Application No: 15/4389N

Location: Former Victoria Community High School and The Oakley Centre, West Street, Crewe, CW1 2PZ

Proposal: Demolition of former Newdigate and Meredith Buildings and the erection of a 3622 sqm. new educational building and associated car parking and landscaping works, along side the refurbishment of the Oakley Building for use by the UTC

Applicant: Georgina Harris, Crewe Engineering & Design UTC

Expiry Date: 25-Dec-2015

SUMMARY:

The proposal will contribute to economic and social sustainability through the provision of improved educational facilities. In terms of environmental sustainability, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of amenity design and highways, it is not considered that a refusal on these grounds could be sustained and that any concerns in this regard are outweighed by the economic and social benefits of the proposal and the environmental benefits of bringing a vacant site back into use. The scheme, it is considered to represent sustainable development and is in accordance with the relevant policies of the development and accordingly it is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

REASON FOR REPORT:

The proposal is a major development, the applicant is Cheshire East Council and the proposal is subject to objection.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is approximately 1.3 ha, and consists of three buildings constructed in the 1980's: The Newdigate, Meredith and Oakley Buildings.

The site also includes a plant room, to the north of the private element of Chetwode Street. This is to be retained as part of the scheme.

Whilst Newdigate and Meredith Buildings are currently vacant, the site has a long established educational use having been occupied by the Victoria Community Technology School and more recently the Sir William Stanier Community School until 2009.

The site itself has a varied topography, characterised by retaining features and steps across the outside space. This is also very evident within the Oakley Building itself, which has significant level changes within it.

External areas of the site have areas of tree cover, blocked paved hard landscaping and planters. This also includes two fenced hard court play areas to the south east of the site.

The current site is very permeable to pedestrians and passers by virtue of not formally being fencing off from the surrounding area.

The site is located to the north of Crewe town centre.

The north of the site is bounded by two-storey terraced residential properties along Meredith Street, whilst the west is bounded by houses along Newdigate Street and to the east, Newton Street and access to garages.

The south of the site is bounded by West Street and retail development including an Asda superstore.

Whilst the Newdigate and Meredith Buildings are currently vacant, the Oakley Building is currently occupied by a daytime care centre, Pupil Referral Unit and Community Group. These facilities will be relocated to facilitate this development.

Along Newdigate Street and Newton Street, properties largely side onto the site. The houses on Meredith Street bound by Chetwode Street are separated from the site by workshops / garages and the plant room building (which is to be retained).

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The project involves:

- The demolition of two former school buildings – Newdigate Building and Meredith Buildings
- Erection of a new three-storey college building (use class D1) with teaching, laboratory, meeting and ancillary spaces
- The refurbishment of the existing Oakley Building (currently used as a community centre, use class D1) providing further teaching space for use by the UTC, including additional plant and amended rear access.

- New hard and soft landscaping scheme framing the new and refurbished buildings along with new boundary treatments to the site
- Enhanced pedestrian route to the west of the new UTC building, linking through to West Street
- Provision of a new car park for the UTC
- Plant room and hard courts are retained
- Associated highways works

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

There are no relevant previous decisions.

PLANNING POLICIES

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan policy

BE.1	Amenity
BE.2	Design
BE.3	Access and Parking
BE.4	Drainage Utilities and Resources
BE.5	Infrastructure
NE.5	Nature Conservation and Habitats
NE.20	Flood Prevention
TRAN.5	Provision for Cyclists
TRAN.6	Cycle Routes
TRAN.9	Car Parking
RT.1	Protection of open spaces with recreational or amenity value
RT.3	Open Space
RT.9	Footpaths and Bridleways.

OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES

Environmental Health

No objection subject to the following conditions:

- Scheme of acoustic mitigation
- Details of all fixed plant to be submitted and agreed
- Hours of use of the building to be submitted and agreed
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Details of external lighting to be submitted and agreed
- Travel plan

- 2 electric vehicle charging points
- Phase II contaminated land report

United Utilities:

No objection Subject to the following conditions:

- Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.
- Prior to the commencement of any development, a surface water drainage scheme, based on the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance with evidence of an assessment of the site conditions (inclusive of how the scheme shall be managed after completion) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- The surface water drainage scheme must be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards. In the event of surface water draining to the public surface water sewer, the pass forward flow rate to the public sewer must be restricted to 72.6l/s in accordance with the drainage strategy submitted.

Environment Agency:

No objection subject to contaminated land conditions.

