

Application No: 13/4073N

Location: Westminster Street Park in Crewe., Westminster Street, Crewe

Proposal: Installation of a control kiosk, pressure relief column, Hardstanding, Landscaping and drop kerb operational access required in connection with a flood relief scheme at Westminster Park, Crewe. Resubmission of 13/2937N

Applicant: United Utilities

Expiry Date: 17-Dec-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Impact on trees/landscape character of the park
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring houses
- Archaeology
- Ecology

REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application is being referred to Southern Planning Committee as it has been called-in by Councillor Hogben due to public concern about the potential loss of trees and impact on the open space.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site is Westminster Park which is a vibrant and popular public open space in Crewe. It is surrounded by four grid iron streets of larger terraced houses that both frame and face onto the park. . A demarcated and equipped playground is located in the south east corner of the park with a nursery building occupying an area to the north. Further to the north and west is the open space area. The site is formally protected as open space. Service access is predominantly gained from Furnival Street to the south. The boundaries are generally vegetated and tree lined and secured by a metal railing fence. The site edged red, the application site, is specifically in the west of the park with a slither denoted from north to south for the works proposed.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This United Utilities scheme forms part of a major programme of work to provide the appropriate facilities for the treatment of wastewater to the required standard. Eight residential

properties on Nantwich Road suffer from repeated foul flooding that ultimately results in local sewage flows backing-up through cellar connections causing cellar flooding. An underground sewage tank is proposed to store flows during storm events and prevent flooding. An electric control panel associated with the tank will be housed within a kiosk. The kiosk would be coloured Holly Green and measure 3.0 metres x 0.75 metres x 1.85 metres (high). A pressure relief column is proposed that would be 6.0 metres high and 0.15 metres wide. Access is proposed primarily from Furnival Street utilising the existing access. The works programme would last for 12 months before completion. This application is an amended resubmission as a result of concerns regarding of an initial scheme (13/2937N) that was withdrawn in October 2013.

RELEVANT HISTORY

13/2937N – Installation of a control kiosk, pressure relief column etc – Withdrawn 16th October 2013.

POLICIES

Local Plan Policy

- BE.1 (Amenity)
- BE.3 (Access and Parking)
- BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
- BE.5 (Infrastructure)
- BE.16 (Development and Archaeology)
- RT.1 (Protection of Open Spaces with Recreational or Amenity Value)
- RT.2 (Equipped Childrens Playspace)
- CF.3 (Retention of Community Facilities)

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways Officer – No objections

VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

No objection but would wish to see control boxes protected by railings to prevent inadvertent access and vandalism.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of concern has been submitted regarding security on the site; the road safety of children attending the nursery; and the impact on car parking in Nelson Street.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning, Design and Access Statement
Tree Survey
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
Habitat Report
Geotechnical Report

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

Policy RT.1 states that development will not be permitted where it would result in the loss of open space which has a recreational or amenity value. Exceptions can be made where it can be demonstrated that there is an excess of open space in the catchment area, where the development is ancillary to the main use and does not affect the quantity or quality, the proposal affects land incapable of forming a playing pitch, where provision is made elsewhere or the proposal would provide a recreational facility which would outweigh the loss. The proposals would not result in the loss of open space. There would be a temporary loss of space to accommodate the compound during the construction period, but this would be reinstated on completion.

Policy RT.2 states that proposals which result in the loss of equipped children's playspace which serve a local need will not be permitted. The proposed development would be sited on an existing playground which only has three items of equipment at present. The proposals would not result in the loss of play equipment.

CF.3 states 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. The proposals would not result in the loss of a community facility.

Impact on trees/landscape character of the Park

The site is located within the open space and therefore consideration has to be given to whether the proposed development is appropriately design and sited so as to not result in unacceptable harm on the character and appearance of the park. The park is very open in character and is part of the fabric of the area. As the actual above ground development is minimal, effectively the kiosk and the relief column, it is therefore considered that the proposals would not result in a detrimental intrusion into the park. It is accepted that there may be inconvenience of lack of access to certain areas of the park during the construction period but this is a reasonable necessity of this important flood relief project. Once construction is complete the park will return to its full useable space. The alternative scheme considered prior to the proposals for Westminster Park would cause more harm as it would involve large scale lengthy closures of Nantwich Road that would be unfeasible.

Surfacing materials for the path and parking area would ensure limited encroachment into the open countryside.

The scheme as submitted shows that there would be a requirement for the removal of two trees along the boundary of the site close to the access on Furnival Street. The initial application (13/29737N) was withdrawn as it proposed a more considerable loss of a group of trees along the boundary of Furnival and Westminster Street. This was unacceptable. Thus, the applicants have significantly amended the proposals in the present submission to overcome concerns in respect of trees. It is considered that the loss of the two trees is acceptable given their proximity to the access and that the main group are now being retained. The trees removed would be a Silver Birch (Grade B) and a Holly (Grade C). Some pruning of other trees may be required to accommodate the construction compound but replacement planting (with 5 new trees) is proposed in mitigation. The appropriate tree protection measures and method statements would be attached as conditions to any approval.

Impact on the amenity of neighbouring houses

The park is bound by residential properties to all sides. The amended application proposals should not overly impact on the amenity of the residents that surround the site. It is accepted there would be some period of inconvenience in respect of the temporary loss of space in the park whilst the compound serves the 12 month construction period. The main access point during construction would be from Nile Street but this is temporary. Once complete the access would be from Furnival Street; vehicular access would only be required on an extremely occasional basis for routine maintenance and monitoring activity.

Archaeology

The proposals would result in the demolition and removal of a Second World War Air raid Shelter. The Archaeology Unit have confirmed this is acceptable subject to the appropriate conditions regarding a programme of recording and reporting so that a permanent record remains.

Ecology

The application has been accompanied by a habitat survey report that states that nesting bird habitat is present on the periphery of the park throughout the trees. Any works should therefore be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season. The comments of the Councils Ecologist will be reported in the update to Committee.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposed development would be sited within the settlement boundary and is acceptable. It is considered that there would be no significant harm caused on the visual or residential amenities of neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore in compliance with BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources), BE.5 (Infrastructure), BE.16 (Development and Archaeology), RT.1 (Protection of Open Spaces with Recreational or Amenity Value), RT.2 (Equipped Childrens Playspace), and CF.3 (Retention of Community Facilities) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

RECOMMENDATION – Approve subject to the following conditions

1. Standard time limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Tree Protection
4. Landscape Method Statement
5. Archaeology

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