

Application No: 22/4451N

Location: CREWE LIBRARY, PRINCE ALBERT STREET, CREWE, CHESHIRE, CW1 2DH

Proposal: Construction of a new History Centre (Class F1) with related access, servicing, landscaping and other associated works, following the demolition of the former Crewe Library building.

Applicant: The Cheshire Archives & Local Studies Service

Expiry Date: 17-Feb-2023

SUMMARY

The application proposes a two-storey building on the site of Crewe Library known as the History Centre to re-house the Cheshire East Archive collections within a purpose built facility, and also provide space for events/exhibitions, research and a café. The proposal development of the History Centre accords with the Council's objective of remodelling the civic hub with the Civic and Cultural quarter. In conjunction with the intrinsically linked public realm improvement scheme (22/4472N), it will deliver town centre redevelopment in accordance with the objectives of Policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

Whilst of a contemporary architectural design, the History Centre is considered to constitute a high quality development that will achieve a positive relationship with Memorial Square, the surrounding townscape and the new area of public realm. The History Centre is therefore of a siting and design which accords with the objectives of CELPS Policy SE1 and SE 7, and policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

The development will not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of those living nearby and also achieve an acceptable relationship with the adjacent Magistrates Courts building. It is considered the proposal therefore complies with policy SE1 of the CELPS and Policy HOU12 of the SADPD.

The site is in Crewe town centre with existing pedestrian and public transport infrastructure within the vicinity of the site, or within short walking distance. As the site is considered well located to cater for staff or visitors to travel by sustainable modes of travel, the use of the History Centre will not have an adversely impact on town centre parking provision or harmful highway impact as a result of traffic generation.

The proposals will have a neutral impact on ecology and trees given the landscaping and additional tree planting provided within the adjacent public realm scheme. Other issues including designing out crime have been addressed, subject to a condition requiring the provision of secure cycle parking. In addition, to ensure measures are undertaken to mitigate the impact during construction on the Magistrates Court and nearby residential properties a condition is recommended for the approval of a CEMP.

On this basis, the proposal is for sustainable development which would bring environmental, economic and social benefits and is therefore considered to be acceptable in the context of the relevant policies of the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the SADPD and advice contained within the NPPF.

Recommendation: APPROVE subject to Conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Referred due to Council interest/ownership of the site.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located within Crewe town centre to the south of Memorial Square and alongside Prince Albert Street to the west. It comprises the Crewe Library building which dates from 1967 and forms part of a wider civic complex comprising the Magistrates Court and Police Station. A raised pedestrian concourse provides the main public access to the Library and the adjacent Magistrates' Court building to east, as well as first floor access to Crewe Police Station.

Crewe Street and the Grade II listed Christ Church lie to the south of the site.

A public car park (Civic Centre) is located beneath the raised concourse accessed from Crewe Street. This undercroft carpark also provides access to a staff car parking area located below the southern end of the Magistrates Courts building.

Crewe Library closed in 2016 and was relocated to the Lifestyle Centre on the southern end of Memorial Square. The building has remained vacant since this time.

The site forms part of the civil and cultural quarter of Crewe town centre, which also contains the Lifestyle Centre, the Lyceum Theatre, the Market Hall and Lyceum Square.

PROPOSALS

The proposals are part of a Cheshire-wide project, 'Cheshire's Archives: a story shared' which is being funded by Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This aims to deliver two new History Centres in Chester and Crewe to replace the Archives service's current facility on Duke Street in Chester. The collections date back more than 900 years and archives need to be stored in strict airtight conditions to manage the temperature and humidity 24 hours a day which is near impossible to achieve in the existing building.

It is therefore proposed to re-house the Cheshire East collections within a purpose built facility known as the History Centre to provide a climate controlled environment to better preserve and display local archival materials.

The proposed History Centre is a two-storey building of contemporary design, and also of similar scale and massing to the library building it is to replace.

At ground floor level, the front and side façades of the building are mainly glazed together with the use of red facing brickwork. The first floor level overhangs the ground floor, and perforated metal cladding is proposed to wrap around the upper storey, but also incorporates a large glazed area overlooking Memorial Square towards the Municipal Buildings (grade II) and Crewe Market Hall (grade II).

