

Application No: 13/3082M

Location: 22, 24, 26 & 36 CASTLE STREET, 25, 25B & 25C CASTLE STREET MALL, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE.

Proposal: Internal and external alterations to the original former Cheshire Building Society (no. 36 Castle Street) together with the demolition of the majority of the subsequent extensions to the building and the change of use of the ground floor from offices (Class B1(a)) to 2 no. flexible use units (Classes B1(a), A1, A2, A3 and/or A4). Demolition of retail units at no.'s 22, 24 & 26 Castle Street and no.'s 25, 25B & 25C Castle Street Mall (forming part of the Grosvenor Shopping Centre) to facilitate the redevelopment of a two storey building (plus roof top plant area) to adjoin the redeveloped former Cheshire Building Society and provide 4 no. retail (Class A1) units, erection of replacement canopy above Castle Street Mall, formation of 5 no. car parking spaces, external alterations and associated works.

Applicant: Mr John Sullivan, Eskmuir Securities Limited

Expiry Date: 11-Nov-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Delegated Authority to Northern Planning Manager to Approve, subject to conditions and no new objections being raised during the consultation period which ends on 24th January 2014.

MAIN ISSUES:

- Principle of Development
- Heritage & Design
- Sustainability
- Regeneration
- Highway Safety and Traffic Generation

REASON FOR REPORT

The application has been referred to the Northern Planning Committee as the proposal is for a small scale major development where the proposed floorspace would comprise retail/commercial and other floorspace exceeding 1,000 sq. m.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site measures approximately 2982 sq. m. It comprises a three to four storey B1 office building (former Cheshire Building Society premises) located at the junction of Churchill Way and Castle Street in Macclesfield Town Centre and a two storey section of the Grosvenor Centre in the south west corner which lies adjacent to the former Cheshire Building Society premises.

The section of the Grosvenor Centre included within the site boundary comprises five ground floor retail units with storage and servicing above, plus a projecting canopy above and the entrance into the Grosvenor Centre taken from Castle Street. All of the retail units are currently occupied.

The entire site lies within the designated Primary Shopping Area, an area of archaeological potential and adjacent to the High Street Conservation Area. The building formerly occupied by Cheshire Building Society is also a locally listed building.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of five retail units contained within the Grosvenor Centre, partial demolition of the Cheshire Building Society and construction of a replacement two storey building forming an extension to the former Cheshire Building Society premises. A replacement glass canopy over the entrance to the Castle Street Mall is also proposed.

This would facilitate the creation of 6 new units (three two storey units and three single storey units) and two office units (one single storey at first floor level and one spanning three storeys).

Permission was granted in 2012 for proposals to redevelop the site although that permission related to the redevelopment of part of the Grosvenor Centre and change of use of the Cheshire Building Society premises to create an extension of the Centre and three retail units with offices above. Now the Cheshire Building Society is to be demolished with the Castle Street and Churchill Way elevations retained and an extension constructed now housing 2 flexible units (uses Classes B1(a), A1, A2, A3 and/or A4), 4 Retail Units, 5 car parking spaces and construction of glass canopy.

RELEVANT HISTORY

The former Cheshire Building Society premises were constructed circa 1927 and the Grosvenor Centre was constructed latterly around 1970. There have been 46 applications submitted within the application site boundary including an extension to the former Cheshire

Building Society premises in the 1990s. None of these applications are relevant to the proposals.

However the following applications are relevant:

12/2073M Change of Use of Ground and First Floors of no. 36 Castle Street from Office (Class B1) to Retail (Class A1), Internal Subdivision and Alterations Together with the Demolition of Retail Units nos 22, 24 and 26 Castle Street and nos 25, 25B, 25C Castle Street Mall to Facilitate the Development of a Two Storey Building to Adjoin no.36 Castle Street for the Provision of Three Retail Units (Ground and First Floor) with Offices Above (Second Floor), External Alterations and Associated Works. Approved with conditions 23-Aug-2012

12/4532M Removal of Condition 5 (Servicing Plan), 6 (Films/Transfers) and 7(Renewable Energy Measures) on Planning Application 12/2073M - Change of Use of Ground and First Floors of no. 36 Castle Street from Office (Class B1) to Retail (Class A1), Internal Subdivision and Alterations Together with the Demolition of Retail Units nos 22, 24 and 26 Castle Street and nos 25, 25B, 25C Castle Street Mall to Facilitate the Development of a Two Storey Building to Adjoin no.36 Castle Street for the Provision of Three Retail Units (Ground and First Floor) with Offices Above (Second Floor), External Alterations and Associated Works. Approved with conditions 22-Feb-2013

POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) was abolished on 20 May 2013 and therefore the policies within this document carry no weight.

