain.

If planning consent is granted a condition would be required to secure the implementation of the submitted BNG measures.

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.

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.

Secondary access

Both the Arboricultural and Ecology Officer have questioned the need for this access, as there are negative impacts. The applicant considers it is vital for the following reasons:

- During the multi phases of construction the secondary access will speed up and simplify construction movements within the site and deliveries
- When the first phase of development is underway, owing to the way the development needs to be constructed, the secondary access becomes part of the primary construction access. Both access points are required.
- When the build out is complete the secondary access becomes a service only entrance which is necessary for the ongoing functioning of the building
- Whilst explored extensively at the pre app stage and as discussed in meetings, this development cannot operate without the access strategy as proposed, therefore there is no reasonable alternative to having a secondary access

The relative negative impacts are discussed in both the tree and ecology sections and if the access is needed to allow this form of development to take place as indicated then the harm is done (to trees and ecology) at that point. Mitigation is only going to go so far to address the impacts so keeping it open beyond the construction phase has limited additional harm.

Flood Risk/Drainage

Whilst no comments have been received from the Flood Risk Team, the site is well understood from a drainage/flooding perspective and lies in Flood Zone 1 (least risk of flooding) and it is considered that a suitably worded condition can address this matter.

Noise

In support of the application, the applicant has submitted an acoustic / vibration assessment as part of the application pack.

The impact of the noise from construction activity and use of the site when completed on has been assessed in accordance with:

- BS8233:2014 Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings
- BS4142:2014 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound

An agreed methodology for the assessment of the noise source.

The report recommends noise mitigation measures (at section 9.120 – 9.124) designed to achieve BS8233: 2014 and WHO guidelines; to ensure that future occupants of the properties / occupants of nearby properties are not adversely affected by noise from construction activity / noise from the development

The reports methodology, conclusion and recommendations are accepted by Environmental Protection subject to a condition requiring the recommended mitigation measures to be implemented and maintained throughout the use of the development.

Air Quality

A Travel Plan has already been adopted for Alderley Park (15/5401M).

This project has proposed to provide 52 onsite parking spaces. The developer has proposed to install Electric Vehicle infrastructure on all onsite parking. This is acceptable in air quality terms.

The Infrastructure plan shall aim to meet the following specification:

- o A single Mode 3 compliant Electric Vehicle Charging Point per property with off road parking. The charging point shall be independently wired to a 30A spur to enable minimum 7kW Fast charging or the best available given the electrical infrastructure.
- o Should the infrastructure not be available, written confirmation of such from the electrical supplier shall be submitted to this office prior to discharge.
- o Where there is insufficient infrastructure, Mode 2 compliant charging may be deemed acceptable subject to the previous being submitted.

The infrastructure shall be implemented and maintained throughout the use of the development.

This proposal is for the above mentioned application. This scheme does not require an air quality impact assessment. This is because under the IAQM and EPUK guidance, this development does not meet the requirement to carry out a full air quality impact assessment.

Also, an air quality assessment was undertaken in 2015 for the outline planning application for the wider Alderley Park site (planning ref: 15/5401M). This assessment predicted that the annual mean NO₂ concentrations at all existing receptor locations considered in the assessment were below the relevant air quality Objective.

However, there is 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.

A condition is recommended requiring the use of ultra-low emission boilers.

Contaminated Land

The application is for a proposed use that would be particularly vulnerable to the presence of contamination. Residential developments are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present or brought onto the site. The application area has a history of laboratory use and therefore the land may be contaminated.

Should any soil be imported to site for use in areas of garden/landscaping, this should be demonstrated to be chemically suitable for its proposed use in line with the Developer's Guide, in the absence of any other agreement for the site.

The report submitted in support of the application, NX Consulting Limited, reference NX444, dated 24th May 2022, investigated the site and found no contamination to be present in soil or groundwaters. Gas monitoring was undertaken, and one location exhibited elevated concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane. Gas protection measures were recommended due to time constraints but given the results overall and the lack of a significant source it may be prudent to investigate this area further.

Should gas protection measures be proposed, a site plan showing the exploratory locations in relation to the proposed layout should be submitted as well as the technical drawings and specifications for the measures. This needs to be agreed prior to commencement.