The main entrance is located opposite Memorial Square. The ground floor of the building will accommodate open plan exhibition space within the entrance areas which then wraps around

a stage/ auditorium, and a café with internal and external seating areas. The archive itself is central to the building plan, and is housed within a windowless blockwork compartment.

The first floor level accommodation primarily comprises of a research space, meeting rooms and secure storage.

A separate and intrinsically linked planning application (22/4472N) has been submitted concurrently with this application for the demolition of the old Library building and the undercroft public car park enabling the construction of the proposed History Centre. This also proposes the creation of new public realm, new car parking and a new entrance for the adjacent Magistrates' Court. Planning Application 22/4472N is also on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

RELEVANT HISTORY

None relevant

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

LPS 1 - Central Crewe
MP 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
PG 2 - Settlement Hierarchy
SD 1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD 2 - Sustainable Development Principles
EG 5 - Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce
SC 1 - Leisure and Recreation
SC 3 - Health and Well-being
SE 1 - Design
SE 2 - Efficient Use of Land
SE 3 - Biodiversity
SE 4 - The Landscape
SE 5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
SE 7 - The Historic Environment
SE 9 - Energy efficient Development
SE 12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management
CO. 1 - Sustainable travel and transport

Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)

PG 9 - Settlement boundaries
GEN 1 - Design Principles
GEN 2 - Security at crowded places
ENV 3 - Landscape Character
ENV 6 - Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation
ENV 15 - New development and existing uses

ENV 16 - Surface water management and flood risk
HER 1 - Heritage Assets
HER 4 - Listed Buildings
HER 8 - Archaeology
RET 9 - Environmental improvements, public realm and design in town centres
RET 10 - Crewe Town Centre
HOU 12 - Amenity
INF 2 - Public Car Parks
INF 3 - Highway Safety and Access
INF 9 - Utilities
REC 5 - Community facilities

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Strategy
Crewe Town Centre Public Realm Strategy
A Cultural Strategy for Crewe 2019 -2029

CONSULTATIONS (Summary)

Environmental Health: No objection subject to condition for the remediation of contamination and the provision of Ultra Low Emission Boilers, and attachment of informative in respect of Construction hours, Noise Generative Works, requirements for Piling works and floor floating, and provision of a Site Specific Dust Management Plan (DMP).

Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service - No objection and comments that it is unlikely that there will be any surviving below ground remains of those houses at this site given the extensive 1960's building.

Highways - No objection subject to a condition subject to a condition for cycle storage

United Utilities - Object, as land drainage is shown to be going into the public sewer. But further adds that should planning permission be granted a planning condition is attached requiring that prior to the commencement of development, details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme are submitted to, and approved by the LPA.

Cheshire Constabulary, Designing Out Crime Officer - Comments. A series of issues need to be addressed in relation to CCTV provision, lighting, access control measures, increased natural surveillance, secure cycle storage, and measures to reduce the potential for anti social behaviour.

Cadent Gas : No objection

VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL:

Crewe Town Council : Supports the principle of development but raises the following observations and concerns:

- i. Reduction in town centre parking capacity, particularly that used for access to the Library and Lifestyle Centre*
- ii. The car park design layout should include for more disabled parking bays*
- iii. The car park design layout should include for more family-friendly parking bays*
- iv. The car park design layout should include for an increased proportion of EV charging bays.*

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

5 representations have been received objecting to the application on grounds summarised below;

- The existing building should be re-purposed. The proposed demolition goes against Cheshire East's stated aims of achieving Net Zero. Construction and building accounts for 40% of the U.K.'s carbon emissions and demolition causes two-thirds of the country's total waste.
- No serious consideration given to repurposing, or altering, this award winning landmark building.
- Alternative and cost effective reuse of existing library building suggested for a college specialising in Financial Literacy, with accommodation for the Archives provided through the renovation of Christ Church.
- The design of the new building is totally unacceptable for the Cultural Quarter and sandwiched between Victorian Christ Church and Edwardian Municipal Buildings reflecting neither.
- The existing utilitarian building must be replaced with an ambitious and remarkable structure that blends in with the surrounding architecture.
- Removal of parking space which are used by visitors to Crewe Lifestyle Centre.
- Provision of parking for the lifestyle centre must be a requirement for any approval.
- Potential for increased anti-social behaviour on Memorial Square.
- Inadequate public consultation

A representation has been received which neither objects or supports the application, raising points summarised as follows;

