

Planning Reference No:	10/0279N
Application Address:	Reaseheath College, Main Road, Worleston, Nantwich
Proposal:	Demolition of a single storey teaching/amenity block and erection of a new two storey Food Centre of Excellence for business and research areas.
Applicant:	Reaseheath College
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Grid Reference:	364962 354206
Ward:	Cholmondeley
Earliest Determination Date:	24 th March 2010
Expiry Dated:	12 th April 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	4 th November 2009
Date Report Prepared:	15 th March 2009
Constraints:	Open Countryside

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact of the development on the character and appearance of the building and the locality
- Highway and parking implications
- Impact of the development on protected species
- The inclusion of sustainable development measures within the development

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Planning Committee because the proposal is for more major development exceeding 1,000 square metres.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

Reaseheath College is located in open countryside just north of Nantwich. The principle vehicular access is from B 5074 Nantwich – Winsford Road (on the east side of the college). Secondary vehicular accesses are obtained from A51 to the south of the college and Poole Lane. Reaseheath Conservation Area extends from the group of dwellings and buildings on A51 into the college grounds but the site of the current application is outside of the conservation area.

The application area is located to the north of the main access from Winsford Road within the built footprint formed by the college buildings. The application site is surrounded on all sides by other college buildings.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application is a variation to application 09/2675N which was considered by the Committee in December 2009. The difference between the two schemes is that the current application seeks permission to increase the first floor accommodation for the provision of more conference rooms. The ground floor of the proposal is unchanged.

The application seeks permission for a development of 1,811 square metres including the demolition of an existing building of 624 square metres and an additional 1187 square metres. This is some 200 sq m more than the previous approved scheme. Earlier, planning permission was granted for a new two storey teaching block for Food Processing under reference P08/1134 however the Learning Skills Council funding expected for that development did not materialise and the 2009 application was submitted for a slightly different form of development. It is expected that the revised scheme will be financed by a European Regional Development Grant.

The accommodation includes an extension to the existing food processing hall, offices, storage rooms, food processing rooms, refuse facilities and changing/ staff facilities together with a bakery on the ground floor and plant room, meeting and conference facilities on the first floor.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

Over 40 applications have received the benefit of planning permission at Reaseheath College since January 2006. The following relate to the Food Processing Department.

09/2675N Food centre for business innovation and research. Approved 15th December 2009.

09/2160N Refurbishment and Extension of the Existing Food Processing Department to Accommodation new student facility. Approved 22nd July 2009.

P08/1134 Double storey block to provide teaching facilities and servicing for Food Processing Department. Approved 4th December 2008

5. POLICIES

The development plan for this area includes the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2021 (RSS) and the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP).

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 Spatial Principles

DP2 Promote Sustainable communities

DP3 Promote Sustainable Economic Growth

DP4 Making Best Use of existing Resources and Infrastructure

DP5 Managing Travel Demand

DP6 Promote Environmental Quality

DP7 Mainstreaming Rural Issues

DP9 Reduce Emissions, and Adapt to Climate Change

RDF2 Rural Areas

W1 Strengthening the Regional Economy

L1 Health, Sport, Recreation, Culture and Education Services

RT2 Managing Travel Demand

RT9 Walking and Cycling
EM1B Natural Environment
EM1 D Trees Woodlands and Forest
EM3 Green Infrastructure
MCR4 South Cheshire

Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan

Policy 10 Minimising Waste During Construction and Development
Policy 11 Development and Waste Recycling.

Policies in the Local Plan

NE.2 (Open Countryside)
NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)
BE.1 (Amenity)
BE.2 (Design Standards)
BE.3 (Access and Parking)
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
BE.5 (Infrastructure)
BE.15 (Scheduled Ancient Monuments)
BE.16 (Development and Archaeology)
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)
TRAN.5 (Provision for Cyclists)
TRAN.6 (Cycle Routes)
TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)
CF.2 (Community Facilities)

Other relevant planning guidance includes:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth.
PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPG13: Transport

6. CONSULTATIONS

Strategic Highways Manager (SHM): No highways objections. The SHM recommends that all travel plans associated with this site should be consolidated into one master travel plan.

