

Application No: 20/2876N

Location: UNITS A & B, 1 WESTON ROAD, CREWE,

Proposal: Partial Demolition and Redevelopment and Partial Refurbishment of an Existing Building resulting in a total of 25,673sq.m of B8 floorspace at Units A and B, 1 Weston Road, Crewe

Applicant: AEW UK Core Property Fund

Expiry Date: 07-Oct-2020

SUMMARY

The application site is situated within an existing employment area within the Crewe Settlement Boundary, off Weston Road; where investment in employment uses is supported.

The proposal seeks permission to retain part of the existing warehouse unit and replace the larger area on the site frontage. This proposal seeks to retain 5,266 sq. m. of the existing warehouse to the rear of the site and the existing canopy shed to the south of the building, and construction of 16,940 sq. m. of new warehouse floor space on the frontage of the site. The building will also include 1,500 sqm of office space on the frontage of the building over two floors. This is a net loss of 4,547 sq. m. of internal floorspace.

The proposal would visually improve the appearance of the site within a prominent location in Crewe, and will retain an employment use on the site. The design is considered to be acceptable for the proposed use in this location.

The proposed development will result in the loss of some semi-mature trees and landscaping within the site and mitigation is proposed in a new landscaping scheme. None of the protected mature trees off site are to be affected by the development and will help to maintain a softened appearance of the site when seen in views from Weston Road.

The potential impact of light pollution on the adjacent woodland and its wildlife requires a lighting scheme and existing light survey is to be submitted. It is considered that this matter could be conditioned for approval prior to commencement (if necessary).

There are no issues in relation to amenity, highways safety or floodrisk of the site, and it is therefore considered that proposal is acceptable and recommended for approval subject to conditions, as set below.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE with conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is for the partial demolition and redevelopment and refurbishment of an existing warehouse building resulting in a total of 25,673 sq. m of B8 floor space. The proposal is therefore a large scale major development.

PROPOSAL

This application seeks full planning permission for the partial demolition and Redevelopment and Partial Refurbishment of an Existing Building resulting in a total of 25,673sq.m of B8 floorspace at Units A and B, 1 Weston Road, Crewe, noted as Option 2 on the plans.

This proposal incorporates 5,266 sq. m of the existing warehouse to the rear of the site and the existing canopy shed to the south of the building. The proposal includes the demolition of large area of the existing building and construction of 16, 940 sq. m of new warehouse floor space on the frontage of the site. The building will also include 1,500 sq. m of office space on the frontage of the building over three floors.

The proposal includes the replacement of the existing gate house with a new one.

The proposal involves the modernisation of the existing building to meet current logistic purposes and results in a net reduction of floorspace of 4,547 sq. m.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is an existing warehouse building which is partly constructed in brick, with a number of more modern extensions and alterations, of differing external materials. The building is largely a flat roof building of around two storeys in nature, with a 30m high brick tower in the middle.

The site is situated on an established commercial area off Weston Road, Crewe. The area is predominantly commercial and situated within the Crewe Settlement Boundary. The site is located off Weston Road (A532) which is the primary route into Crewe from J16 of the M6 motorway.

Car parking would be reorganised, including the provision of 21 rapid electric vehicle charging bays and cabling for a future 20 bays. 70 cycle storage spaces are also proposed.

RELEVANT HISTORY

20/2877N - Partial Demolition and Redevelopment and Partial Refurbishment of an Existing Building resulting in a total of 25,706sq.m of B8 floorspace at Units A and B, 1 Weston Road, Crewe - undetermined

20/1796S – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion for the partial demolition and redevelopment of Units A and B, 1 Weston Road, Crewe – EIA not required 3rd June 2020

19/3796N – Change of use from existing storage and distribution (Class B8) to a flexible employment use comprising light industrial use or storage and distribution (Classes B1c or B8) – Approved with conditions 2nd October 2019

17/4587N – Retrospective application to erect a single storey portable modular building within the current site ownership – Approved with condition 31st October 2017

17/4600N – To install outdoor wall fascia signage on warehouse, office and gatehouse elevations – Approve with conditions 23rd January 2018

P06/0357 – Canopy Extension – Approved with conditions 5th June 2006

P03/0462 – Additional Car and Commercial Vehicle Parking – Approved with conditions 23rd June 2003

P01/0242 – Overcladding, Insertion of Windows, Revised Car Parking, Installation of Fire Escape and Creation of Office Link – Approved with conditions 2nd May 2001

P01/0725 – Security Gate House and Barriers – Approved 4th October 2001

P00/0825 – Overcladding of Office Block and Creation of Loading Area – approved with conditions 9th November 2000

P00/0786 – Office and Warehouse Extension – approved with conditions 9th November 2000

P00/0825 – Overcladding of Office Block and Creation of Loading Area – approved with conditions 9th November 2000

P00/0786 – Office and Warehouse Extension – Approved with conditions 9th November 2000

P94/0936 – Temporary building. Approved until 30.12.97- approved with conditions 22nd December 1994