- From the corner of Prince Albert Street and Crewe Street there is nothing legible about what the building is or the location of its entrance.
- Signage on the building is required as this corner will also be at the first point of entry from the Southern Gateway access point which is a key link to South Crewe and the railway station.
- Provision of 2 car parking spaces within the rear service area does not allow sufficient space for a refuse vehicle to leave in forward gear. Tracking information is required or should be provided through a condition.
- Will car parking spaces have passive electric car charging points?
- Further details required of the cladding design for the building

- Clarification required of proposed illumination in the evening and impact of lighting on neighbouring properties
- Will the cafe be open when the History Centre is closed with its own self-contained access point, or is it incidental to the History Centre?
- Part of the red line boundary includes some aspects of Public Realm. Will seating and short stay cycle parking be a feature near to the entrance of the site?
- Cycle hoops should be of a design that forms part of the placemaking.
- Details required for the provision of secure cycle storage for employees of the site

A representation has been received by Cushman and Wakefield on behalf of HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) raising the following concerns;

“The HMCTS understand the wide-ranging benefits that the proposed development would deliver however HMCTS do have concerns regarding the likely impacts to the court operation from the proposed development as it is constructed and brought into operation. Any disturbance or disruption from external activity, particularly significant external noise, is likely to interfere with evidence being given in the many cases that the court hears. This would lead to adjournments and delays to cases and have a detrimental impact on HMCTS performance and those that use the court building.”

“It is imperative that safeguards and mitigation measures are put in place and enforced to protect the effective and smooth running of court activity through all phases of construction. It is therefore respectfully requested that the following actions are undertaken by the applicant and enforced by the Council:

- *Submission of an assessment of construction noise on the court operation in collaboration with HMCTS so that the levels of construction noise that will adversely impact court proceedings can be properly understood and assessed. This will allow adequate and robust management and mitigation measures to be identified and enforced through any future planning conditions, specifically those that relate to the proposed Construction Environmental Management Plan.*
- *Where construction operations will emit significant noise impacts that are likely to disrupt the proper functioning of the court, such activities should take place outside of core court hours, the core hours being 09:00 – 16:00. This will require bespoke construction hours to be agreed with HMCTS to limit disruption of any sort to court proceedings and enshrined within the proposed Construction Environmental Management Plan and any bespoke planning condition related to noise emissions.*
- *A further assessment of construction vibration on the court operation and building so that any adverse impact can be properly understood and assessed. This will allow adequate and robust management and mitigation measures to be identified and enforced through any future planning conditions, specifically those that relate to a Construction Environmental Management Plan.*
- *Future planning conditions to ensure that any Construction Environmental Management Plan includes the requirement for construction traffic entering and leaving the site to be closely controlled, vehicles that make deliveries will travel via designated traffic routes to be agreed with the LPA and other interested parties including HMCTS, and that construction traffic will be controlled by means of a vehicle arrival and departure management plan to achieve an even spread of vehicle movements during the working day.*

- *The internal configuration of the building and new public realm/spaces are designed to ensure that there is no overlooking to any of the following private and sensitive areas, hearing rooms, administration offices, and witness/judge/CPS/prisoner entrances. “*

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site lies within the settlement boundary of Crewe where there is a presumption in favour of development. Policy PG 2 (Settlement Hierarchy) of the CELPS identifies Crewe as a principal town where significant development will be encouraged to support its revitalisation and recognising its role as the most important settlements in the borough. Development will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources to allow jobs, homes and other facilities to be located close to each other and accessible by public transport.

In principle, the proposals are supported by CELPS Policy LPS1, which identifies Central Crewe, including the town centre, as an opportunity to regenerate under-exploited assets and provide a strong mix of uses. In particular Policy LPS1 seeks to achieve this through;

- support for an enhanced cultural offer
- a focus of civic functions
- support for multi use facilities to drive footfall and a diversity of uses within the town centre

The proposed development would further accord with CELPS Policy EG5 which supports a town centre first approach, including proposals for cultural development.

