

Application No: 16/0762N

Location: Former Edleston Road Primary School, Edleston Road, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 7HB

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and the development of a mix of 46 no. one and two bed apartments and ancillary works.

Applicant: Bourne Housing Limited

Expiry Date: 18-May-2016

SUMMARY

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and that where this is the case housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

It is therefore necessary to consider whether the proposal constitutes “sustainable development” in order to establish whether it benefits from the presumption under paragraph 14 by evaluating the three aspects of sustainable development described by the framework (economic, social and environmental).

The benefits in this case are:

- The development would provide 47 flats which will help in the delivery of the 5 year housing land supply.
- The development would bring forward a brownfield site which has been vacant and is falling into disrepair. Development of brownfield sites is promoted within the NPPF, the Crewe Local Plan and the Cheshire East Local Plan (consultation version)
- Circa 75% of the school building (a locally listed building and a non designated heritage asset) will be incorporated within the design so this would retain an element of the front façade to public viewpoints
- The development would provide economic benefits through the provision of employment during the construction phase, 47 new residential units and benefits for local businesses in Crewe by virtue of the economic activity associated with the new residents of those flats

The development would have a neutral impact upon the following subject to mitigation:

- The impact upon protected species/ecology is considered to be neutral subject to the imposition of conditions to secure mitigation.
- There is not considered to be any drainage implications raised by this development that could not be resolved by condition

The development would not raise any significant highways issues subject to the provision of the basement car park as detailed in the revised scheme. The Strategic Highways Manager

considers adequate car and cycle parking is provided within the curtilage of the site via the basement and ground level parking zones

The adverse impacts of the development would be:

- The impact upon education infrastructure as it would not be possible to secure an education contribution as part of this development
- The impact upon residential amenity by virtue of overlooking/overshadowing / loss of outlook of adjacent residential occupiers
- The adverse impact upon affordable housing requirements in Crewe by virtue of the non-provision of any contribution as part of the proposal on viability grounds
- The adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the scale, massing and detailed design of the proposal
- The impact upon the locally listed building by virtue of design/ scale of the proposal.

The adverse impacts in approving this development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in the planning balance. It is therefore concluded that the development unsustainable and that Paragraph 14 of the NPPF is not engaged

Recommendation
Refuse

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application property is a detached, two storey unit located on the western side of Edleston Road within the Crewe Settlement Zone Line.

The application site consists of the former Edleston Road Primary School and its associated grounds and car parking. The site is located within the urban area of Crewe and is approximately 700m south of the town centre. The site is bounded to the north by Derrington Avenue, to the east by Edleston Road and to the south by Stalbridge Road. To the west the site is bounded by the existing residential properties located along Derrington Avenue and Stalbridge Road. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and extends to an area of 0.48 hectares.

The former school building was constructed in 1875 (following the 1870 Education Act) and was constructed in red brick with stone detailing, feature windows and lights with repeating dormer windows. The original building was subsequently extended, in a similar style, and has a minor recent extension.

The building sits comfortably within the central part of the site, surrounded by areas of hard surfacing. There is also a robust and attractive brick wall with varied copings around the boundary of the site. The historic significance and architectural quality of the building is recognised by its inclusion on the Local List.

The prevailing scale and grain of the area is 2-3 storey, but predominantly 2 within the immediate context of the site. A short terrace of 3 storey properties is located opposite the site on Edleston Road. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature however there

are some existing commercial and community facilities in close proximity to the application site located along Edleston Road and Stalbridge Road.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application is submitted in outline form, with all matters submitted for determination at this stage except for landscaping. The plans submitted propose the demolition of the majority of the school building, with a small section of the Edleston Road façade retained and the construction of 47 no. one and two bed units. This comprises 22 x 1 bed units and 25 x 2 bed units. The proposed would be a 4-storey building, with the 4th storey contained within its recessed mansard style roof. The building will cover more site area than the current school premises.

