

Application No: 13/3434N
Location: land adjacent to, 9, Walthall Street, Crewe, Crewe, CW2 7JZ
Proposal: Proposed construction of 15 apartments on land adjacent to
Applicant: Greenhouse, Greenhouse Property Management
Expiry Date: 11-Nov-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

MAIN ISSUES

Impact of the development on:-

Principal of the Development

Affordable Housing

Highway Implications

Amenity

Design

Trees

Landscape

Ecology

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to the Southern Planning Committee as it relates to a small scale major development.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is located to the western side of Walthall Street within the Crewe Settlement Boundary as defined by the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan. The site comprises a brownfield site to the west of Walthall Street and adjacent to the Valley Brook. It is mainly hard standing with some vegetation on the southern boundary with the brook, a brick/block wall to the west and a residential property to the north. Levels fall from north to south and from east to west with the main body of the site at a lower level than Walthall Street. The area contains a mixture of residential and commercial properties.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for the erection of 15 apartments in one four storey building. The apartments would be a mix of one and two bedroom units.

The building would be of traditional construction with a brick and render finish and a pitched, tiled roof. There would be a central gable on the front elevation to provide relief. Six parking spaces are proposed to the side of the building in addition to a secure cycle storage facility. Bin There would be an outdoor sitting area and provision for drying washing and bin storage.

RELEVANT HISTORY

No relevant planning history relating to this site.

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.5 – Infrastructure
BE.6 – Development on Potentially Contaminated Land
NE.17 – Pollution Control
NE.20 – Flood Prevention
RES.7 – Affordable Housing
RES.2 – Unallocated Housing Sites
RES.3 – Housing Densities
TRAN.9 – Car Parking Standards

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

United Utilities:

None received at the time of report writing.

Environment Agency:

10th September 2013

No objection subject to the imposition of a condition relating to a landscape management plan adjacent to Valley Brook.

4th October 2013

In reference to the above planning application, we have reviewed the amended site layout plan which shows the additional car parking area. We can confirm that we have no objections to this amendment and we would now like to withdraw our previous requested condition for a Landscape Management Plan.

Strategic Highways Manager:

We note that the site is located fairly close to the town centre. We would expect parking provision of a minimum of one space per dwelling in this location; only six spaces are proposed for 15 or 16 dwellings. This level of provision is not acceptable for up to eight 1-bed and up to eight 2-bed properties.

The existing dropped kerbed access would also need to be upgraded to one with radius kerbs and tactile as for a private drive.

The Strategic Highways Manager's recommendation is for REFUSAL of this application on the basis of insufficient parking provision and a sub-standard vehicular access.

Environmental Health:

Conditions suggested in relation to construction hours, piling works, and external lighting. An informative is suggested in relation to contaminated land. Originally a recommendation of refusal was advised relating to Air Quality Management. This has now been withdrawn as 2 electric car charger units are to be provided.

VIEWS OF TOWN COUNCIL:

Members objected to the development and make the following comments:

- 1) Crewe Town Council supports the use of brownfield sites for housing development.
- 2) Crewe Town Council welcomes the provision of affordable housing. However, it does not believe that all affordable housing should be in apartment blocks.
- 3) Crewe Town Council objects to the development because of its scale. A four storey building is not appropriate when the rest of the area consists of two storey terraced houses.
- 4) There are insufficient parking spaces, only six spaces for 16 apartments.
- 5) There is some refuse storage provision but the space allocated seems very small when the likely amount of waste generated by 16 apartments is considered.
- 6) There is no green energy provision, e.g. solar panels.
- 7) Crewe Town Council knows that there are too many apartment developments in Crewe. Many of these apartments are for sale and have been vacant for a long time. Another apartment development is not needed.
- 8) Crewe Town Council would prefer a development of terraced houses, in keeping with the area. This would provide much needed affordable housing for families.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of report writing.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

To support this application the application includes the following documents;

- Statement in Support of Planning Application (Design & Access)
- Flood Risk Assessment

These documents are available to view on the application file.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 47 that there is a requirement to maintain a 5 year rolling supply of housing and states that Local Planning Authorities should:

“identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land”.

The NPPF states that, Local Planning Authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. This should take account of various factors including:

- housing need and demand,
- latest published household projections,
- evidence of the availability of suitable housing land,
- the Government’s overall ambitions for affordability.

