

Application No: 13/1986N

Location: Former Railway and Royal Mail Buildings Weston Road Crewe, CW1 6AA

Proposal: Variation of condition 4 of application 11/4346N- A hybrid application, comprising (i) full application for the demolition of existing buildings on the site and the construction of a surface grade car park (240 spaces plus 11 disabled), a Taxi rank, improved subway access (ii) An outline application with all matters reserved for new two-storey commercial building towards north west of the site with potential to incorporate A3 (restaurants and cafes) or A5 (hot food takeaways).

Applicant: Andrew Ross, Cheshire East Council

Expiry Date: 12-Aug-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to conditions and an amended layout

MAIN ISSUES

Main Issues

Design & Landscape Considerations

Parking, Highway Safety and Traffic Generation

Flooding and Drainage

Impact On Protected Species

Impact on Residential Amenity

Other Issues

1. REFERRAL

The application has been referred to Strategic Planning Board because the proposal seeks to amend an application that was originally determined by the Strategic Planning Board. This is because the site was over 1ha in size and the applicant is Cheshire East Borough Council.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

This application relates to the former Royal Mail site positioned at the junction of the A534 Nantwich Road and the A5020 Weston Road in Crewe. Demolition of the buildings on site has already taken place in order to implement planning permission for a new car park and pedestrian access serving Crewe Railway Station to the west.

The site is adjoined to the south by light industrial commercial units as well as a Premier Inn Hotel. On the opposite side of Weston Road, to the east, is a large B&Q Warehouse and associated car parking. The Crewe Arms hotel is situated on the opposite side of Nantwich Road to the north where there is a narrowing of Nantwich Road caused by the railway bridge.

The application site measures approximately 1.48ha and is roughly rectangular in shape.

Prior to the commencement of development, there was a grassed area with some tree specimens located on the corner of the site bordering the Crewe Arms Roundabout behind which there is an access road which provided limited parking.

The site falls within the settlement boundary of Crewe as designated in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

In January 2012, the Strategic Planning Board granted full planning permission (ref;11/4346N) for the demolition of existing buildings, construction of a car park and the provision of a new access to the station (Plot A). The application was hybrid and also granted outline planning permission for a new commercial building to the north west of the site (Plot B).

This application seeks to amend the approved car parking scheme so that a number of improvements can be made and to aid its delivery by reducing the requirement to move some key utilities. The amended scheme will still provide a maximum of 240 spaces plus 14 disabled, a Taxi rank and improvements to an existing subway access.

As such, this application seeks to vary the approved plans condition (condition no. 4) attached to the original consent by substituting the previously approved plans with the amended plans.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There are a number of planning applications associated with the site's former use in connection with the railway industry and Royal Mail operations. The application relevant to this scheme is:

11/4346N - A hybrid application, comprising (i) full application for the demolition of existing buildings on the site and the construction of a surface grade car park (240 spaces plus 11 disabled), a Taxi rank, improved subway access (ii) An outline application with all matters reserved for new two-storey commercial building towards north west of the site with potential to incorporate A3 (restaurants and cafes) or A5 (hot food takeaways) – Approved 11-Jan-2012

5. PLANNING POLICIES

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan Policy

BE.1 Amenity
BE.2 Design Standards
BE.3 Access and Parking
BE.4 Drainage, Utilities and Resources
BE.6 Development on Potentially Contaminated Land
TRAN.1 Public Transport
TRAN.3 Pedestrians
TRAN.4 Access for the Disabled
TRAN.5 Provision for Cyclists
TRAN.7 Crewe Railway Station
TRAN.8 Existing Car Parks
TRAN.9 Car Parking Standards
NE.10 New Woodland Planting and Landscaping
NE.20 Flood Prevention

Other Material Policy Considerations

Supplementary Planning Document: Crewe Rail Gateway (Adopted Development Brief and Sustainability Appraisal)

Circulars of most relevance include: ODPM 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
Relevant legislation also includes the EC Habitats Directive and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994

6. OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES (EXTERNAL TO PLANNING)

Strategic Highways Manager

No objection

Any further consultation responses that are received will be reported to Members by way of an update report.

7. VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

N/A

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of report preparation

9. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Main Issues

The principle of the development has already been established. It is not the purpose of this report to re-examine these matters. The key issues for Members to consider are the impact that the amended proposals would have on the character and appearance of the Crewe

Railway Gateway (CRG) and whether or not there would be any further considerations with respect to landscaping, parking / highway safety, flooding and drainage, protected species and neighbouring amenity.

Design and Landscape Considerations

The site is located on a major roundabout at an important gateway into Crewe opposite the Crewe Arms Hotel and next to Crewe Railway Station. The former Royal Mail buildings which occupied the site have now been removed and the site is currently fenced off with works well under way to implement the current permission referenced 11/4346N.

The proposed changes would offer an amended layout, which instead segregates the taxi area from the car park by retaining the existing taxi holding area on Weston Close. The car park would no longer be split into sections for long and short-term parking and the number of parking and disabled spaces would be increased to 244 and 14 respectively. These amendments would allow for greater separation at the north-eastern corner of the site at the roundabout. As such, the car park would not travel hard up to the perimeter edge of the site.

The proposed amendments to the layout would result in a more consolidated parking arrangement without a reduction in the parking provision, and would allow more space for additional landscaping and planting to be secured. This would further soften the visual impact of the proposals on the most prominent part of the site and as such would provide an improved and better quality scheme. As such, the revised scheme would be more respectful of the boulevard style which characterises this approach to the Crewe Arms Roundabout.