Highways Authority:
The proposal represents re-use of a former education site for similar educational purposes with a reduced floor area but, in all likelihood, a similar number of students.

The site is sustainably located and will be supported by a Travel Plan. A revised Interim Travel Plan is to be submitted by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Head of Strategic Infrastructure prior to occupation and will be secured by condition.

Car parking proposals are acceptable and cycle parking will be provided to Cheshire East Council standards (88 spaces) with these spaces being sheltered and suitably monitored.

A lit walk route through site, open to the general public at all times, is to be designed to an appropriate standard to be agreed with Head of Strategic Infrastructure.

The principle of a temporary access to West Street for large construction vehicles is accepted, with a suitable waiting area to be provided between West Street and the gated access to the site.

Public Rights of Way

The application documents refer to the proposal to create an enhanced pedestrian link between West Street and Meredith Street, the principle of which would be supported. It is understood that the route is to be adopted as a public highway.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL:

The Town Council welcomes the redevelopment of two derelict buildings on a prominent site. However residents in Meredith Street should be no worse off after the development and the Town Council is concerned that there may be additional pressure on on-street parking as a result of the proposal.

1. The Town Council questions whether there is sufficient parking provision despite the calculations in the Transport Statement submitted with the application, and in particular considers that the proposed provision of only 1 parking space for every 2 members of staff is unrealistic.
2. It has concerns about the ability of coaches to negotiate the parked cars on either side of Meredith Street in order to access the drop off point.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

5 representations have been received making the following points:

Loss of Existing Building

- Building should be saved and would help the surrounding environment by not demolishing it
- Concern about big lorries being used to take away rubble
- Concern about fumes and dust
- Impact on wildlife and trees
- Concern for safety of children and people with asthma

Objection to UTC in Principle

- Creation of the UTC may serve the interests of the backers, Bentley (Volkswagen), Bosch, Siemens, OSL, MMU, UNIPART, etc., but the taxpayer will pay the bill.
- Charged to the taxpayer will be the costs of demolition and construction of buildings, associated interest, service charges, and incidental charges of BAM as the already chosen Private-Public partner (PPP), as well as the ongoing running costs of the college, student tuition fees, etc.
- The project will inflict yet more damage on the existing technical college in Crewe, South Cheshire College, which was re-built about six years ago at a cost of over seventy million pounds of taxpayer's money. Already that investment of public funds in rebuilding the South Cheshire College (SCC) has been put in jeopardy by tuition fee increases soon after the re-build and

the college had to sell off land and make staff redundant because of reduced student numbers and income. Creation of a competing, so-called "university", effectively just another technical college / secondary school, may kill off South Cheshire College completely.

- The proposed enormous waste of public funds on the UTC could alternatively be used in the public's interest, for affordable housing, for example.
- Is the project a belated attempt by Cheshire East to address the problem of the rapid dereliction of the Newdigate and Meredith buildings that were effectively abandoned six years ago, such that these building must now be demolished, although the third building of the complex, the Oakley Building, that has continued to be occupied and used to this day, remains intact and useful?
- An alternative to Utter Total Chaos (UTC) is to allow South Cheshire College (SCC) to run the courses that employers are apparently requiring. SCC have the experience, the resources, the expertise and the space to provide what is needed, without wasting enormous amounts of public funds with a competing project.
- The planning application should be turned down at this stage as it is a vanity project that is a waste of taxpayers money and will have a detrimental effect on South Cheshire College.
- Has the tender process for this been carried out properly, only two firms actually submitted prices, is the taxpayer getting value for money?

Car parking and Highways

- The proposed location, a narrow strip of land wedged between narrow Meredith Street, a Victorian residential street where pavement and double car parking is the norm, and its location next to the heavily used West Street is yet another ludicrous aspect of the proposed project.
- The proposals for car parking are utterly inadequate: the developers of the project claim eighty parking spaces, apparently an additional sixty-two places, which are said to be for teaching and ancillary staff, also presumably for visitors and the disabled. Parking facilities for students on the campus apparently are not planned. Student numbers are projected to increase to eight hundred. Of these, some sixteen year-old students will have motor cycles and some seventeen to eighteen year-olds will have cars. Neighbouring streets; Meredith Street, Ludford Street, Newdigate Street and Chetwode Street, are all narrow and already monopolised by resident's cars, by ASDA staff and ASDA shoppers anxious to avoid Cheshire East's parking fees and restrictions for their car parks across West Street next to ASDA. No facilities for student's vehicles exist. There seems to be no viable strategy capable of dealing with the absence of adequate parking other than to tell people that they should walk or cycle: this approach, this "promotion of sustainable travel", is unlikely to succeed. Chaos will likely follow and the result may well lead to the demolition of surrounding housing to overcome the vehicle parking inadequacies.
- If coaches and buses are to be used for conveying staff and students to the "UTC", how are these vehicles to access the site? Is it to be via Broad Street