SADPD Policy RET 10 supports opportunities for improving and regenerating Crewe town centre and in particular states that within the Civic and Cultural Quarter Development Area (CCQDA) the following development schemes will be supported;

i the re-use or redevelopment of the former library buildings for a range of civic, cultural, community and other town centre uses, including a potential history centre

In addition Policy RET 10 also supports town centre public realm improvements that improve the quality of the public spaces, including green spaces, enhance the setting of heritage assets, enhance the setting of heritage assets and improve routes across the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Civic and Cultural Quarter brings together a range of leisure, cultural and civic functions including the Lifestyle Centre and the Municipal Buildings, in addition to the area around Memorial Square and Christ Church. The supporting text of policy RET 10 adds that, “The vision for the quarter will look to remodel the civic hub, currently comprising the former library, police station, law courts and undercroft car parking”.

In line with CELPS Policy SE1 “Design”, SADPD Policy RET 9 further supports town centre development provided this makes a positive contribution to their surroundings. Policy RE9 sets out the principles that town centre development should follow including designing buildings and spaces that create a sense of identity, are adaptable, accessible, inclusive, easily understood, and enhance local character and where the public realm associated with new development positively integrates with that of the wider town centre.

These proposals are intrinsically linked with the public realm improvement project of planning application 22/4472N. The entire regeneration scheme is therefore the subject of two planning applications (22/4472N & 22/4451N) and will be delivered in 2 overall phases. The first phase will principally relate to the delivery of public realm improvements involving the demolition of the former library and raised concourse, ground re-modelling, the provision of the re-configured car park and eastern part of the public realm, and the new entrance to the law courts. Phase 2 will entail the development of the new History Centre building on the site of the demolished library and the remaining western area of public realm.

The delivery of the History Centre together with the public realm project proposed under 22/4472N, will deliver town centre redevelopment within the Civic and Cultural Quarter Development Area in accordance with the objectives of Policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD. Detailed issues relating to the siting and design of the History Centre development are addressed below.

Design

Issues relating to the demolition of the existing library building, concourse and undercroft are addressed as part of application 22/4472N. However, the Council's Design Officer considers the existing library building is a non-jarring, brick, contemporary building that architecturally 'of its time'. Furthermore, in rejecting an application to list the library, Historic England concluded that, "the standard, functional design of the late-1960s former library in Crewe means that it lacks special architectural and historic interest to merit listing in a national context"

The submitted Design and Access Statement explains the rationale why the existing building is not able to be re-purposed for the proposed History Centre. This is principally due to a series of technical considerations, including significant structural issues and required need for airtightness for storage of the archive collection. Therefore given the specific needs for the archive facility, and also to achieve the "design vision" for the proposed History Centre including the creation of a 'transparent' and welcoming entrance onto Memorial Square, this cannot be delivered through a repurposing or retrofit of the existing library building.

The new History Centre building will occupy the same footprint to that of the library but with levels raised to ensure it sits at grade to the levels of Memorial Square and Prince Albert Street. The Design Officer considers this will result in a far better and responsive design than exists currently. The positioning and orientation of the building will help to frame Memorial Square and the new public realm, also creating active frontage/usage that will further animate this public space.

The design of the History Centre maintains the general scale of the existing library, with its primary elevation addressing Memorial Square and associated public buildings. Feature glazing and fenestration create active corners at the front of the building and also active sides to the new public realm and Prince Albert Street.

The building is to be constructed in red brick and a cladding system comprising solid, mesh and perforated cladding to the upper storey. The design of that is to be finalised as part of the

detailed design and finalisation of materials. This will also allow the opportunity to animate the building during day and night-time, integrating artwork and interpretation and also creating the opportunity to accent the building with lighting. Planning conditions are recommended requiring details of materials, including that of the upper floor cladding and also the provision lighting/illumination.

Both the front elevation and part of the sides are activated by feature curtain glazing with the front upper storey defined by a cowed full width, full height 'window' onto the square and with a recessed but open and transparent understorey with "spill out " space onto the new public realm. It is recognised services are to be concealed within the building and this results in the southern elevation not containing openings and thus plainer and less active architecturally than the other elevations.

In summary, the Design Officer advises that the History Centre will positively address Memorial Square and the new southern area of public realm, whilst also having an enhanced relationship to Prince Albert Street. In this context, and following review of the submitted Heritage Assessment, the proposed development is not considered to have a harmful effect on designated heritage assets including the grade 2 listed buildings of Christ Church to the south or Crewe Market Building and the Municipal Buildings beyond Memorial square to the north, and overall would preserve their settings.