The figures contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy proposed a dwelling requirement of 20,700 dwellings for Cheshire East as a whole, for the period 2003 to 2021, which equates to an average annual housing figure of 1,150 dwellings per annum. In February 2011 a full meeting of the Council resolved to maintain this housing requirement until such time that the new Local Plan was approved. In December 2012 the Cabinet agreed the Cheshire East Local Plan Development Strategy for consultation and gave approval for it to be used as a material consideration for Development Management purposes with immediate effect. This proposes a dwelling requirement of 27,000 dwellings for Cheshire East, for the period 2010 to 2030, following a phased approach, increasing from 1,150 dwellings each year to 1,500 dwellings.

It is considered that the most up-to-date information about housing land supply in Cheshire East is contained within the emerging Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) February 2013. The SHLAA has put forward a figure of 7.15 years housing land supply.

Policy change is constantly occurring with new advice, evidence and case law emerging all the time. However, the Council has a duty to consider applications on the basis of the information that is pertinent at any given time. Consequently, it is recommended that the application be considered in the context of the 2013 SHLAA.

In this case the site is located within the Crewe Settlement Boundary and Policy RES.2 of the Adopted Local Plan allows for residential development on unallocated sites in Crewe.

The site is surrounded by residential and commercial properties and good access to services and facilities. Therefore it is considered that the principal of the development is acceptable and the development would be appropriate in this location.

Affordable Housing

The Interim Planning Statement: Affordable Housing states in section 3.2 that there is a requirement for affordable housing to be provided in settlements with a population of over 3,000 on any windfall sites with more than 15 dwellings or that exceed 0.4ha.

The proposal was originally for 16 apartments and this has now been reduced to 15 and the site is 0.09 hectares in size. Therefore there is no requirement for the provision of affordable housing.

Highways Implications

The original proposal provided only six parking spaces within the site, when the requirement is for 1 space for each bedroom within the development. Subsequently a plan was submitted showing a total of 13 parking spaces which is considered to be an improvement, but still did not meet the standards required.

The issue of the radius kerbs has been addressed in the amended plan and is considered to be acceptable.

Having regard to the additional spaces, several of them were to be in an area adjacent to Valley Brook where the Environment Agency had requested landscape management plan. This has allowed an additional amendment to be submitted, that shows 15 parking spaces being provided within the site. This has addressed the concerns of the Strategic Highways Manager having regard to the potential for the development to lead to on-street parking.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards).

Amenity

There are residential properties to the south and north of the proposed building. The property to the south is in excess of 30 metres away from the boundary of the site and has no windows in the side elevation that would face the proposed building. The property to the north (9 Walthall Street) also has no windows in the side elevation. To the rear, adjacent to the boundary with number 9 the proposed building would be set in by 2.5 metres and there would be no windows that would overlook the rear garden of this property.

Environmental Protection have recommended conditions relating to construction, piling and external lighting and these are considered to be reasonable and should be imposed should the application be approved. Originally there were concerns about impact on an Air Quality Management Area; these concerns have now been resolved by the inclusion of 2 electric car charging points within the development. The provision of these should be controlled by condition.

Design

The importance of securing high quality design is specified within the NPPF and paragraph 61 states that:

“Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”

The proposed building would be four storeys with a pitched roof. The elevational treatment of the building shows gable features and lintel and sill detailing. The height of the building would be seen in the context of this sloping site, with the eaves height being level with the ridge height of 9 Walthall Street and it is considered that this would not create an over dominant feature in the street scene. It is considered that the design is acceptable and would not appear out of character in this part of Crewe.

Trees and Landscape

The site is brownfield and is largely derelict, with some trees on the boundaries. The Valley Brook boundary in particular would benefit from enhancement. To this end a scheme of landscaping for the site should be secured by condition.

CONCLUSIONS

The site is within the Crewe Settlement Boundary and the principle of residential development is considered to be acceptable.

The impacts on design, amenity, landscape and ecology are considered to be acceptable.

The proposal would provide a satisfactory level of off-street parking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Time limit**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Hours of construction**
- 4. Details of piling**
- 5. External lighting**
- 6. Detailed access/junction plans**
- 7. Landscaping scheme**
- 8. Implementation of landscaping scheme**

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