and Meredith Street from the west, passing Beechwood primary school where infants are brought to school daily in parent's car where many are forced to park hundreds of yards away because parking in the area is so sparse. Is it to be from the east via the chicanery of Vernon Street, Market Street car parks and the very narrow entrance to Meredith Street next to the Nags Head public house? Another alternative would be on the north side of West Street where a bus lay-by could be created near the site of the existing traffic light controlled crossing and the proposed "enhanced pedestrian link". However, this might require relocation of the pedestrian crossing, and negate any of the (claimed but unlikely) benefits of the proposed, and ridiculously named, "enhanced pedestrian link", which is presumably an existing right of way.

- If buses and coaches are to be used to convey students and staff, where will they be able to turn around? All the surrounding roads, Meredith, Chetwode, Ludford, Newdigate, Albert streets are all very narrow. The prospect of turning anything up to twenty 40-seat vehicles around in any of these streets is utterly preposterous, even if they arrived at staggered intervals by arrangement to coordinate starting times at Beechwood Primary School, Beechwood Nursery and the ridiculously proposed UTC; the outcome will be utter total chaos.
- Even though the parties involved have had a Traffic plan commissioned its findings are laughable and it takes no account of existing double parking in Meredith Street, parking by visitors to the town and shop staff not wanting to pay car parking charges already using the area, not to mention the traffic mayhem already caused at drop off and pick up times for the local school.
- The proposed entrance to the UTC car park is too narrow and to get to it means travelling down an already busy Meredith St creating at least another 160 traffic movements during one day(the car park will have 80 spaces). No consideration has been given to existing residents car parking and movement requirements. The Traffic Plan suggests that students should be encouraged to bicycle to the UTC, I trust they will accept responsibility when an accident occurs, also where are all the bicycles to be parked? 400 Students is a lot of bikes...6/8 bikes equals 1 car park space!
- Better public transport and cycling infrastructure would reduce the need for car parking, and encourage staff and students to engage more with the local community and commerce
- The 88 space parking site is bigger than the area for student recreation and sports. It also allows for more than twice the number of cars to park than bicycles. given that ten bikes can occupy the space of one car this seems disproportionate if we are to encourage healthy travel and exercise. The Asda car park opposite is never more than half full during school hours and condo easily cope with the extra cars. To promote cycling cycle paths around the site should be developed, particularly to the station to encourage a wider catchment area for those who do not drive.
- Would recommend the investigation into a foot tunnel under Vernon Way which would bring the Cumberland sports facilities and Thomas St parking within a 200 metre walk. Both are under-utilised during school hours.

Public Transport

- The bus service frequency is incorrect. The stop on Broad Street is served by just three buses an hour (2 on the 12 Crewe-Leighton Hospital and 1 on the 32 Crewe-Sandbach). This therefore makes the site in accessible to certain groups of people, especially those travelling from the south of the town.
- Cheshire East should work with bus companies, and create two new bus stops on each side of the road; at UTC (and opposite) and Market Centre (and opposite). This would make these facilties more accessible.
- some routes should be rerouted, such as the Arriva 6 Leighton Hospital-Brookhouse and D&G 1 Leighton Hospital-Crewe Bus Station-Crewe Business Park, to provide a quarter hourly service along this stretch of West Street.
- These two services would therefore (from the north) continue down West Street, and instead of turning right into Hightown, continue down West Street, calling at the new UTC and Market Centre stops. Then bus should turn left onto Vernon Way, take the third exit from the roundabout onto Earle Street, follow the road round calling at Crewe Library (Prince Albert Street). Turn right onto Chester Street, before a right onto Delamere Street before going into the bus station. This would extend journey times by just 2-3 minutes, but would allow more passengers to use the services, thus keeping them viable.
- As the Number 1 route extends to Crewe Railway Station during the peak times, it would allow for students from a further distance to access the UTC better, and encourage them to study in Crewe. The combined services would also allow students from across North, West and South Crewe to reach the college.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- Arboriculture Assessment
- Acoustic Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Resource Management Plan
- Ecological Appraisal
- Ground Report
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Climate Change Report
- External Lighting Report
- Transport Statement
- Building SI Statement
- Ventilation Statement
- Interim Travel Plan
- Planning Statement

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Main Issues

The site is located within the settlement boundary for Crewe, where there is a general presumption in favour of development. Given that the site was last in educational use, the construction of the new UTC campus is considered to be acceptable in principle.