The boundaries with the site would be fenced with a 1 metre high boundary treatment which will be high quality and will align with boundary details already approved. Submission of a revised comprehensive soft landscape scheme to reflect the revised layout will be required and therefore it is recommended that original condition be amended.

With respect to the subway access, this would be accommodated inside an entrance building rather than a canopy as previously proposed. The propose building would still be located in the same position and would be set towards the back of the site. The proposal would still be contemporary in terms of its style and appearance and would comprise of a predominantly glazed structure. As such, the proposed alterations and amendments would improve the general appearance, landscaping and quality of the scheme and is therefore acceptable in design terms.

Parking, Highway Safety and Traffic Generation

The development will increase parking available at the station and will also improve the pickup and drop off facilities in close proximity to it. The reopening of the existing subway will provide a direct link into the station for pedestrian users and this will reduce pressure on the use of the Station Top along Nantwich Road which currently serves as the existing drop off and pick up point.

The proposed amendments will not impact directly on the access configuration originally envisaged. Vehicular access to the proposed car park is still to be provided by a priority controlled give way access off Weston Road. The access would be offset towards the

southern end of the site to increase separation with the roundabout junction at the location of the former Royal Mail access junction. Some minor modifications to the existing junction are proposed in order to provide a wider right-turn lane for traffic turning into the site from the north. The only change would be that the existing taxi rank and its access would be retained, which is further north of the proposed access.

The Strategic Highways Manager has not objected to the proposed revisions. The traffic impact from this development will not be significantly different from that previously approved. The proposal will reduce traffic needing to pass the station to park in the existing Pedley Street car park and also traffic needing to either pick up or drop off at the existing Station Top facility. As such, the proposals are acceptable having regard to highways and parking considerations.

Flooding and Drainage

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has already been carried out to determine the impact of the proposed development on flooding and an acceptable drainage strategy and surface water scheme has already been approved. The proposed changes to the scheme would allow for the inclusion of additional soft landscaping and a smaller area of hard standing and therefore there is likely to have less impact on the surface water regime in the area. However, the drainage conditions will need to be amended to reflect the revised layout.

Impact on Protected Species

An ecological assessment was submitted with the original application and it was concluded that bats were not reasonably likely to be present or affected by the proposed development. The buildings have now since been demolished and 3 mature trees that were previously on the site have been removed. As such, the Nature Conservation has confirmed that the proposal would not be likely to cause significant ecological issues. Accordingly the requirements of the NPPF and the EC Habitats Directive are satisfied.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The surrounding uses are predominantly commercial and industrial. The proposed changes will not directly impact on the amenity afforded to any neighbouring residential uses.

Other Matters

The pre-commencement conditions attached to the original approval have already been discharged. As such, it is recommended that they be amended to reflect the details already agreed as approval of this scheme will result in a fresh decision being issued. Conditions relating to landscaping, drainage will need to be amended to reflect the proposed changes in the layout.

10. REASONS FOR APPROVAL

The principle of the development has already been accepted and is supported by local and national planning policy. This proposed scheme would facilitate the delivery of additional parking close to the station and would improve access and pedestrians links with the station.

The proposed alterations to the layout would enable the provision of a greater landscape buffer with the roundabout and the proposed changes to the subway access building would also improve the appearance of the back of the site. This would lead to a better designed scheme which would be more respectful of the character and appearance of the surroundings.

The parking, traffic and highways arrangements would not deviate significantly from the approved scheme and would lead to a reduction in traffic needing to pass the station to park in the existing Pedley Street car park and also traffic needing to either pick up or drop off at the existing Station Top facility.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon residential amenity, ecology, drainage/flooding and it therefore complies with the relevant local plan policy requirements and accordingly is recommended for approval subject to the imposition of conditions originally attached except those requiring amendment.

11. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-

- 1. Standard 3 year time limit (Phase A – Car Park)**
- 1. Standard outline time limit (Phase B – Two-Storey Commercial Building)**
- 2. Submission of reserved matters shall be made within 3 years (Phase B - Two-Storey Commercial Building)**
- 3. Approved Plans including Amended Layout**
- 4. Materials as already agreed and specified**
- 5. Details of Boundary Treatment**
- 6. Revised Landscaping scheme to be submitted**
- 7. Landscaping implementation**
- 8. Breeding bird survey to be carried out prior to commencement of any works during nesting season for Plot B**
- 9. Submission of details of bin storage**
- 10. Revised Surface Water Drainage Strategy to be submitted**
- 11. Revised scheme of Surface Water Regulation to be submitted**
- 12. Construction of access prior to first use**
- 13. Hours of construction restricted**
- 14. Hours of pile driving operations restricted**
- 15. Revised details of Sustainable Urban Drainage System to be submitted**
- 16. Only foul drainage to be connected to sewer**
- 17. Limit retail floorspace to 549m² with subdivisions to provide 6 units**
- 18. Construction Method Statement in accordance with agreed details**
- 19. Traffic Management Plan in accordance with agreed details**
- 20. Scheme for of real time parking information in accordance with agreed details**
- 21. Details of CCTV in accordance with agreed details**
- 22. Demolition to take place in accordance with submitted demolition strategy**
- 23. Details of the proposed finishes and hard landscape treatments of the subway and stair facilities**
- 24. Submission of details of cycle racks**

25. Submission of details of external lighting

26. Dust Management Plan in accordance with agreed details