Whilst of contemporary design and the architecture of the building and its materiality is clearly of today, The Design Officer considers it sites positively in the townscape, whilst offering the potential to animate the area during night-time and add to the general ambience, particularly Memorial Square. The largely outward-looking design will also significantly improve upon the contribution of the current library building to the surrounding streetscape.

The History Centre development is therefore of a siting and design which accords with the objectives of CELPS policy SE1 and SE 7 and policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

Amenity

SADPD Policy HOU 12 (Amenity) requires that new development should not be permitted if it is deemed to cause unacceptable harm upon neighbouring amenity such as form overlooking, visual intrusion or noise and disturbance.

The development occupies the footprint of the old library and is of a similar scale and mass to the existing building. Furthermore although the upper floor of the new building incorporates glazing to serve staff facilities and a meeting room within the Prince Albert Street elevation, the existing library contains a series of first floor windows. As a result the proposed History Centre would not therefore have any greater impact on residential amenities of any neighbouring properties including the flats of Imperial Chambers on the opposite side of Prince Albert Street. However to safeguard amenity, a condition is recommended requiring details of the specification of external lighting prior to its installation.

Furthermore, following assessment of the submitted noise report, the Council's Environmental Health Officer does not consider that the use or operation of the History Centre will generate unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to nearby properties in this town centre location.

In term of the relationship of the new building with the Magistrates Courts, a distance of 42m will remain between the western elevation of the Courts building and the facing eastern elevation of the History Centre at the closet point. Given this separation distance, coupled with the removal of the existing raised concourse adjacent to the western elevation of the Magistrates Courts building, it is not considered that the siting and design of the History Centre would result in unacceptable overlooking of private or sensitive areas of the Magistrates Courts.

It is considered the proposal therefore complies with policy SE1 of the CELPS and Policy HOU12 of the SADPD.

Highways

The existing Library building is to be demolished and replaced with a History Centre, which also includes the removal of the adjoining concourse and undercroft public car park. Planning application 22/4472N proposes a smaller replacement car park as part of a public realm project and is accessed from Crewe Street.

Sustainable access

The site is in Crewe town centre with existing pedestrian and public transport infrastructure within the vicinity of the site or within a short walking distance. The site is considered well located to cater for staff or visitors to travel by sustainable modes of travel.

Safe and suitable access

An existing vehicle access off Crewe Street which is currently in use will be restricted to maintenance vehicle access to the public realm only, with entry controlled by retractable bollards.

A further existing vehicle access off Crewe Street is unused. It is proposed to bring this back into use and provide access to a servicing/delivery area including 2 car parking spaces at the rear of the new History Centre. Refuse collection is to take place from the highway.

The Council's Highway Officer has further advised that swept path analysis (tracking) provided within the Transport Assessment satisfactorily demonstrates that the proposed rear service area is of sufficient size for satisfactory use by delivery vehicles.

Parking

There are currently 89 car parking spaces with the adjacent civic centre car park but this will be replaced with a new public car park of 32 spaces proposals by application 22/4472N. Two additional spaces for use by the history centre itself are provided within its rear service areas. This results in a net reduction of 55 parking spaces.

The closest car parks to the site are Oak Street, Thomas Street, Chester Street, Gatefield, and Holly Bank. A Crewe town centre parking study was carried out, which analysed pre-covid ticketing data, and indicated that the Chester Street car park was almost fully utilised but the others were not, and that there would be sufficient spare capacity to cater for the proposed loss/reduction spaces from the replacement of the existing Civic Centre car park. Nevertheless, there are plans for a new multi-storey car park in Crewe a short walk away which would provide almost 400 spaces and which is due to become operational early 2024.

As set out in application 22/4472N, the Highway Officer considers the layout of the new car park to be acceptable and the proposed numbers of disabled person spaces (13%) to be sufficient.

Cycle parking is to be provided, although the Highway Officer recommends that a condition is imposed to ensure that this is suitably secure and sheltered.

Network Capacity

The applicant has stated that on a typical day occupancy would be 45 visitors and a group of 10 to 20 people. On event days there would be a maximum of 150 people. Using the modal split of other museums/exhibition centres indicates that the majority would arrive by methods other than the car. The maximum car parking demand of the site would be expected to be around 15. Given the sustainable location of the site this is considered to be a reasonable assessment, and relative to the existing use the highways impact will be minimal.