The main issues in the consideration of this application are the acceptability of the redevelopment in principle, the effect on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, highway safety and the impact of the design and layout on the character and appearance of the area and mature trees within the site.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Educational Benefits

The proposal will provide a new educational facility for the benefit of the people of Crewe. This is a major social sustainability benefit of the scheme.

Amenity

The site is surrounded by existing residential development to the north, west and east. It is bounded to the south by the major road of West Street beyond which lies commercial development within the town centre. The site is currently in educational use, and therefore, it is not considered that the proposed development, in principle, raises any amenity concerns, subject to the noise impact of individual pieces of plant and equipment, dealt with below.

With regard to the proposed buildings themselves, a minimum of 25m will be maintained between the proposed building and the nearest neighbouring residential property boundary. Greater distances will be maintained to the majority of dwellings themselves. Distances of over 21m are considered to be acceptable to maintain privacy. 13m is sufficient to avoid loss of light as a result of the construction of a standard 2 storey dwelling. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed UTC building will be higher than this, given that the minimum separation distance is almost twice the 13m standard, this is considered to be sufficient to avoid any loss of amenity as a result of overshadowing. Particularly given that the site is already occupied by large buildings.

Local residents have raised concern regarding construction traffic through the main access which is via the residential area to the north. This will be addressed through the construction management plan. However, the highways department has agreed with the developer that a temporary access for large construction vehicles can be provided direct from West Street.

Noise

The development is for an educational establishment which, due to its location could be adversely affected by noise from road traffic. In addition, noise from

fixed plant and equipment associated with the development could lead to a significant impact on existing neighbouring properties.

The applicant has submitted an acoustic feasibility report in support of the application which outlines an acoustic mitigation scheme to ensure internal and external noise levels meet relevant British standards. The report also outlines considerations when procuring and designing fixed plant and equipment.

At this time the detailed design / uses of each room are not known and as such it was not possible to outline the detailed acoustic scheme. The report recommends that when the detailed design / room uses are known a more detailed mitigation scheme can be designed. Therefore the Council's Environmental Health Officer has recommended conditions requiring a detailed scheme of acoustic mitigation to be submitted and agreed along with details of all fixed plant and acoustic insulation and the hour of use of the building.

In addition, the construction phase of the development has potential to cause noise impacts off site. Therefore, a Construction Environmental Management Plan is also recommended, which can be secured by condition.

Public Rights of Way

At present there are north-south pedestrian links through the site between West Street and Chetwood Street; West Street and Newdigate Street and directly between West Street and Meredith Street. As a result of the proposals, two of these links will be lost in order to create a secure campus with a single point of public entry and access control. This is an important security requirement for a modern educational institution. The Council's Rights of Way team have been consulted on the application and have raised no objection. Furthermore, the proposals will create an enhanced pedestrian link between West Street and Meredith Street, the principle of which is supported by the Council's Rights of Way team. The provision and retention of this link will be secured by condition.

There is also currently a pedestrian link the full length of the West street frontage frontage from Market Street to Newdigate Street to without using steps. The Landscape Officer has expressed concern that development proposals do not appear to maintain a link. In response the applicant has confirmed that, the current scheme does not maintain the east-west link across the whole site due to level changes. There is a retaining wall across the end of the proposed car park and also they do not consider that this route would be one to encourage people to walk across (post development). The new link north south link will provide a link to Meredith Street where people can then move west. However, the Council's Rights of Way team and highways department have expressed concern about this aspect of the scheme and the developer has been asked to reconsider this matter. A further update will be provided to Members in due course.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABLITY

Environmental Benefits

The scheme will regenerate a derelict brownfield site in a prominent location within the town centre. It is sustainably located in close proximity to shops, business and other services within the town centre, as well as large residential areas, from where many students and staff will be drawn. It has good access to public transport links within the town centre, including the bus station.

Air Quality

During scoping communications, it was agreed with officers that a stand alone air quality impact assessment would not be required for the proposed development. This was on the basis that the traffic associated with the proposed development is considered to be negligible in comparison to the existing educational uses at the site.