The scheme has been amended during the determination period and now also includes a basement car park to be excavated and provided as part of the proposals. The basement car park would comprise 29 car parking spaces and a further 6 no car parking spaces are proposed within the grounds. A small central section of the school façade to Edleston Road is retained and incorporated within the design proposal. The flats contain some balconies.

The application description as applied for is 46 flats and the demolition of the building on the application form. This anomaly is noted, however, given the recommendation it is not considered to be a reason to invalidate the application.

RELEVANT HISTORY

P08/1208 - Vehicular Access (Retrospective) – Approved with conditions 12th December 2008

P08/0828 - Vehicular Access – Approved 18th August 2008

P97/0606 - Extension to form classrooms, storage and ancillary accommodation. (County consultation) – Approved 25th September 1997

13/0013N - Conversion of building to 10 residential flats – approved 17th April 2013

15/2996N - Demolition of Former Edleston Road County Primary School. Demolition determination -Prior Approval Required - 24 July 2105

POLICIES

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Local Plan Policy – Crewe & Nantwich Local Plan

CF.3 - Retention of Community Facilities

BE.1 - Amenity

BE.2 - Design Standards

BE.3 - Access and Parking

BE.4 - Drainage, Utilities and Resources

BE.13 - Buildings of Local Interest

RES.2 - Unallocated Housing Sites

E.7 - Existing Employment Sites

TRAN.9 - Parking

NE.5 - Nature Conservation and Habitats

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

PG2 – Settlement Hierarchy
PG6 – Spatial Distribution of Development
SC4 – Residential Mix
CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport
CO4 – Travel Plans and Transport Assessments
SC5 – Affordable Homes
SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles
SE 1 Design
SE 2 Efficient Use of Land
SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4 the Landscape
SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE 6 – Green Infrastructure
SE 8 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
SE 9 – Energy Efficient Development
SE 13 Flood Risk and Water Management
IN1 – Infrastructure
IN2 – Developer Contributions

Supplementary Planning Documents:

The EC Habitats Directive 1992
Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010
Circular 6/2005 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System
Interim Planning Statement Affordable Housing
Interim Planning Statement Release of Housing Land

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Strategic Highways Manager – No objections subject to the provision of underground parking as detailed in the revised scheme

Environmental Health – No objections, subject to conditions relating to hours of construction, hours of piling, the prior submission of a piling method statement, the prior submission of any proposed external lighting, the installation of noise mitigation in accordance with the submitted noise assessment, the provision of adequate bin storage and a contaminated land informative.

United Utilities – No objections, subject to conditions in relation to drainage and surface water connections

Flood Risk Manager: No objections, subject to conditions in relation to drainage

Strategic Housing Manager: Objection. The proposal will have an impact upon local affordable housing provision. The viability of the scheme will not sustain any contribution therefore housing object to this application.

(Childrens Services) Education: Objection. The proposal will have an impact upon primary education provision which will require a contribution of £54,231.45. The viability of the scheme will not sustain this contribution therefore Children's Services object to this application on grounds of impact upon local education provision

VIEWS OF THE PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL

Crewe Town Council: Strongly object to this application for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed on-site parking provision of 23 spaces for 46 flats is inadequate. It does not meet the requirements of the Cheshire East Parking Standards Guidance Note (October 2012) which would require 71 spaces (1 space per 1 bed flat and 2 spaces per 2-bed flat). Comparable developments in Crewe granted permission in recent years have provided 1 space per dwelling (in this case that would equate to 46 spaces). There is already a shortage of on-street parking at certain times and inadequate on-site provision will create problems for highway safety and residential amenity.
- 2) The proposal is overdevelopment of the site taking into account the inadequate parking provision and lack of space within the site to increase that provision.
- 3) There is inadequate provision for storing the quantity of waste likely to be generated by 46 flats.
- 4) The design does not reflect the Victorian character of the area, contrary to Policy BE2 of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and Policy SE1 of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. This could be addressed by retaining more of the original building.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

49 objections were received to the scheme as originally submitted raising the following issues:

- Loss of privacy
- Parking congestion/ area is already congestion
- Loss of the school building
- Building allowed to fall into disrepair
- High density living is causing problems in the area
- Damage to other property during building process
- Bin storage for such a high number of units will spill onto the streets
- Impact upon infrastructure
- External appearance of the school is part of Victorian town history.
- Overdevelopment

A further 7 representations have been received in respect of the amended scheme, which raise the same concerns with the following additional issues:

- The basement car park will attract illicit activity, area has become a red light district
- Any replacement building for Edleston Road School MUST be in keeping with other buildings & have red brick walls NOT rendering
- Plans show 47 flats but only 46 applied for
- The proposed building is not in keeping with the surrounding Victorian style homes
- Lack of parking. With 71 bedrooms a provision for an equitable number of (71) parking spaces should be assured by the developer anything less will be detrimental to local businesses and residents

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning Statement
Noise Assessment
Heritage Assessment
Transport Technical Note
Viability Assessment
Ecology Assessment

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

Policy CF.3 of the Local Plan refers to the retention of community facilities. It advises 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.

Given that permission has been granted for the use of the site for residential purposes, as a material consideration this policy test has been satisfied

Policy RES.2 refers to unallocated housing sites. Policy RES.2 advises that within the settlement boundaries of Crewe and Nantwich (within which this site falls), the development or redevelopment of unallocated sites for housing will be permitted in accordance with the general Local Plan policies with regards to amenity, design, highway safety, drainage and infrastructure.

The existing school is a locally listed building and a non designated heritage asset. Much comment is raised by the local community who consider the building to be important to the history of the area and Crewe.

The NPPF has within its core principles is that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Housing Land Supply

The NPPF reiterates the requirement to maintain a 5 year rolling supply of housing in order to significantly boost the supply of housing. This proposal would help to deliver an additional 47 no. dwellings within the plan period in a sustainable location within the settlement boundary of one of the Key Town Centres for the Borough. Further, the proposal would utilise 'previously developed land' which is supported by one of the core principles of the NPPF, which states that Local Planning Authorities 'encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

With regard to the economic role of sustainable development, the proposed development will provide 47 residential flats to housing land supply, which will deliver direct and indirect economic benefits to Crewe including additional trade for local shops and businesses, jobs in construction and economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain. The additional residents would also add economic activity within Crewe by working and shopping locally.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Affordable Housing

The Councils Interim Planning Statement: Affordable Housing (IPS) states in Settlements with a population of 3,000 or more that we will negotiate for the provision of an appropriate element of the total dwelling provision to be for affordable housing on all unidentified 'windfall' sites of 15 dwellings or more or larger than 0.4 hectares in size. The desired target percentage for affordable housing for all allocated sites will be a minimum of 30%, in accordance with the recommendations of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment carried out in 2013. This percentage relates to the provision of both social rented and/or intermediate housing, as appropriate. Normally the Council would expect a ratio of 65/35 between social rented and intermediate housing.

This is a proposed development of 47 dwellings therefore in order to meet the Council's Policy on Affordable Housing there is a requirement for 14 dwellings to be provided as affordable dwellings. The SHMA 2013 shows the majority of the demand in Crewe is for 50x 1 bedroom, 149x 3 bedroom, 37x 4 bedroom dwellings and an oversupply of 51x 2 bedroom dwellings, plus 12x 1 bedrooms and 20x 2 bedroom for Older Persons. The majority of the demand on Cheshire Homechoice is for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings therefore 1 and 2 bedroom units on this site would be acceptable. 9 units should be provided as Affordable rent and 5 units as Intermediate tenure.

No Affordable Housing provided on the basis that it would make this development unviable.

The Viability report submitted by the Applicant has been peer reviewed by the Council and the development is considered to be unviable even without the Affordable Housing being supplied on site or with Commuted Sum in lieu of the housing. It therefore follows, in the light of the advice contained within the NPPF, that this scheme cannot sustain any contribution in terms of affordable housing.

Crewe has a clearly proven need for housing from the SHMA 2013 as this is showing a Net need for 217 Units per year being required and with the Cheshire Homechoice showing a total of 1669 people on the register in need of housing.

