

Application No: 13/5139N
Location: Land adjacent 9, Walthall Street, Crewe, CW2 7JZ
Proposal: Construction of 12no. apartments
Applicant: Mr Greenhouse, Greenhouse Property Management
Expiry Date: 05-Mar-2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement and conditions

MAIN ISSUES

Impact of the development on:-
Principal of the Development
Affordable Housing
Highway Implications
Amenity
Design
Trees & Landscape

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.

Members will recall that a previous application was refused by Southern Planning Committee in 2013, that application was for a four storey building containing 15 apartments. Members refused the application for the following reason:

“The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed development by reason of its height and scale would result in an overbearing impact upon the character and appearance of the area and street-scene. As a result the proposed development is contrary to Policy BE.2 (Design Standards) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 and guidance contained within the NPPF.”

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for the erection of 12 apartments in one 3 storey building. The apartments would comprise 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. Twelve parking spaces are proposed to the side of the building in addition to a secure cycle storage facility. There would be an outdoor sitting area and provision for drying washing and bin storage.

RELEVANT HISTORY

13/3434N 2013 Refusal for 15 apartments

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:

No objection.

Strategic Highways Manager:

At the time of report writing, no response had been received from the Strategic Highways Manager (SHM). However on the previous scheme for 15 apartments the SHM was satisfied with the provision of one space per apartment and this is provided within this proposal.

Environmental Health:

Conditions suggested in relation to construction hours, piling works, contaminated land bin storage, external lighting and electric vehicle charging points.

Environment Agency:

No objection.

Crewe Town Council:

The Council notes the nature of the revised application and raises no objections subject to the comments of neighbours.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of report writing.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

To support this application the application includes the following documents;

- Design and Access Statement
- 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.

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.

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 15 apartments and this has now been reduced to 12 and the site is 0.09 hectares in size. Therefore there is no requirement for the provision of affordable housing.

Highways Implications

Twelve parking spaces are proposed within the site which meets the requirements agreed by the Strategic Highways Manager (SHM) on the previous application. The access is also as proposed in the previous application which was considered to be acceptable by the SHM.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies BE.3 and TRAN.9 of the adopted local plan.

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 previous scheme was for a four storey building containing 15 apartments and the Council considered that this would create an overbearing impact upon the character and appearance of the area and street-scene.

This application has sought to address these concerns by reducing the building to a three storey structure containing 12 apartments. The resultant building would be 2.72 metres lower than the previously proposed four storey building.

The building would have a traditional brick and render finish with contrasting blue brick string courses, with a tiled roof. Stone cills and heads would be used to articulate the window openings. It is considered that the use of these materials would create architectural interest on the elevations of the building that would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.

It is considered that the reduction in height of the proposed building has addressed the previous reason for refusal and that the proposal is now acceptable in terms of design, scale and massing.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy BE.2 (Design) of the adopted local plan.

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 and in this case it is not considered that there are any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits nor are there any policies within the NPPF that indicate that development should be restricted.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in parking, highway safety and traffic generation terms.

The scheme complies with the relevant local plan policies in terms of amenity and it is considered that the proposal is an acceptable design and layout.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with the relevant local plan policies and would not compromise key sustainability principles as set out in national planning policy. Therefore there is a presumption in favour of the development and accordingly it is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

And the following conditions:

- 1. Standard time 3 years**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Hours of construction limited to 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 – 14:00 Saturday and not at all on Sundays**
- 4. Pile driving limited to 08:30 to 17:30 Monday to Friday, 09:00 – 13:00 Saturday and not at all on Sundays**
- 5. No development shall take place until details of external lighting has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
- 6. Submission and approval of details of materials**
- 7. Landscaping details including boundary treatment of car parking area to be submitted and approved**
- 8. Implementation of landscaping**
- 9. Submission of a Phase 1 Contaminated Land Survey**
- 10. Construction Management Plan**
- 11. Provision of 2 vehicle charging points**
- 12. Parking to be provided prior to occupation**

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 Planning and Place Shaping Manager has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Southern 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 be delegated to the Planning and Place Shaping Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Southern 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.

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