Nonetheless, in order to ensure local air quality does not deteriorate and is safeguarded for the future, direct measures have been proposed to reduce traffic emissions and encourage sustainable modes of travel.

These are in the form of a robust travel plan and electric vehicle charging infrastructure for staff use which will be secured by condition.

Contaminated land

The Environmental Health team has no objection to the application but has commented that the application area has a history of mill, commercial and potentially infilled pit use and therefore the land may be contaminated. The a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present or brought onto the site. A Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment for contaminated land has been submitted in support of the application which recommends ground investigation works be undertaken to further assess potential contaminant linkages on the site.

It is unclear whether the electricity sub station mentioned in the Phase I report is historical or current, and if current, whether it will remain on site. This should be confirmed and appropriate analysis for PCBs undertaken as detailed in the report.

A proposed scope for the Phase II ground investigation was also submitted with the application. This scope details that a ground investigation was undertaken in May 2015, however this has not been submitted with the application.

The proposed scope does not allow for the analysis proposed in Section 5.2.2.2 of the Phase I report, for example analysis for PCBs, pH, MTBE, SOM and VOCs (if necessary). The deviation from the proposed analysis presented within the Phase I report should be justified. In addition Environmental Health Officers would ask that boreholes are screened appropriately for gas monitoring, and also that at least half of the rounds are undertaken in worst-case conditions.

As such the Environmental Health team recommends that a condition requiring a Phase II contaminated land investigation to be carried out and the results submitted should be attached as a condition, along with details of any necessary mitigation and its implementation.

Ecology

The application is supported by an ecological assessment which has been considered by the Council's Nature Conservation Officer. He has advised that there are unlikely to be any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development. However if planning consent is granted he recommends that conditions be attached to safeguard nesting birds.

Landscape

The Council's Landscape Officer has considered the proposals and suggests that the materials and treatment of the areas of hard landscape will need to be of a high quality to compliment the building. Whilst the buildings incorporate brick and dark grey curtain walling, in the vicinity of the pedestrian plaza and steps there appear to be a large amount of white concrete, proposed. Similarly concrete is proposed in the seating area/outdoor dining to the north. A more appropriate material could be secured by condition, however.

Soft landscape proposals are provided and appear reasonable, although, in the plaza stepped areas turf is indicated which may be difficult to maintain.

The proposals would involve loss of a significant number of existing trees and several landscaped areas within the site. These features provide some amenity value in the vicinity. It is possible proposed amendments to the wall on the West Street boundary may impact on off site trees. The views of the Forestry Officer should be sought.

Trees

The Forestry Officer has commented that following the meeting with the developer on the 10th November 2015 a revised set of plans which includes the proposed temporary access of West Street will be provided. There are two possible locations for the temporary access point from an Arboricultural perspective, the developers preferred option involves the removal of a single ornamental tree (T26 Cotoneaster) located within one of the raised beds on highway land. The benefits of using this access to local residents at the rear of the site are significant; the trees removal is not contested. Replacement planting can be instigated once the raised planter has been re-instigated following completion of development.

The development proposals involve the removal of a large number of individual and groups of trees planted as part of the landscape proposals for the existing Oakley complex. Whilst there will be some loss of amenity within the immediate

area, it is conceded that a number of trees have exhausted their locations. Inappropriate species choice has resulted in some trees now being in direct contact with buildings, along with footpath disturbance as a result of root development and expansion. They have in the main exhausted their locations, with their loss mitigated by the use of a smaller number of semi-mature trees as replacements, as part of a specimen landscape scheme.

At the pinch point of the new building on the west street elevation a section of the wall which forms the raised planter requires removal to allow for the installation of piles. On completion the wall is to be re-built on the same line. This aspect of the development is located outside the site edged red. This can be accommodated without having any direct or indirect damage to adjacent trees, but a suitable tree protection scheme will be required in accordance with current best practice BS5837:2012. It was agreed on site further discussions would take place with TEP to agree the position of the fencing in order to avoid pre-commencement conditions should the application be approved. There is also an opportunity to review the status of the West Street trees as part of this application. A number are dead with inappropriate species (Crack Willow) also noted. This linear group of trees will be key to providing a degree of screening to the new development, removal of selected trees along with specimen replacement planting should be seen as a net long term gain.

On balance the loss of the identified trees is considered acceptable providing a suitable replacement planting scheme can be accommodated within the revised development layout.