Local Plan Policy

Policy BE1 - Design Guidance

Policy BE2 - Preservation of Historic Fabric

Policy BE20 - Locally Important Buildings

Policy BE22 – Sites of Archaeological Potential

Policy T9 - Traffic Management and Traffic Calming

Policy S1 - Town Centre Shopping Development

Policy MTC1 - Prime Shopping Area

Policy MTC22 - Offices

Policy DC1 - Design and Amenity

Policy DC2 - Design and Amenity

Policy DC3 - Design and Amenity

Policy DC5 - Design and Amenity

Policy DC6 - Design and Amenity

Policy DC13 - Noise

Policy DC14 – Noise

Policy IMP4 – Environmental Improvements in Town Centres

Other Material Considerations

PPS4: Planning For Sustainable Economic Growth – Companion Guide

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

SPD List of Locally Important Buildings

Cheshire Retail Study Update

Macclesfield Town Centre Public Realm Strategy

Macclesfield Town Vision

Ministerial Statement – Planning for Growth (March 2011)

PUBLICITY

Initially advertised on 21 August 2013 for a period of 21 days. Revised plans were received and re-consultation began on 3 January 2014 also for a period of 21 days. This publicity period will expire on 24 January 2014.

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

United Utilities

No comments received at the time of writing report

Cheshire Constabulary

No comments received at the time of writing report

Environmental Health

Conditions recommended in respect of noise, dust, odour, demolition and waste management.

Town Centre Manager (Macclesfield)

No comments received at the time of writing report

Strategic Highways Manager

No objections

Archaeology Planning Advisory Service

Does not think that any significant archaeological deposits are likely to have survived and advises that further archaeological mitigation would not be required.

Macclesfield Civic Society

Proposal is welcome in principle but detailed elements (see above) require careful assessment. Would wish to comment on any amended proposals.

The Macclesfield Civic Society welcomes proposals for redevelopment and enhancement of the former Cheshire Building Society HQ and the Grosvenor Centre (fronting onto Castle

Street). The mix of uses appears entirely appropriate for the town centre location. We have reservations about the new build elements on the south and west elevations. The new two storey units with flat roof elements contrast rather unfavourably with the former post office building in terms of scale, material and design and we consider more could be done to integrate these units into the existing townscape. A parapet or pitched roof (at least in part) could assist in this respect.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of writing the report

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A Design and Access Statement and a Planning Statement were submitted with the planning application.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The proposals relate to the creation of four retail units, two 'flexible' units and offices. These uses are considered to represent town centre uses. As the site lies within the prime shopping area of the town centre policies MTC1 and MTC3 are applicable. Policy MTC1 seeks to encourage the consolidation and enhancement of the prime shopping area. Whilst the potential loss of A1 retail to the uses specified i.e. A2, A3, A4, A5 or B1 would not accord with this remit, the redevelopment of the site to provide larger modern retail units would. Moreover, an element of flexibility would help the Prime Shopping Area to change and adapt in accordance with policy MTC1. On that basis, it is considered that the proposals would accord with policies MTC1 and MTC3 which accord with chapter 2 of the NPPF.

Policy MTC22 encourages the use of upper floors as offices – this is also compliant with the NPPF which supports town centre uses in the town centre. The proposals would accord with this policy.

Heritage & Design

The Cheshire Building Society premises are a locally listed building and the NPPF considers this to represent a heritage asset.

The list description notes that it is an imposing building, constructed in 1925, as the main post office for Macclesfield. The design incorporates stone with an ashlar base. It also features a slate Mansard roof with stone detailing.

In contrast, the adjacent Grosvenor Centre was constructed circa 1970. It has a flat roof and is constructed of dark brown brick with rendered pillars and modern shop fronts. A projecting glazed canopy and entrance features from Castle Street into the Grosvenor Centre. These were added latterly.

The changes from the extant scheme relate to the demolition of the atrium area behind the ashlar and stone frontage and the demolition of the extension facing Churchill Way which was added in 1980s.

However, substantial demolition does not automatically constitute substantial harm to the heritage asset.

In this instance, it is the stone and ashlar façade which contributes to the character of the building and justifies its being locally listed. The atrium to the rear was added at a later date and is not part of the public realm. The extension added in 1980s is a later addition.

The removal of the atrium is acceptable as its importance to the special qualities of the heritage asset is limited. Moreover, it represents a significant constraint to the redevelopment of the site as it has resulted in different floor levels across the building. This would not be suitable for the operational requirements of large scale retail units. When balancing the very positive benefits of providing large scale retail units within the town centre against the relatively limited impact of removal of the atrium which is not visible within the public realm, it is considered that demolition of this element is acceptable.

As noted above, the 1980s extension contributes to the character of the building albeit to a lesser degree than the original Post Office building. Nevertheless, whilst not specifically mentioned within the list description, considerable effort was made to ensure that this extension reflected the quality and character within the fenestration of the original building which makes it now difficult to distinguish this as a later addition.

Amended plans have been submitted due to officer concerns that the replacement extension did not reflect the same character and quality as the extension which was proposed to be demolished. Whilst the LPA does not wish to impose a particular architectural style, it is appropriate to try and seek to reinforce local distinctiveness by providing a replacement extension which respects the character of the building and reflects the same quality present in the existing fenestration.

