

Application No: 13/0013N

Location: EDLESTON ROAD COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL, EDLESTON ROAD,
CREWE, CW2 7HB

Proposal: Conversion of former primary school to form ten residential apartments

Applicant: South Cheshire College

Expiry Date: 17-Apr-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to conditions

Main issues:

- Principle of development
- The impact of the design / locally listed building
- The impact upon amenity
- The impact upon highway safety and parking
- The impact upon protected species

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to the Southern Planning Committee as it is a major development comprising of 10 residential units or more.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application property is a detached, two storey unit located on the western side of Edleston Road within the Crewe Settlement Zone Line.

The application site consists of the former Edleston Road Primary School and its associated grounds and car parking. The site is located within the urban area of Crewe and is approximately 700m south of the town centre. The site is bounded to the north by Derrington Avenue, to the east by Edleston Road and to the south by Stalbridge Road. To the west the site is bounded by the existing residential properties located along Derrington Avenue and Stalbridge Road. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and extends to an area of 0.48 hectares.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature however there are some existing commercial and community facilities in close proximity to the application site located along Edleston Road and Stalbridge Road.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application proposes the conversion of the former Edleston Road Primary School building to form 10 residential apartments.

The former school building was constructed in 1875 (following the 1870 Education Act) and was constructed in red brick with stone detailing. The original building was subsequently extended, in a similar style, and has a minor recent extension.

Following the school moving to nearby new premises, South Cheshire College acquired and used the building as temporary accommodation while their new campus at Dane Bank Avenue was being constructed. Following the opening of their new campus, the College is seeking to dispose of the former primary school, and is seeking planning permission for its conversion to apartments.

RELEVANT HISTORY

P08/1208 - Vehicular Access (Retrospective) – Approved with conditions 12th December 2008

P08/0828 - Vehicular Access – Approved 18th August 2008

P97/0606 - Extension to form classrooms, storage and ancillary accommodation. (County consultation) – Approved 25th September 1997

P95/0625

POLICIES

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Local Plan Policy

CF.3 - Retention of Community Facilities

BE.1 - Amenity

BE.2 - Design Standards

BE.3 - Access and Parking

BE.4 - Drainage, Utilities and Resources

BE.13 - Buildings of Local Interest

RES.2 - Unallocated Housing Sites

E.7 - Existing Employment Sites

TRAN.9 - Parking

NE.5 - Nature Conservation and Habitats

Other material considerations

Pre-application letter provided by Cheshire East Council

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Strategic Highways Manager – No objections

Environmental Health – No objections, subject to conditions relating to hours of construction, hours of piling, the prior submission of a piling method statement, the prior submission of any proposed external lighting, the installation of noise mitigation in accordance with the submitted noise assessment, the provision of adequate bin storage and a contaminated land informative.

United Utilities – No objections, subject to informatives in relation to drainage and surface water connections

VIEWS OF THE PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL

N/A

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No comments received

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning Statement
Noise Assessment
Transport Technical Note

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

Policy CF.3 of the Local refers to the retention of community facilities. It advises that proposals which would result in the loss of community facilities which make a positive contribution to the social or cultural life of a community will not be permitted unless a suitable alternative provision is made.

Given that this site is no longer in use, and has been marketed for 2 years to date with no firm interest other than from housing developers, it is considered that the proposal would satisfy this aspect of policy.

Policy RES.2 refers to unallocated housing sites. Policy RES.2 advises that within the settlement boundaries of Crewe and Nantwich (which this site falls), the development or redevelopment of unallocated sites for housing will be permitted in accordance with the general Local Plan policies with regards to amenity, design, highway safety, drainage and infrastructure.

A combination of the above two policies determines that the principle of the proposed scheme is acceptable with regards to the Local Plan.

The NPPF largely supports the Local Plan policies that apply in this instance.

Amenity

Policy BE.1 of the Local Plan refers to amenity. For housing, consideration needs to be given to the occupiers of both neighbouring properties and the future occupants of the site with regards to privacy, loss of light, visual intrusion and pollution.

As the proposed building is already in situ, no new issues with regards to loss of light or visual intrusion would be created.

In relation to the impact of the development upon neighbouring properties, it is accepted that the relationships between windows already exist. Furthermore, the general separation distances between neighbouring windows around the immediate area would be similar to that proposed. As such, it is considered that there would only be a limited impact upon neighbouring amenity as a result of the proposal.

In terms of the level of amenity afforded to the occupiers of the development itself, consideration has been given to the nature of the proposed rooms which have windows that face onto each other within the scheme e.g. where there are two gables which face each other. This relationship has occurred on the scheme at 2 ground floor points. One of these is between the side window of the living room to Flat 1 and the side windows to the living room of Flat 4. There is an approximate 19 metre gap between these openings. The other is between the window of the hallway to flat 2 and the 2 windows to bedroom 1 of Flat 5. There is an approximate 10 metre gap between these openings.

Given the large separation distance between the windows to flat 2 and flat 4, and because both are secondary windows, it is considered that this relationship is acceptable. However, given the minor 10 metre gap between the windows of flat 2 and flat 5, it is proposed that the window serving the hallway to flat 2 be obscurely glazed in order to prevent any loss of privacy.