Since the SHMA 2013 was produced and including year 16/17 Quarter 1 there have been 450 Affordable Houses completed in the period of this current SHMA 2013.

With the amount of people on the register minus the currently completed sites this still leaves 1219 people still on the register. This combined with the 217 units PER YEAR required in the SHMA until 2018.

There is still a clear need for affordable housing in the SHLAA period in Crewe. The impacts of this scheme unviability in these terms to the sustainability of the scheme needs to be assessed in the planning balance.

Education

The education impact is another element of the social sustainability of the scheme to be assessed within the overall planning balance.

The development of 25 (2 bed +) dwellings is expected to generate:

5 primary children (25 x 0.19)
4 secondary children (25 x 0.15)
0 SEN children (25 x 0.51 x 0.023%)

The development is expected to impact on primary school places in the immediate locality. Contributions which have been negotiated on other developments are factored into the forecasts both in terms of the increased pupil numbers and the increased capacity at primary schools in the area as a result of agreed financial contributions. The analysis undertaken has identified that a shortfall of primary school places still remains. The development is not forecast to impact secondary school or SEN provision.

To alleviate forecast pressures, the following contributions would be required:

$5 \times \text{£}11,919 \times 0.91 = \text{£}54,231.45.$

Viability

As part of this application a viability report has been submitted by the applicant. The viability report has been independently assessed by consultants appointed by the Council.

The Council's appointed consultants have advised that they consider the scheme, based on current industry costs, would make a loss of approx. £1.5 m. This is a figure which is significantly different than the Applicants own viability report.

The Councils consultant advises that the costs associated with the development of this site which could total £4.5m. This is based upon the complexity and design quality of the design of the building with the retained façade element and the build costs, with the provision of the

basement car park to address initial Highways objection to the lack of surface level car parking and the potential need for piling.

It is understood that the Applicants own report is based on RICS building costs rates, which do not include external works (drainage, services to the site etc) as part of their calculations. The Applicants assessment also seems to not include all of the building in its calculations. The Council's consultant has therefore raised doubt about the accuracy of the submitted viability report.

The Council's consultant has confirmed, however, that even based on the Applicants own calculations (which are not considered to be the true costs of the whole development and are considered to be an under assessment of the final costs) this design of building, with all its complexities and additions would make a 1.2% profit and on this basis, the Council's consultant advises that even on the applicant's own calculations, that this scheme is unviable in development industry terms. Accordingly, development financing would be unlikely to be forthcoming in either scenario.

The Applicant, in response, states that he will be personally funding this development for long term retention and the block will be rental block rather than sold off. In these circumstances, the Councils consultant casts doubt on the viability of the scheme with respect of contractor's overheads. Doubt is also cast over whether development finance would ever be realised for this scheme and whether the proposal, with its complex build, basement car park and detailed design will be developed, given the viability concerns.

However, notwithstanding these concerns, this development to this design, in this area; it is accepted that this scheme is unviable, regardless of any affordable housing requirements or other S106 requirements, (e.g. commuted sum payments for education, contributions towards off site provision for children's play) that would reasonably be imposed.

The NPPF, when considering viability as a material planning issue, states as follows:

'To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable'

In terms of the requests for S106 contributions these have come from education, and an affordable housing requirement for 30% on-site provision. In this case, given the unviable nature of the development, the education contribution and the affordable housing requirement as requested cannot be secured.

Accordingly, whilst the provision of market dwellings contributes to social sustainability, that contribution is significantly diminished by the fact that no social housing will be provided and other costs such as the primary education contribution that this development would generate will have a social cost to the Crewe area. This will need to be assessed within the planning balance.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Amenity of existing and future residents

Environmental Health have advised that they have no objections subject to the implementation of a number of conditions. These include hours of piling, the prior submission of a piling method statement, the prior submission of details of any external lighting proposed, the implementation of the noise mitigation measures as detailed within the applicant's noise assessment and the inclusion of a contaminated land and working hours informative.