The design as amended achieves this - the design incorporates mock sash windows with reconstituted stone lintels and with mock stone banding which reflects the detailing on the existing building. Whilst the design includes use of more modern materials, the design is consistent and the choice of materials would ensure that the extension is easily distinguishable as a later addition which would be more appropriate than a pastiche as it is honest to the historic hierarchy of the evolution of the building and would meet the functional requirements of the new uses.

The Conservation Officer has expressed concerns regarding the choice of materials and more specifically the use of UPVC windows as the windows within the original building are timber. However materials details can be conditioned to ensure that high quality materials are utilised which respect the character of the building.

Sustainability

Under previous applications the LPA sought to impose a condition relating to renewable energy measures which was subsequently removed in acknowledgement that the proposals would re-use an existing building and constitutes a brownfield site within the urban area of Macclesfield and retrofitting renewable can be problematic.

Whilst the majority of the scheme is now new build which would make renewable energy measures easier to incorporate, the relevant policy (EM18) is not part of the Development Plan as the RSS has been abolished. Whilst there is an emerging policy within the Pre-Submission Core Strategy, this carries limited weight as the document has not gone through a formal consultation process. There is no policy within the adopted Local Plan and therefore it would be unreasonable to impose this condition.

Regeneration

The Cheshire Retail Study update states that the Council should promote the redevelopment of the existing town centre to reverse current shopping behaviours to out-of-centre destinations through strengthening the comparison goods and leisure offer in the town centre, in accordance with the emerging economic master plans. The proposals would help to achieve this goal and accords with Cheshire East's Town Vision.

The site lies within the central retail quarter of the town centre, and provided that entrance points are proposed along Churchill Way and Castle Street, the proposals would aid movement along the retail circuit between the traditional heart and central retail quarter.

The Town Vision also notes that proposals should take opportunities to rectify areas of weak urban form created in the 1960s. In this regard, not only would the proposals bring back a significant building which is currently vacant into viable economic use, but would also involve the partial removal and improvement of the appearance of the Grosvenor Centre.

The proposals would therefore bring about regeneration benefits.

Highway Safety and Traffic Generation

The Strategic Highways Manager has commented that as the proposed uses are consistent with a central town centre use there are no objections to the proposals. There are existing parking restrictions fronting the site to prevent unauthorised parking and customer parking for the site is available at the nearby Grosvenor Centre, although 3 parking spaces are retained in the site.

Servicing to the site will be via the dedicated service yard at the Grosvenor Centre.

Other Material Considerations

Archaeology

It is noted that the site lies within an area of archaeological potential as the area was thought to lie within that part of the town developed in the medieval period and subsequently used in the post-medieval period for residential and industrial purposes.

As the area of archaeological potential covers the entire town centre and the area has already been seriously disturbed by the construction of the 1970s shopping mall, significant archaeological deposits are unlikely to have survived. On that basis, the Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service has advised that further archaeological mitigation would not be required.

As it has been demonstrated that there would be no harm to sites of archaeological importance as a result of these proposals, the proposals would accord with policy BE23 within the Local Plan.

Amenity

There are no nearby residential properties affected by the proposals and given that the uses proposed would not generate significant levels of noise, it is not considered necessary to remove permitted development rights for flats above shops. The proposals would therefore accord with policies DC3, DC5, DC6, DC13 and DC14 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposals would represent a sustainable form of development as it would improve the retail offer and improve the vitality and viability of Macclesfield Town Centre, re-use a brownfield site and bring back a vacant heritage asset into active use whilst improving the historic setting and architectural character of the building. In addition, the proposals would bring about some improvements to town centre regeneration and would have no discernable impact upon amenity or archaeology.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development means that the balance of considerations lies in favour of approval of this scheme. Therefore, withholding planning permission cannot be justified under the test that should be applied under paragraph 14 of the Framework.

The proposals would therefore comply with policies Policy BE1: Design Guidance, Policy BE2 - Preservation of Historic Fabric, Policy BE20 - Locally Important Buildings, Policy BE22 – Sites of Archaeological Potential, Policy T9 - Traffic Management and Traffic Calming, Policy S1 - Town Centre Shopping Development, Policy MTC1 - Prime Shopping Area, Policy MTC22 – Offices, Policy DC2 - Design and Amenity, Policy DC5 - Design and Amenity, Policy DC6 - Design and Amenity, Policy DC13 – Noise and Policy DC14 – Noise, Policy DC1: New Build, Policy DC3: Amenity, Policy DC6: Circulation and Access, of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan 2004 and guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 Northern Area Manager has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

Should this application be the subject of an appeal, authority shall be delegated to the Northern Area Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Northern Planning Committee to enter into a planning agreement in accordance with the S106 Town and Country Planning Act to secure the Heads of Terms for a S106 Agreement.

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A02EX - Submission of samples of building materials
3. A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
4. Submission of detailed elevational and cross sectional drawings of windows
5. shop front not obscured
6. Details of finish and construction materials for rainwater goods to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority
7. Prior to the commencement of any internal alterations details of a photographic record of the internal subdivisions of the building shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority
8. Drainage details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

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