Layout and Design

The Council's Design Officer has considered the proposal and is of the view that the design is acceptable, although there are some minor matters of concern which could be dealt with by condition.

There is some concern regarding lack of tree planting of the car park. There may still be opportunity to plant along the western boundary with Newdgate Street (or part of it) – principally for amenity benefits for the local neighbourhood rather than having a large open car park visible within this street.

At the pre-application stage the potential use of ceramic cladding as part of the materials palette was discussed and there is concern that the elevation adjacent the public route through the site (the Hall space), should be as animated and active as possible. The uplighting along this elevation is welcome but the treatment of this part of the building lends itself to the use of ceramic cladding, as opposed to metallic cladding. Ceramics are a more sympathetic material where people will have close interaction with the building. Also the final detail and finish of the cladding is important and should be conditioned along with other materials.

Given the amount of glazing it is imperative that the quality of the glazing is of high quality and also, it is not clear whether the glazing is inset or flush with the facing. Insetting the windows/glazing will give more relief and shadowing on the elevations, adding more depth. It could also contribute toward summer shading, especially on the southern elevation.

There are some flues on the main building that project quite a way above the building. They are located quite close to the front of the building. These could be set further back and/or reduced in height.

With regard to the external space – The Design and Access Statement refers to concrete products and the concrete terrace (in white) for the main space in front of the Atrium. It is worth suggesting that a palette of reasonably high spec materials is being developed outside the Lifestyle centre, that would also lend itself to this site. The retaining walls for the terrace could utilise a blue engineering brick rather than white concrete. To add interest this could be constructed in a different bond to stretcher to increase its interest. White concrete could be prone to graffiti out of hours as this space is directly related to through pedestrian traffic.

Pedestrian railings are indicated in a limited number of locations, the design of these could be enhanced to add to the schemes public realm quality (particularly as part of the terrace design).

There are areas of old blue paving bricks within the site, that at pre-app it was discussed were to be replaced. These could be reused in the hardscape elsewhere in the site (such as in the rear communal spaces of the UTC).

However, as stated above, all of these matters could be addressed by condition.

Drainage and Flood Prevention

The applicant has submitted with the application, a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, which concludes that adequate attenuations measures can be put in place to ensure that all surface water run-off can be adequately disposed of and any increased potential for flooding resulting from additional hard standing is mitigated.

The Environment Agency and United Utilities have considered the report and raised no objections subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions to ensure that the required mitigation is carried out. Therefore, it is not considered that a refusal on flood risk grounds could be sustained.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABLITY

Economic Benefits

The scheme will provide economic benefits in the form of jobs in construction, teaching and support jobs at the finished facility and increased spending with local shops, businesses and other services. Also, crucially, it will help to provide a highly skilled and well trained workforce, which will benefit regeneration and economic objectives for Crewe and will have economic benefits for local employers. It will also help to attract new employers to the town.

Highways

Planning History

The site has previously been in use for educational purposes (the Sir William Stanier Community School) and the Oakley building remains in use as a leisure facility.

Site description and current application proposal

The site lies immediately to the north of the A532 West Street, in Crewe. The site is formed by a collection of three buildings; Oakley, Newdigate, and Meredith, which are interspersed with walkways and small outdoor meeting areas or squares.

Existing pedestrian access from the town centre is gained via a signalled crossing of the A532 West Street into the heart of the site. Vehicle access is currently gained to a small car park off Newton Street and parking bays off Chetwode Street; both accessed from Meredith Street. Pedestrian and cycle access can also be gained from both of these locations. Although the development site currently allows public pedestrian access across the campus the routes are not currently highway adopted routes.

The existing buildings have the following floor areas;

- Oakley 3,000sqm
- Newdigate 1,650sqm
- Meredith 3,290sqm

The Oakley building is to be retained and refurbished and the other two buildings are to be demolished and replaced with a single building of 3,750sqm. The redevelopment proposal would serve a total of 800 pupils/students and, it is assumed by the applicant, 80 staff.

The proposed level of parking is now 89 spaces rather than the 93 spaces referred to in the Transport Statement (TS) including five disabled bays and this parking is for staff only. The applicant needs to make some allowance for disabled students to access by car.

Wider planning balance

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure is not aware of any wider planning issues that may in part be related to transport that might arise as a result of this development proposal e.g. noise, light, or air quality issues. (The TS does indicate that discussions with officers of CEC have been undertaken regarding Air Quality issues). If such issues are likely to arise it is assumed that the relevant officers of the Council will respond as appropriate.