The amount of amenity space proposed is also an important consideration of a scheme such as this. The standard amount of space required for dwellings within the Crewe and Nantwich Area is 50 square metres as detailed by the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Development on Buckland and Gardens SPD. However, for flats / apartments, no such figure is quoted, however a communal space should be provided. Paragraph 3.36 of the SPD advises that *'In the case of developments which are made up of flats, where it is not appropriate to provide private open space for each dwelling, it will be necessary to provide communal open space; these should be located so they can be used by all the residents equally.'*

The proposed development includes 2 strips of amenity space to the rear of the block on the Stalbridge Street elevation

This, in conjunction with the fact that the site lies close to the Crewe Town Centre, will ensure that the future occupiers of the site will have access to ample amenity space within walking distance.

For housing proposals, Policy BE1 requires consideration to be given to the occupiers of both neighbouring properties and the future occupants of the site with regards to privacy, loss of light, visual intrusion and pollution.

The scale of the proposed block of flats would dominate the surrounds of the site. This proposal also extends the site coverage of built form closer to the boundaries, particularly to Derrington Ave and Edleston Road. The proposed building comprises a 3 and 4 storey building with an excavated basement car park.

In terms of the separation distances, the proposal will introduce a 2/3 storey flat roof structure comprising principal windows to 3 separate flats on different floors a distance of 17m from principal living and bedroom windows immediately opposite the main frontage of 133 Edleston Rd and 18 Union Street. This will be detrimental to the living conditions of those residents by virtue of loss of outlook, loss of privacy and the general sense of being overlooked and enclosed by numerous, separate dwellings circa 17m away. The inner urban location on a busy thoroughfare such as Elliston Road does not diminish this adverse impact upon amenity.

In terms of the relationship with (south facing) terraced dwellings at 10, 12 and 14 Derrington Avenue, the proposal incorporates a 3-storey block of flats, comprising 9 separate flats over 3-storeys at a separation distance of 21 m. The SPD for Garden and Buckland Development does not explicitly refer to developments such as this; however, it is a well established principle nationally that 21m relates to privacy distances for 2-storey development where it is opposite other 2-storey development. This building is a 3-storey block with a 4th floor set back from the frontages.

Further, Policy BE1 requires proposals not to prejudice the amenity of future or existing residents by virtue of overshadowing, overlooking, visual intrusion, noise disturbance, and odour or in any other way.

It is considered that the proposals will detrimentally effect the living conditions of existing residents to those effected properties in Derrington Avenue and Edleston Road, by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing, visual intrusion/ loss of outlook, contrary to Policy BE1.

This is also noted from objections received from these residents as part of this application. The amenity of existing residents is a bone fide issue and one which also needs to be assessed as part of the planning balance

To address privacy concerns, the Applicant has put forward a fixed window blind/louvre solution to the inside double glazed window cavity with the overlooking flats windows in an attempt to direct views away from the houses opposite. This solution, whilst technically possible, would then result in adverse consequences for living conditions of those future residents of the flats in question, which are north facing and permanent louvres within windows would reduce the amount of natural light to their primary accommodation even further. In addition, this solution would not address the impacts upon the amenity by virtue of the loss of outlook and potential loss of daylight/overshadowing that the affected houses would have imposed upon them by the scale of the block in front of them, where presently there is nothing. This would also be contrary to policy BE1 and would also be detrimental to the environmental sustainability of the proposal.

Heritage and design considerations

Policy BE.2 of the Local Plan advises that planning shall only be permitted where the development would achieve a high standard of design, would respect the pattern, character and form of the surroundings and would not have an adverse impact upon the streetscene by reason of scale, height, proportions and materials used.

Policy BE.13 of the Local Plan advises that Buildings of Local Interest will be protected from inappropriate development. The building is also a non-designated asset. The NPPF sets out at para 135 that “The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”

As a non-designated heritage asset the benefits of the development should be weighed against the level of harm to the heritage asset in the planning balance. The level of harm to the asset will be significant. Circa 75% of the building would be lost.