Environmental Health: No objections.

Ecology: No objections. Although the survey is a little old now, none of the buildings affected by this application are particularly suitable for protected species and there are therefore no objections to the submission.

Environment Agency: Comment on previous application. No objections subject to conditions for no work to commence until the building to be demolished has been checked for bats and mitigation agreed if bats are found. If work takes place in the bird nesting

season then the site should be thoroughly checked for nesting birds. Recommendations in Bat Survey with respect to nesting birds and bats should be implemented.

United Utilities: Comment on previous application. No objections provided the site is drained on a separate system with only foul drainage connected to the foul sewer.

7. VIEWS OF PARISH COUNCIL

No response at the time of writing this report.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of writing this report.

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Design and Access Statement (Prepared by Hulme Upright undated but prepared in 2009 and updated 2010)

- The building is designed to create a gateway feature together with the engineering department on the south side of the access road, which has been reclad following an earlier permission;
- It therefore reflects the scale and materials of that building;
- First floor accommodation is designed as a front "pod" constructed in laminate cladding with a further "pod" to the rear which is broken up by a flat sedum roof located centrally within the rear "pod";
- At ground floor level a single storey feature wall projects out from below the pod;
- At the opposite end from the feature wall, the office accommodation allows for a glazed wall feature to that part of the building.
- A number of recent developments at the campus have been designed in a modern approach and this development follows that pattern.
- The development includes a business support facility which will enable local food based businesses to hire space and resources to improve their products;
- The development incorporates a number of sustainable development measures including rainwater harvesting to flush WCs, solar water heating, natural ventilation to all meeting rooms, day light maximisation to reduce lighting needs, an anaerobic digester to provide a biogas suitable for campus fuel, sedum roof (green roof) areas to control water flow to the drainage system and improve the microclimate of the building;
- The building is designed to achieve BREEAM Excellent standard.

Transport statement (Prepared by WSP and dated September 2008)

This is the Transport Statement submitted with the phase 3 applications in 2008.

- The phase 3 developments will be the final phase of redevelopment at the college and will provide facilities for an additional 200-250 full time students and 150 part time students plus 20 additional staff, which represent an increase in people using the site by about 7%;
- The college is committed to encouraging all users to travel by sustainable modes of transport;
- The college is easily accessible by foot, cycle or public transport and the college subsidises a bus service for students;
- The college has also given its approval in principle to the creation of a new cycle connection from the main access on the B5074 the Connect 2 cycle route east of the college;

- Phase 3 developments will only generate a low additional volume of traffic during peak hour;
- The TA demonstrates that the impact of additional traffic from Phase 3 development proposals will have no significant impact on the main college entrance of B5074 (Worleston Road), the entrance on A51, the roundabout at the junction of A51/A500/B5074, A51/Wettenhall Road priority junction and Nantwich Bypass/ A530 Middlewich Road junction at 2010;
- By 2020 the roundabout at the junction of A51/B5074/A500 will exceed capacity without the redevelopment however all other junctions will be acceptable. This junction will require modification by that date if it is to continue to operate within capacity;
- Given that the junction will require modification irrespective of the phase 3 developments at the college, if it is to operate within capacity, no mitigation is proposed with these applications.

The revised proposal submitted in 2009 notes that the application includes an area of business innovation floor space for food based companies. Local businesses currently use the existing Food Processing department to aid teaching the subject. The college do not expect any alteration to vehicles numbers and movements, as predicted in 2008, associated with the revised application.

Ecological Survey and Bat Survey: (Prepared by Ecology Services UK Ltd and dated May 2008.)

The Surveys were submitted with the 2008 applications and included the whole of the campus area. The Ecological Survey concluded that within the college grounds there is potential foraging for commuting bats and roosting site for both bats and nesting birds and the BAP protected Habitats are present within the college grounds.

The more detailed Bat Survey submitted with the 2008 application concluded that the Food Sciences Building, being a modern construction, does not have any obvious access points for birds or bats. It was also noted Great Crested Newt (GCN) eggs were found at Pond 1 some 160m north of the development site but no GCN were found over a period of time which included 18 visits to the site.