The report did not reference which Generic Assessment Criteria (GAC) was utilised, only listed the values. It's good practice to include a reference within the assessment table, and where applicable, a justification for the value, for each determinant. The GAC for lead should also be reviewed to ascertain it is correct.

As such, and in accordance with paragraphs 174, 183 and 184 of the NPPF 2021, Environmental protection recommend that the following conditions, reasons and notes be attached should planning permission be granted:

Housing

Housing object to the application.as no affordable housing is proposed as part of the application. They mention that on part of the Alderley Park site they are providing 15% affordable housing and due to this, no affordable housing is to be provided on this specific application. They highlight that the Supplementary Planning Document for Affordable Housing (SPD) states that sites should not be artificially divided into smaller components in order to take a site below the stated affordable housing threshold.

SADPD Policy HOU 2 also confirms that the requirements of LPS Policy SC 5 'Affordable homes' apply to schemes for specialist housing provision and this includes C2 uses where independent dwellings would be formed. In addition, the detailed site policy (LPS 61 'Alderley Park Opportunity Site') specifically requires the provision of affordable housing in line with Policy SC 5. Where scheme viability would be affected by a policy-compliant level of affordable housing, the developer will need to submit an open book viability assessment which should be subject to an independent review commissioned by the council. In cases where the level of affordable housing is reduced on viability grounds, SADPD Policy GEN 7 'Recovery of planning obligations reduced on viability grounds' will apply and the applicant would need to enter into a legal agreement with the council to enable a review of the viability assessment against future trigger points with the aim of recovering all or part of the reduced planning obligation should the profitability of the scheme increase.

It is recognised that viability work carried out as part of the previous outline approval (15/5401M) lead to an agreement whereby, under the outline permission, 15% affordable housing would be provided (7.5% key worker housing onsite and a commuted sum for 7.5% offsite affordable housing). This was approved prior to the adoption of both the LPS and SADPD policies, including those on affordable housing. Whilst the site is within the boundary of this outline application (15/5401M) this has now expired so it only right it is assessed against the new policies where there is a conflict. That said the reduced level of affordable housing as set out above, was accepted by Members in a more recent approval for Jones Homes in 2021 which followed the 2015 application approach, and an application has been submitted (Ref 22/3506M) for the onsite provision which it is to be linked to this approval to ensure it is implemented within a fixed timescale.

The policy makes reference to the need for an open book viability assessment to demonstrate, in this case, the need for a reduced affordable housing contribution so the funds from any capital receipt can go towards the funding of the construction of new laboratory buildings. This has been submitted as outlined below, and whilst it has not been independently appraised the case is fully understood and has been consistent from previous applications. A clawback clause can be added.

In conclusion the lack of the policy compliant affordable housing contribution counts against this application and does not fully comply with the policies in this regard. However, this application does follow the accepted amended contribution established in 2015 made by other developments at Alderley Park and is directly related (and if approved will be linked to) the next phase in the development of Alderley Park by providing the first new-build life science accommodation to meet the increasing demand for this sector. This site is the last identified site (from the Development Framework) that can make this contribution.

Viability/Economic case

As set out in the description, the application is supported by the Alderley Park Commercial Update by Cushman & Wakefield, which in effect is a viability assessment of this proposal and the linkages to the application for the new life science development (also on this agenda) which would be “cross-funded” by this development.

The report states that without the cross-subsidy, which in any event would not cover all the costs, the life science development would be unviable. In brief the report states that some £13.5m would be received from the land sale for the supported housing proposal to be used to “pump prime” the development of the office/lab life science space, and this is considered to be the minimum required.

In common with all recent planning approvals at Alderley Park, both on the original outline (15/5401M) & subsequent full approvals for Jones Homes (20/1970M) more recently following the expiration of the outline, a viability argument has been accepted that allows for a different approach to be taken to affordable housing, as set out above, but for funds to be channelled into the life sciences development and the unique position that Alderley Park holds in that sector. Earlier monies have been channelled into re-purposing existing buildings, but due to the success of these developments these opportunities are coming to an end, and as such there is the need for new build facilities to continue this success into the future.

CONCLUSIONS

This application is for full planning permission (the time limit for submission of reserved matters under the outline having now expired) for this one remaining undeveloped parcel in the southern campus area of Alderley Park. The principle of development has been established by the outline approval, and it is considered that the proposals are appropriate development in the Green Belt and in line with the general policies in the Development plan, NPPF and the Alderley Park Development Framework.