The significance of the heritage asset is recognised by its formal inclusion on the Local List. This proposal would result in the substantive loss of the school building, with a modest remnant retained and encapsulated by the proposed new apartment building. Notwithstanding the retention of a small part of the building and the boundary wall, this development may ultimately lead to the asset’s removal from the Local List due to the level of harm that would arise as a consequence of the development.

In broader urban design terms, the building is substantially larger in both footprint and in terms of overall scale and mass than the vast majority of buildings in the area. In respect to its immediate neighbours, which are generally 2-storey, this proposal will significantly increase the general scale of townscape in the area.

The school building has a relatively large footprint compared to its surroundings but the new building will be larger still, of significantly greater site coverage and its overall mass in relation to neighbouring properties will be substantially different to that which presently exists.

In architectural design terms a number of iterations have been prepared at pre-application to try and create a building that captures both the architectural flavour of the school and something that reflects the terraced character of the area. Initial attempts were extremely 'busy' particularly on the Derrington Avenue elevation.

The attempts made by the applicant to successfully integrate the design should be noted, however the sheer scale of the building makes it extremely difficult to achieve this in what is essentially a very human scale neighbourhood. This building has certain monumental qualities and despite these attempts, would still seem at odds with its surroundings. Whilst improvements have been made to try and give the retained gable section of the school building some 'breathing room', the remnant of the school building does feel that is being engulfed by the new building rather than being complemented by it.

Again this is due to the sheer scale and mass of the proposed new build element. In trying to retain an element of the history of the site, this may well appear a tokenistic pastiche and perhaps will only seek to emphasise the degree of harm that has arisen to the asset.

The southern side of the building presents a significant outdoor opportunity to create a sunny communal space for residents but the space itself is not large enough to achieve this satisfactorily and is also not ideally situated. Its landscape and liveable qualities will therefore be limited. Other spaces exist between the building and the retained boundary wall on the Edleston Road and Derrington Avenue frontages but these are either affected by proximity to a very busy vehicular route or by the shading of the building and the narrowness of the space.

The scale of the building is such that it sits uncomfortably in its surroundings, to the detriment of the local established townscape but also potentially to the wellbeing and quality of life of existing neighbouring residents. It could also be argued that the living accommodation of some of the apartments would be affected by measures to try and overcome issues of amenity for neighbours, particularly units on the northern elevation, Derrington Avenue.

Para 135 of the NPPF advocates a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of impact and significance of the building. This proposal results in substantial harm to the building and its setting and the significance of the building is formally recognised by its inclusion on the Local List. In essence the significance of the building will be all but lost as a consequence of the proposed development. The attempts to try and incorporate the remainder of the school within the new building are noted but the scheme is characterised by just that, the school being assimilated rather than new development being duly reverent to the heritage asset. This could only heighten the sense of loss and harmful impact, viewing the juxtaposition of the two; with the overwhelming scale of the new, set against the very modest remnant of the old.

In terms of the external environment of the scheme, whilst the retention of the boundary wall is noted, as is the inclusion of a basement car park design to reduce the amount of surface car parking, the quality of external space is still heavily compromised, particularly space to the south that could have provided a generous, sunny and airy communal space for the residents. What space is proposed to the south is compromised by the surface parking on one side and the basement car park access to the other. The remaining external spaces will either be largely shaded or adjacent to a busy road.

In summary, this scheme is having to work too hard to achieve the level of development the applicant seeks, resulting in great harm to the significance of the locally listed building. It will also lead to a building, despite the best efforts of the designer, that is out of scale in the local townscape and in relation to its immediate neighbours and which potentially is unneighbourly and could create less than ideal conditions for some of its occupants.

Paragraph 56 of the NPPF stresses the importance of good design to achieving sustainable development, stating that it is “indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”

It further advises at Paragraph 64 that “Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.”

In the light of these issues, whilst the efforts of the Applicant are noted, it is considered that the proposed development would fail to comply with Policy BE.2 and BE.13 of the Local Plan and the advice within the NPPF concerning non designated heritage assets and achieving good quality design. This proposal is therefore environmentally unsustainability in terms of the impact upon the locally listed building and the character and appearance of the area.