Transport Submissions

The TS prepared for this application was undertaken by Curtins.

The Curtins' TS purports to provide an audit of the existing highway and traffic situation around the proposal site. The TS fails to make commentary on one key transport issue that is obvious on roads surrounding the site; namely that the residential roads are heavily parked despite the majority of the former school site not being in operation at present. Indeed on the section of Meredith Street passing the community centre vehicles are parked all down one side of the road as well as fully on the footway in front of the community centre.

The TS proposes 40 cycle parking spaces to serve the development site (however also see commentary on discussions with the applicant on this issue later in this report).

The applicant indicates that servicing and delivery, when the UTC is in operation, will be through the parking area. Although not ideal this provision is considered acceptable.

Accessibility

The site is located in a highly accessible location for walk-in from residential areas and the town centre. The site is also well located for staff/students to be able to access retail and food/leisure facilities during break times.

The site will provide cycle parking. This must be sheltered and allow facility for secure parking e.g. Sheffield type stands in shelters that are overlooked or, more likely in this case, monitored. The plans submitted with the planning application currently indicate a level of cycle parking (40 spaces) well below CEC's cycle parking standards (88 spaces).

The applicant has indicated that the space set aside can easily accommodate 88 cycle parking spaces and indicates that these will now be provided from the outset of the development proposal opening. Discussions were also held regarding the need for shelters and monitoring and the applicant promised to look into the monitoring issue.
Bus services are easily reached including the service numbers 1, 20, and 32 within 250m of the site and a wider range of services can be reached in the town centre at the bus station.

Rail services can be accessed further afield at Crewe railway station and bus service number 1 provides a link to the railway station.

It is concluded that the site is highly accessible by sustainable modes, as one would expect close to the centre of Cheshire East's largest town.

Traffic Generation

The Curtins' TS provides a methodology for assessing the forecast number of trips at the proposed school that CEC cannot accept.

The estimation of trip generation based on the previous use has been based on the GFA of the school and the proposed trip generation of the new facility is based on pupil numbers. We see no reason why a different method should be applied to each facility.

Curtins has also looked at the trip generation for the proposed facility as half school and half college/university; despite basing parking standards on that of a school only.

Strategic Highways do not agree that this facility, despite its name, will have any of the travel characteristics associated with a college/university which clearly have a high number of students that will be living on campus or nearby and, on the other hand, have a higher number of students that will have access to a car than the 17/18 year olds that would attend this facility.

The facility is more akin to a standard secondary school – albeit without 11-13 year olds – with a large sixth form facility. So, on that basis, the SHM considers that the appropriate comparison is that of a standard secondary school.

Given that the proposed facility is somewhat smaller than the original school facility it seems unlikely that the traffic generation of the proposed facility would be any greater than that of the previous use.

Parking

Parking is clearly an issue in this area of Crewe with housing adjacent to the development being primarily terraced with no frontage gardens or parking. Indeed, site visits have indicated heavy parking during the day with vehicles parked on-street and illegally on footways.

It is considered that this proposal is more akin to a secondary school than a college/university. On that basis we would expect;

1 space per 2 staff	= 40 spaces
1 space per 10 sixth form age	= 40 spaces
Additional 5 spaces	= 5 spaces
Total	= 85 spaces

If we treated the facility as a college it would be;

1 space per 2 staff	= 40 spaces
1 space per 15 students	= 53 spaces
Total	= 93 spaces

The proposed provision of 89 spaces is therefore considered adequate for this facility and at least five of these spaces should be dedicated to disabled users and of a suitable standard for disabled use.

A designated drop-off/pick-up bay is also to be provided.

Cycle parking standards are one space per 10 staff and students. That equates to 88 cycle parking spaces and, it is now understood, the applicant will make such provision on first occupation of the building.

Construction traffic

Although no formal construction management plan is available the applicant has indicated that they consider the best access for large vehicles to be via a temporary access from West Street but that construction employees in smaller vehicles would access via the residential roads to the rear. This is agreed as a suitable strategy, with appropriate temporary signage and with reinstatement works to be agreed.

Travel Plan

The applicant has provided an Interim Travel Plan.

The development site location is undoubtedly sustainable in terms of transport options and access to shops and facilities typically used at break and mealtimes. However, the applicant will still need to promote use of sustainable modes of transport for environmental, traffic, health, and parking reasons.

The Interim Travel Plan indicates measures that ‘could’ be implemented and needs to be more positive indicating those measures that ‘would’ be implemented, with potential remedial measures that might be implemented should they be required to ensure the success of the Travel Plan.