Environmental Health have advised that they have no objections subject to the implementation of a number of conditions. These include hours of construction, hours of piling, the prior submission of a piling method statement, the prior submission of details of any external lighting proposed, the implementation of the noise mitigation measures as detailed within the applicant's noise assessment and the inclusion of a contaminated land informative.

The amount of amenity space proposed is also an important consideration of a scheme such as this. The standard amount of space required for dwellings within the Crewe and Nantwich Area is 50 square metres as detailed by the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Development on Backland and Gardens SPD. However, for flats / apartments, not such a figure is quoted, however a communal space should be provided. Paragraph 3.36 of the SPD advises that *'In the case of developments which are made up of flats, where it is not appropriate to provide private open space for each dwelling, it will be necessary to provide communal open space; these should be located so they can be used by all the residents equally.'*

The proposed development includes a strip of amenity space along the full northern elevation of the unit between the unit itself and Derrington Avenue.

This, in conjunction with the fact that the site lies close to the Crewe Town Centre will ensure that the future occupiers of the site will have access to ample amenity space within walking distance.

In terms of refuse, the Council's Waste Team advised at pre-application stage that for residential unit comprising of 10 flats / apartments, they would expect to see a communal bin store provided on site. This bin store would need to accommodate '2 x 1280 litre containers for residual waste and 2 x 1280 litre containers for recyclable waste.' It is noted that space for this has been provided on the eastern boundary of the site.

Design Standards

Policy BE.2 of the Local Plan advises that planning shall only be permitted where the development would achieve a high standard of design, would respect the pattern, character and form of the surroundings and would not have an adverse impact upon the streetscene by reason of scale, height, proportions and materials used.

Policy BE.13 of the Local Plan advises that Buildings of Local Interest will be protected from inappropriate development.

As part of the conversion, limited external alterations are proposed to the building. These works include the removal of 2 porches, a link between the external stores and works to alter a number of existing windows to form doors and a number of doors to form windows. In addition, internal alterations are proposed.

The Council's Heritage Officer has advised that *'The proposed works will result in few alterations externally. The external elements to be demolished are generally of more recent origin and hence their proposed demolition is acceptable.'*

The proposed works to alter existing external doors to become windows and windows to become doors are also acceptable, given the fact these works are confined to few such openings. Their proposed design is also generally in keeping with these elevations.

The proposed new areas of wall externally should be in matching bricks, coursing and mortar.

The proposed retention of the chimney, as advised, is welcome.

The proposal to introduce external aluminum pipework/gutters is also acceptable, provided they are painted black and the existing cast iron pipework/gutters are retained where salvageable.

The proposed site plans appear to indicate that the existing curtilage walls will be retained, and the retention of their existing railings and the existing gates should be conditioned. To retain the historic visual appearance of the school.

In principle the proposed alterations internally are acceptable, as they are a means of achieving the retention of this building commercially.'

As such, subject to the above-mentioned conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would adhere with Policy BE.2 and BE.13 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety and Parking

The proposed development will utilise an existing access to the site which is onto Stalbridge Road. As such, there are no new access points to consider.

The development will include the provision of 18 parking spaces, which includes 1 disabled parking space.

The Strategic Highways Manager would normally seek 200% parking provision, which this development would fall short of by 2 spaces. However, the applicant has submitted a Transport Technical Note which details that a local survey has indicated that there is sufficient additional on-street parking available.

The Council's Strategic Highways Manager has advised that *'The site is well placed for all amenities and public transport. I therefore conclude that the proposed number of within-curtilage spaces should be adequate and not result in overspill into adjacent residential areas. In addition, evening parking is permitted along the side road frontages. Accordingly I have no objection to this proposal.'*

As a result of the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development adheres with Policy BE.3 of the Local Plan.

Protected Species

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has advised that he does not anticipate there being any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The proposed change of use is located within the Crewe settlement boundary and would only involve minor external alterations to the unit. It would utilise a currently vacant unit and would not have an adverse impact upon neighbouring amenity or raise any significant highway safety or protected species issues. The proposal therefore complies with Policies CF.3 (Retention of Community Facilities), BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Access and Parking), BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources), BE.13 (Buildings of Local Interest), RES.2 (Unallocated Housing Sites), E.7 (Existing Employment Sites), TRAN.9 (Parking) and NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Adopted Replacement Local Plan 2011. The proposal would also accord with the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions

- 1. Standard (Time)**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Material details to be submitted**
- 4. Hours of construction/construction method statement**
- 5. Hours of piling**
- 6. Prior submission of piling method statement**
- 7. Lighting to be approved**
- 8. Implementation of noise mitigation measures**
- 9. Obscure glazing (x1)**
- 10. All new brickwork, its coursing and mortar shall match the existing**

- 11. All existing cast iron gutters and pipework to be retained if salvageable;**
- 12. All new pipework and gutters to be in metal and painted black;**
- 13. Existing gates and railings to be retained**
- 14. bike store details for each unit**
- 15. bin store details**

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