Highway Safety and Parking

Originally the Strategic Highways Manager objected to the proposal on grounds of lack of parking. The Applicant has addressed this objection by the introduction of a basement car park. The proposed development will close up the existing access onto Stalbridge Road and provide two new entrances to Stalbridge Road, one via a ramp for the proposed basement car park and a separate access for 6 surface level car parking spaces.

Overall the proposal now includes the provision of 35 parking spaces. Covered cycle storage has also been increased as part of the revisions

Car ownership data for the local area has been used to advise the applicant of an adequate level of off-road parking provision. The proposal now reflects local car ownership levels for apartments, and CEC’s visitor parking requirements for apartments. This would negate the need for additional on-street parking. Additional cycle parking would be provided in line with CEC’s standards.

The Strategic Highways Manager considers that the revised proposal is within a sustainable location and will not result in a severe impact on the road network capacity. The Strategic Highways Manager has now withdrawn his initial objection and now raises no objection on the basis that 35 car parking spaces and adequate cycle parking is provided.

As a result, it is considered that the proposed development adheres with Policy BE.3 of the Local Plan.

Protected Species

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has advised that he does not anticipate there being any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development.

PLANNING BALANCE

Given the inner urban location of the site there is a presumption in favour of residential development, provided the amenity of the area for future or existing residents is not compromised and the non-designated heritage asset/locally listed building is adequately safeguarded.

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and that where this is the case housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

It is therefore necessary to consider whether the proposal constitutes "sustainable development" in order to establish whether it benefits from the presumption under paragraph 14 by evaluating the three aspects of sustainable development described by the framework (economic, social and environmental).

Policies BE1, BE2, and BE13 of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan are considered consistent with the aims of the Framework. The relevant policies of the development plan are therefore considered consistent with the Framework and should be afforded significant weight in the determination process.

Given the lack of viability of the proposed development, the requirements for affordable housing and education mitigation need to be set aside. In these circumstances, these social sustainability issues are not added to the planning balance and are a cost of this development to the community.

It is accepted that the development would provide positive planning benefits in the form of 47 market dwellings in a sustainable location. The time limited economic benefits created predominantly during the construction phase of the scheme and the contribution made by new residents of 47 flats in the local economy by virtue of their proximity to work and shopping opportunity in the town centre are accepted.

Balanced against this economic benefit, however, must be the adverse impacts, which in this case would be the impact upon the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the scale and mass of this large, imposing 4-storey building in a predominantly Victorian street pattern, the impact of the proposals upon the locally listed building and non designated heritage asset, the adverse impacts upon the amenities of adjoining residents by virtue of loss of privacy, outlook, daylight/looming scale of proposed building upon those residents within their dwellings. There is also the concern that the proposed solutions to some of the problems of the

proposal, for example the applicants' solution to the overlooking problem, will result in poor quality habitable accommodation for future residents.

In this instance, it is considered that the dis-benefits of the scheme, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefit to housing land supply. Paragraph 14 is not engaged and this proposal does not constitute a sustainable form of development

Accordingly it is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons

1. The proposal, by virtue of its height and proximity to dwellings opposite on 133 Edleston Road, 18 Union Street and 10-14 Derrington Avenue will be detrimental to the amenity of those residents by virtue of loss of privacy and overbearingness for all; loss of light, overshadowing for the residents on Derrington Avenue contrary to Policies BE1 of the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Local Plan.
2. The proposal by virtue of its scale, mass and detailed design would be inappropriate and out of keeping with the general character of the area within which it is located and consequently represents poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area and the way that it functions, contrary to policy BE2 of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan, and Paragraph 64 of the NPPF.
3. The proposal by virtue of its scale, mass and detailed design, the extent of demolition proposed and the impact upon its setting would result in significant harm to the heritage significance of the locally listed building, contrary to Policy BE13 of the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Local Plan and paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) of the Southern Planning Committee, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.



© Crown copyright and database rights 2013, Ordnance Survey 100045045