Conclusion

The Strategic Highway Manager raises no objection to the development, subject to a condition requiring the approval of details for secure cycle storage.

Designing out Crime

The Cheshire Constabulary Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) raised a series of issues in relation to both planning applications 22/4472N and 22/4451N with regard to the need to discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. In respect of the proposed History Centre building these principally concerned the provision of effective security measures including CCTV, provision of lighting and secure cycle parking provision.

Following assessment of additional information, and discussions with the applicant, the DOCO has advised that arrangements for the provision of CCTV, the provision of lighting including illumination of cladding and measures to secure the interior and exterior of building have addressed the concerns originally raised.

Original concerns were also raised by the DOCO in respect of the building's first floor overhang and the potential for loitering/congregation here with the increased and risk of anti-social behaviour. However, the DOCO has since accepted that given the overhang is less than 1m in depth together with the provision of CCTV surveillance and lighting, that such issues can be adequately mitigated.

However, the DOCO remains concerned in respect of the overall provision and standard of secure cycle storage. In response, the applicant considers that 25 cycle spaces are appropriate to serve the History Centre. Some will be provided at entrance to the building with loop storage was selected due to maintaining the key view to the façade of the building from across Memorial Square. The building's perimeter to the east and west has full height curtain walling, and the glazing adds surveillance to the cycle storage proposed in these locations. Additionally there will be CCTV coverage of this area and also staff (2No.) cycle storage provision will be provided within the building.

Nevertheless given the concerns raised by the DOCO, and also that further details are required by CEC Highways Officer, a condition is recommended to secure the provision of suitable, sheltered and secure cycle parking/storage.

Energy Efficient Development

Cheshire East Council has committed to being carbon neutral by 2025. In response to this commitment, the applicant states that the design of the Crewe History Centre will aim to help set this new building on a pathway to net zero carbon. To achieve this, a Net Zero Carbon design approach that follows the UK Green Building Council framework has been adopted to ensure that the CO2 associated with the building's operation will be minimised.

The submitted Sustainability and Energy Statement sets out that the provision of mechanical and electrical services for the History Centre have been designed to deliver a controlled environment for the building. This is to be achieved through reducing energy consumption by maximising energy efficiency in the design of the fabric of the building and also the application of low carbon and renewable technologies including;

- Roof mounted photovoltaics generating electricity for the building.
- Air source heat pump heating and cooling
- Hot water will be generated by local point of use electric water heaters.

The energy Statement concludes that the History Centre will generate over 10% of its energy requirements from renewable sources and the design of the building will achieve a high energy efficiency rating, in accordance with the requirements of CELPS Policy SE.9 (Energy Efficient Development).

Ecology

The Council's Ecologist does not consider that the proposed development results in any significant ecological issues.

It is recognised that a small number of urban trees are to be felled as part of the proposed development. However the Council's Ecologist has advised that the landscape proposals of 22/4472N incorporate sufficient tree planting that achieves satisfactory mitigation for tree removal. This further ensures that the development does not result in a loss of biodiversity.

Drainage

United Utilities have raised an objection to the application on the basis that the plans show land drainage going into the public sewer on Crewe Street. Although notwithstanding this, a planning condition is recommended requiring the approval of details of the drainage system.

The proposals of application 22/4472N include a surface water drainage system to serve the entire public realm and History Centre development, prepared with regard to the principles of the Cheshire East Council Sustainable Drainage Systems design guide. As recommended,

the drainage system includes the use of rain gardens / bio-retention as an infiltration system to control surface water run-off.

The library and its predominantly hard surfaced environs already drain to the existing sewer. This scheme seeks to introduce a greater area of soft landscape and includes SuDS within the design, creating the potential for significant betterment in slowing the flow of surface water to the mains sewer, as set out in the submitted drainage report.

The surface water drainage scheme is currently being assessed by the LLFA and its comments will be reported in an update to Southern Planning Committee.