The plan also needs to be more definitive in terms of targets and, as indicated above, list a menu of measures to be implemented should such targets not be achieved.

The Plan should also refer to the duration of the TP which it is assumed will run for the lifetime of the facility. The finalised plan should include an indication of the surveys that will be undertaken and how monitoring will be achieved internally and reported externally.

Site Plan

The applicant has indicated an unwillingness to provide a lit footpath through the site which would be adopted by the Council; the reasoning relating to potential use of 'high quality' materials that may not meet adoptable specifications.

However, conditions can be imposed to ensure that such a pedestrian link through the site will be provided 'in perpetuity'. It needs to be lit and built to a suitable standard. Plans need to be submitted to make it absolutely clear where this route will be provided. This can also be achieved through the use of conditions.

Conclusion

The proposal represents re-use of a former education site for similar educational purposes with a reduced floor area but, in all likelihood, a similar number of students.

The site is sustainably located and will be supported by a Travel Plan. A revised Interim Travel Plan is to be submitted by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Head of Strategic Infrastructure prior to occupation and will be secured by condition.

Car parking proposals are acceptable and cycle parking will be provided to Cheshire East Council standards (88 spaces) with these spaces being sheltered and suitably monitored.

A lit walk route through site, open to the general public at all times, is to be designed to an appropriate standard to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

The principle of a temporary access to West Street for large construction vehicles is accepted, with a suitable waiting area to be provided between West Street and the gated access to the site.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it is considered that the re-development of the UTC is acceptable in principle and will provide a new state-of-the-art facility of the benefit of the town. The site layout and design of the buildings are of an exceptionally high standard, which will enhance the quality of the built environment locally. The flood risk and highway safety implications of the development have been carefully assessed and are considered to be acceptable. There will be no net loss of open space and the development has been subject to and influenced by public consultation and participation. Outstanding matters relating to tree protection and hard and soft landscaping can be adequately dealt with by means of conditions and it is therefore considered that the development complies with all the relevant local

plan policies and accordingly it is considered to represent sustainable development and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE: Conditions

1. **Standard**
2. **Approved Plans**
3. **Prior to commencement provision of tree protection scheme in accordance with current best practice BS5837:2012**
4. **Prior to commencement Phase II contaminated land investigation to be carried out and the results submitted**
5. **Prior to commencement Construction Management Plan to be submitted and agreed**
6. **No works to commence during bird nesting season without prior survey**
7. **No works other than clearance / refurbishment until scheme of acoustic mitigation to be submitted and agreed along**
8. **No works other than clearance / refurbishment until provision of revised landscaping / replacement planting scheme to include removal of dead trees and replacement planting on West Street boundary & planting within the car parking & along the western boundary with Newdigate Street.**
9. **No works other than site clearance / refurbishment until details of facing and surfacing materials have been submitted. Materials to include ceramic cladding to the elevation adjacent the public route through the site, retaining walls to be blue engineering brick, reuse of existing blue brick paviors,**
10. **No works other than clearance / refurbishment until details of brick bond to retaining walls to be submitted and agreed.**
11. **Prior to installation of any fixed plant details of acoustic insulation to be submitted and agreed**
12. **Prior to first occupation details of the hours of use of the building to be submitted and agreed.**
13. **Prior to first occupation travel plan to be submitted and agreed**
14. **Prior to first occupation electric vehicle charging points to be provided**
15. **Prior to occupation of the development a suitable Travel Plan will be submitted to the satisfaction of Cheshire East Council, including suitable measures to promote sustainable travel at the site.**
16. **No development other than site clearance / refurbishmentt to commence on site prior to the provision of a plans that include a walk link through the development, at a suitable standard, connecting West Street to Meredith Street and/or Chetwode Street. Route to be retained thereafter**
17. **Car parking provision to be provided at a total of 89 spaces.**
18. **Secure and covered cycle parking to be provided at 88 spaces, with plans for monitoring to be agreed prior to occupation.**


Billington Road
Golding Dr
Alban Street
Stafford Street
Adelaide Street
Roebuck Street
Rear of 106-132 Meredith Street
Meredith Street
Newton Street
Albert Street
Vere Street
Gladstone Street
N
Access to Victoria Centre
Access to Victoria Centre Car Park
Victoria Centre
Beech Street West
Browning Street
Heath Street Car Park
Heath Street
Vernon Way
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