This application is considered to be finely balanced, with the following issues counting against the proposals:

- This is a large building which will have some visual impact, in particular on the residents of the newly constructed Bellway properties
- There will be some tree losses and impacts, which can only be in part mitigated for
- The affordable housing provision does not meet the policy requirements

Largely neutral to the development are:

- Highway impacts

- Ecological impacts that can largely be mitigated for
- Environmental Impacts – Noise/Air Quality/Contaminated Land again which can be addressed via condition
- Flood Risk/Drainage again can be addressed via conditions

In support of the application are:

- A high-quality development that will contribute positively to Alderley Park
- The development will directly contribute to key worker housing
- The development will contribute towards new build life science accommodation - the unique contribution Alderley Park makes, and the reasons behind its Planning Policy allocation.

The contribution to the wider objectives associated the delivery of life science employment uses and the wider economic benefits tip the balance in favour of supporting this application.

As such the application is recommended for approval subject to a Section 106 Agreement and conditions.

SECTION 106

In line with the previously approved site-wide outline application (which has been used for subsequent applications not directly linked to this approval) a section 106 agreement will accompany the application and is required to secure the following:

- Profits to be re invested in life science development
- 15% affordable housing to be provided on site under the established Life Science Employee Housing Scheme or an updated Scheme that could be extended to other Alderley Park employees.
That this accommodation (proposed under application 22/3506M) be implemented within a timetable to be agreed.

In addition, in response to comments made on the application which queried the nature of the proposed use, the applicant has proposed the following:

- That the Extra Care development shall be operated in perpetuity for Use Class C2 purposes in accordance with the Town and Country (Planning) Use Classes Order (as amended)

CIL REGULATIONS

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010, it is necessary for planning applications with legal agreements to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following: a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; a) Directly related to the development; and b) Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. It is considered that the contributions required as part of the application are justified meet the Council's requirement for policy compliance. All elements are necessary, directly relate to the development and are fair and reasonable in relation to the scale and kind of development. The non-financial requirements ensure that the development will be delivered in full. On this basis the scheme is compliant with the CIL Regulations 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement to Secure:

- Profits to be re invested in life science development
- 15% affordable housing to be provided on site under the established Life Science Employee Housing Scheme or an updated Scheme that could be extended to other Alderley Park employees.
That this accommodation (proposed under application 22/3506M) be implemented within a timetable to be agreed.
- That the Extra Care development shall be operated in perpetuity for Use Class C2 purposes in accordance with the Town and Country (Planning) Use Classes Order (as amended)

And the following conditions:

1. Standard 3 year consent
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials
4. Full hard and soft landscape details – including all furniture & features, particularly the proposed pavilion structures to include boundary treatment
5. Implementation of landscaping and 5 year replacement
6. Details for the new bridge - decking, parapet and abutment facing materials
7. A landscape management plan for the tree belt for a 30 year period (in accordance with BNG).
8. Submission of a scheme for the protection of the retained trees, and an arboricultural method statement
9. Submission of a detailed Construction Specification / Method Statement for the proposed secondary access and associated bridge in accordance with the Heads of Terms identified in the submitted AIA
10. Existing and proposed levels, contours and cross sections, including sections through the site boundaries and woodland edges.
11. Submission of a detailed strategy / design, ground investigation, and associated management / maintenance plan for the drainage of the site
12. Separate drainage systems for foul and surface water
13. Ultra-low emission boilers
14. Electrical vehicle infrastructure
- Approval of noise mitigation
15. Approval of a contaminated land remediation strategy
16. Contaminated land verification report
17. Soil tests for contamination
18. Measures to deal with unexpected contamination
19. Full details of existing and proposed levels and contours
20. Submission and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, which includes measures to safeguard the adjacent woodland/LWS from noise, dust, lighting during the construction phase.
21. Implementation of Great Crested Newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures.
22. Safeguarding of Nesting Birds
23. Implementation of lighting in accordance with the submitted strategy.
24. Submission and implementation of habitat creation method statement and 30 year monitoring and management plan.

25. Incorporation of features to increase the biodiversity value of the development (Bat and bird boxes etc.).

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