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The principle of replacement buildings at the college has been accepted by the grant of the previous permission at this specific site and is supported by policies (especially policy L1) in the Regional Spatial Strategy and policy CF2 of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan.

Archaeology

There is an Ancient Monument north of the access road and some 40m east of the application area with the Philip Leverhulme Centre separating the Ancient Monument and the application area. In relation to the 2008 application English Heritage recommended that steps be taken to ensure that no development or construction activities impact on the ancient monument (to the north of the access road) either through use as storage land or as a result of alterations to the access. There is no proposal to alter the access in any

way. The field is separated from the college areas by a post and rail fence and there is no proposal in any of the submitted applications to use this land.

It is not considered necessary to repeat any consultation in relation to the Ancient Monument particularly since the original consultation to English Heritage related to a larger application within the conservation area submitted at the same time as the earlier application for the Food Processing Building. A condition can be attached for no storage to take place on the archaeological land.

Design

The building is designed to provide an additional “gateway” feature to complement the design and appearance of the re-clad front to the Engineering Academy on the opposite side of the access road. The proposed building includes a curved white rendered wall at ground floor level for a bakery with landscaping outside the building around this feature curved wall. Beyond the bakery the entrance to the building, at the western end of the frontage, will take the form of a glazed screen recessed below the first floor pod. At first floor level on the frontage the pod will be constructed with laminate grey/blue cladding to match that of the Engineering Academy with a glazed screen on the front elevation, incorporating horizontal louvers. Where windows are present the glazing will be transparent but where there are no windows the glazing will be coloured and opaque.

The new first floor accommodation proposed in this scheme will replace a flat roofed area in the 2009 scheme. To the rear of the proposed development the older part of the building has a ridged roof. The additional accommodation proposed under the application is for two additional flat roofed “pods” separate by a flat roofed area. The bulk and mass of the first floor accommodation on the side elevations is broken down by a recessed area between the front accommodation, already permitted, and the new rooms for which planning permission is sought in this application. The new conference room provided on the south side of the building projects forward of the accommodation already permitted but with the recessed area and bearing in mind it does not project forward of the ground floor accommodation there are no objections to this.

The proposed development includes white render walls, curtain wall glazing at the entrance and horizontal glazing at ground floor level. At first floor the development will be constructed in laminate cladding with glazing and louvers on the front elevation which will reflect the design and style of other buildings recently constructed on the campus. The development therefore responds to its setting and context and will enhance this entrance to the campus.

Amenity

There are no close residential properties to be affected by the development.

Ecology

The report on the 2008 application concluded that in the case of the Food Processing Department the building is a relatively modern construction and the Bat Survey confirmed that there are no obvious access points for bats or nesting birds in the Food Science building currently on the site. The site inspection confirmed that this building and particularly that area to be demolished and redeveloped is located within the built mass of the complex. In view of the nature of the building it is not considered necessary to include

a condition for the building to be checked for the presence of bats before demolition commences. There are a number of trees present within the application area which are to be removed from the development but these are still young trees and not of an age to have cavities suitable for bats. Furthermore the area lacks landscaping links to the more mature areas of trees and planting which might form foraging areas on the periphery of the college and elsewhere on the site.

It is noted that there is a pond to the north of the college and that whilst Great Crested Newts eggs were found in that pond there is a substantial area of buildings between that pond and this particular development site. Therefore the proposed development would not have any adverse impact on bats, nesting birds or Great Crested Newts.

The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places,

- in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment

and provided that there is

- no satisfactory alternative and
- no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range

The UK implemented the Directive by introducing The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 which contain two layers of protection

- a requirement on Local Planning Authorities ("LPAs") to have regard to the Directive's requirements above, and
- a licensing system administered by Natural England.

The submitted Bat Survey indicates that there are no entrance points on the building to be demolished suitable for use by bats or nesting birds and that there is no habitat suitable for foraging bats immediately close to the building to be demolished. Therefore it is not considered that bats or nesting birds will be adversely affected by the development and there is no requirement to consider the three tests required by the Directive. There is a pond some 160m north of the application site where Great Crested Newt eggs have been found. However no Great Crested Newts were found over 18 visits. Also in view of the distance between the application site and the pond and the presence of other buildings between the application site and the pond it is not considered that the proposed demolition and development will adversely impact on the species or their habitats. Similarly there is no requirement to consider the three tests of the Directive in relation to Great Crested Newts.