Other Matters

Impact on the Magistrates Courts during construction

The impacts during the construction phase are a temporary manifestation of the development process, and as such will be temporary in nature. However, the planning agent acting on behalf of HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has raised concerns in respect of the impact on the operation of the Magistrates Court during the construction phases of the development in terms of noise, disruption, dust and traffic. In response to these concerns the applicant has advised that;

“Cheshire East Council have been liaising with HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) on an ongoing basis since September 2021 with regard to the design of both the extension to the court building and the wider public realm project, including the potential impact from noise and vibration during construction. Monthly co-ordination meetings have been held since August 2022 “,

Further to this engagement the following arrangements are proposed in respect of noise monitoring;

- An independent specialist consultant will be appointed jointly by Cheshire East Council and HMCTS. They will assess the proposed works, existing environment and activities with the Court, and adjacent site and establish the upper limits for noise and vibration levels. These upper limits will be agreed by both parties and included in the Heads of Terms agreement. The consultant will be retained throughout the construction period to undertake site visits, review the monitoring data provided by the contractor and assist in dealing with any noise or vibration related matters;
- A specialist company is to be appointed by the contractor to install noise, vibration and dust monitoring stations around the construction site and noise monitoring equipment will be installed within the courts building which will continually monitor the noise levels. If these exceed the agreed upper limit then an alert will be issued to the Contractor and they will immediately cease the activity in question;
- Activities which are considered higher risk in terms of noise and vibration will be undertaken outside the core hours for the Court. This will involve additional weekend working on Saturdays and selected Sundays

It is recommended that a condition be imposed requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) relating to the development of the

History Centre. This will include measures to mitigate impact on the Courts, such as those set out above and also the amenities of local residents .

Although a CEMP accompanies planning application 22/4772N, this essentially relates to the demolition works, site preparation and public realm scheme and not the construction of the History Centre .

Public Consultation

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement SPD (January 2022) states that for, "For significant or major applications, developers will be encouraged to carry out pre-application consultation with interested local parties and community bodies".

The applicant has advised that an extensive programme of pre-application engagement was undertaken as described in the submitted Statement of Community Involvement ('SCI') to provide Ward Members, Crewe Town Council, local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders the opportunity to view and comment on the development proposals prior to the submission of the planning application. A public exhibition in respect of the proposed History Centre was held on the 14th July 2022 at Crewe Market Hall.

In terms, of the planning application publicity and consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the statutory requirements and the procedures of The Council's Publicity for Planning Applications Protocol.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal development of the History Centre accords with the Councils objective of remodelling the civic hub with the Civic and Cultural quarter and importantly house the Cheshire East Archive collections. In conjunction with the intrinsically linked public realm improvement scheme (22/4472N), it will deliver town centre redevelopment in accordance with the objectives of Policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

Whilst of a contemporary architectural design, the History Centre is considered to constitute a high quality development that will achieve a positive relationship with Memorial Square, the surrounding townscape and the new area of public realm. The History Centre is therefore of a siting and design which accords with the objectives of CELPS Policy SE1 and SE 7, and policies RET 9 and RET 10 of the SADPD.

The development will not adversely affect the amenities of those living nearby and also achieve an acceptable relationship with the adjacent Magistrates Courts building. It is considered the proposal therefore complies with policy SE1 of the CELPS and Policy HOU12 of the SADPD.

The site is in Crewe town centre with existing pedestrian and public transport infrastructure within the vicinity of the site, or within short walking distance. As the site is considered well located to cater for staff or visitors to travel by sustainable modes of travel, the use of the History Centre will not have an adversely impact on town centre parking provision or harmful highway impact as a result of traffic generation.

The proposals will have a neutral impact on ecology and trees given the landscaping and additional tree planting provided within the adjacent public realm scheme. Other issues including designing out crime, have been addressed, subject to a condition requiring the provision of secure cycle parking. In addition, to ensure measures are undertaken to mitigate the impact during construction on the Magistrates Court and nearby residential properties a condition is recommended for the approval of a CEMP.

On this basis, the proposal is for sustainable development which would bring environmental, economic and social benefits and is therefore considered to be acceptable in the context of the relevant policies of the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the SADPD and advice contained within the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the following condition

- 1. Commencement of development (3 years)**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Details of materials and finishes**
- 4. Details of lighting/illumination of building**
- 5. Details of secure cycle storage/parking**
- 6. Submission and approval of full details of Drainage scheme**
- 7. Provision of ultra low emission boilers**
- 8. Contaminated land - Submission and approval of Remediation Strategy**
- 9. Contaminated land - Submission and approval of Verification Report**
- 10. Contaminated land – soil testing**
- 11. Measures to deal with unexpected contamination**
- 12. Submission of CEMP**

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 Chair of the Southern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