Notwithstanding this advice for personnel working on the site and recommendations are included in the bat survey (for both bats and birds) and a condition can be attached to ensure that work proceeds in accordance with these practices.

Highway Matters and Parking

The SHM raises no objections to the development. The development will result in the loss of 6 parking spaces on the western side of the existing building. The Transport Statement submitted, which is the document submitted in 2008, shows that there were on campus around 730 parking spaces of which 32 were disabled spaces. The Transport Statement demonstrates that at the time of survey in June 2008 only 6 of the 24 parking areas at the college were over 90% full most of the day and a further 3 of the 24 were over 90% full at some time during the survey. The survey also showed that cycle parking and motor cycle parking at the college were underutilised.

The college has a travel plan and a significant number of students travel by bus to the college. It is not therefore considered that the loss of the six parking spaces will adversely impact on the availability of parking at the college.

The applicant's agent has submitted supporting information confirming that in their opinion it is not considered that the development for which planning permission is now sought will have any significant impact on traffic patterns or the need for parking at the college.

The college has a number of businesses operating within the grounds. The businesses work hand in hand with the college in order to teach students how to work in business. It is not therefore considered that the provision of additional space for food processing business links proposed by this development will significantly alter the pattern of traffic movements at the site or the need for parking. The new development can be serviced from the minor roads within the campus and the building is located sufficiently far into the site not to affect vehicle movements on the public highway or adversely affect the route to the main parking area on the southern side of the access drive.

Other Matters

The previous permission included a condition for the implementation of the drainage scheme submitted with the application and a similar condition can be attached to any permission for this development.

The building has been designed to achieve a BREEAM "excellent" rating and sustainable development measures proposed include the recycling of rain water for flushing WCs, natural ventilation where appropriate, day light maximisation to reduce lighting needs, the use of an anaerobic digester to provide fuel for the campus, a sedum roof to part of the building. The Design and Access Statement confirms that the various sustainable development measures will fulfil the requirements of policy EM18 of the Regional Spatial Strategy and provide at least 10% of the development's predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources.

Whilst the development will increase the built footprint of the building on the site, the recycling of rain water will assist in controlling drainage run off from the site. The area of hardstanding to be provided around the building is the minimum necessary for pedestrian access and servicing and all relatively modest in extent. The remaining areas will be planted to further assist rain water control and also enhance the setting of the building.

Policy 11 of the Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan requires the submission of a waste audit. No such information has been submitted with the application however it is considered that this can be included as a condition of any planning permission.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development for the Food Centre includes the provision of offices, conference and meeting rooms, and a business support facility to enable food based industries to hire space and resources to research and improve their products. The development is a modification to an earlier permission. As such the proposed development will allow for local businesses to use the college and students to gain additional experience and skills by working with businesses.

The development is designed to reflect the appearance and design of modern buildings recently constructed at the campus. It will enhance the approach to the college and incorporates a number of sustainable development measures. The proposal will not adversely affect any protected species and will not significantly increase the amount of vehicle movements at the college.

12. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL subject to the following conditions

- 1. Standard time**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Surfacing materials**
- 5. Landscaping scheme**
- 6. Implementation of landscaping**
- 7. No activities in field containing ancient monument**
- 8. Implementation of drainage works**
- 9. Scheme for external lighting**
- 10. Work to proceed in accordance with recommendations for bat and birds and advice to personnel in bat survey**
- 11. Site (including trees) to be checked for nesting birds if development commences in bird nesting season**
- 12. Details of source separation, recycling and storage of waste for Food Centre**
- 13. Travel Plan plus additional cycle parking facilities if necessary**
- 14. No demolition or works of any description until a Waste Audit is submitted in relation to the demolition of the existing areas of the rebuilding and recycling/ re-use of materials as far as reasonably practical**
- 15. Development to incorporate the sustainable development measures specified in the Design and Access Statement**

Location Plan: Cheshire East Council Licence No. 100049045