P97/0884 – Renewal of permission for temporary building – approved with conditions 1st December 1997

P99/0125 – Change of use to storage and alterations to elevations – Approved with conditions 16th March 1999

7/09227 – Illuminated logo sign. – approved with conditions 12th July 1982

7/04561 – Gas/oil store – 26th September 1978

7/04605 – Extension of existing work shop for operations plant – approved with conditions 10th October 1978

7/07138 – Two storey extension to existing factory to provide additional manufacturing and packing facilities and covered area over existing compactor and baler – approved with condition 29th July 1980

7/10512 – Extension to existing Chill Room and Pallet Handling area. New hardstanding area for parking 20 vehicles – approved with conditions 17th November 1983

7/03153 – Kitchen store to supplement existing store facilities – approved with conditions 1st September 1977

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NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
Planning Practice Guidance

Local Plan Policies

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy

MP1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development,
PG2 Settlement Hierarchy,
SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East,
SD2 Sustainable Development Principles,
EG1 Economic Prosperity,
EG3 Existing and Allocated Employment Sites,
SE1 Design,
SE2 Efficient Use of Land,
SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity,
SE4 Landscape,
SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland,
SE 6 Green Infrastructure,
SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability,
CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport,
CO4 Travel Plans and Transport Assessments,
Appendix C

Saved policies of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan

BE.1 Amenity,
BE.3 Access and Parking,
BE.4 Drainage, Utilities and Resources,

NE.9 Protected Species,
E1 Existing Employment Allocations,
E4 Development on existing employment areas,

Other relevant documents

Cheshire East Design Code

CONSULTATIONS

Strategic Highways Officer – No objections

Environmental Protection- No objections, subject to conditions Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure, low emission boilers, contaminated land conditions and informatives for construction hours, piling foundations, dust control, and contaminated land

Flood Risk Manager – No objections, subject to conditions for the development to be carried out in accordance with the FRA and a drainage management/ maintenance plan

United Utilities – No objections. Subject to conditions surface water drainage, foul water to be drained separately, and Sustainable drainage management plan

Cadent/National Grid - No objections, advise HSE should be consulted.

HSE – Do not advise against

Crewe Town Council – None received at time of writing this report.

REPRESENTATIONS – none received at time of writing this report.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The proposal site is situated within the Crewe settlement boundary; within an existing employment area which is protected by Policy EG 3 Existing and Allocated Employment Sites of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy. The site is also designated within EMP 1 Strategic Employment Areas within the emerging SADPD.

Policy EG3 aims to retain existing employment uses on sites in order to maintain an adequate and flexible supply of employment land to attract new and innovative businesses, to enable existing businesses to grow and to create new and retain existing jobs. Furthermore, the emerging policy EMP 1 states that...(3) '*Proposals for further investment for employment uses in these areas will be supported*'. Whilst the policies in the emerging plan have no/limited weight in the decision making process currently, there is a clear indication that the re-use and redevelopment of the site for employment is in principle considered to be acceptable.

Therefore, the main issues of the proposal are the impact on trees, ecological impact, design and character and appearance within the street scene, and parking provision. These issues are considered further below.

Design

Local Plan policies SD1, SD2 and in particular SE1 set out the importance of good design in the Borough, as well as the clear guidance set out in the Cheshire East Borough Design Guide.

The proposal (option 2) seeks to retain 5,266 sq. m of the existing warehouse to the rear of the site and the existing canopy shed to the south of the building with lorry bays retained to the south but largely on the north of the site. The proposal includes the demolition of large area of the existing building and construction of 16,940 sq. m of new warehouse on the frontage of the site. The building will also include 1,500 sq. m of office space on the frontage of the building over two floors.

The proposed extension and existing building will all be clad in Kingspan Microrib (or similar) in a grey colour (exact colour to be agreed by condition). The building will have a maximum height of around 19m on the road frontage. The existing building has a maximum ridge height of 16m, with the majority of the building not exceeding 12.5m, other than the brick tower which projects to 30m in height.

The building as proposed would remove a number of ad-hoc extensions and condense the development into a more efficient rectangular shaped building. The removal of external canopies etc has also allowed for a more efficient parking and access/egress arrangement for the delivery vehicles.

The proposed building will be at least 3m taller than this existing building, and will be sited closer to the road frontage than the current units. The proposed building will be taller than the adjacent Warehouse which is visible from Weston Road, and therefore will be more prominent on the street frontage. However, the site is screened by mature trees on Weston Road and the protected woodland to the south. The Design Officer considered the application during pre-application stage and considered the over design to be acceptable, and would help to improve the overall visual appearance of the site within the streetscene.

The proposed front elevation has changed slightly, in response to pre-application discussions held with the applicant, with large glazed window sections on the corner and vertical feature panelling helping to break up the elevation on the frontage, as suggested by the Design Officer. It is considered that the design is modern and will help to improve and update the visual appearance of the site within the wider streetscene.

The wider streetscene on Weston Road, is made up of large warehouse/industrial buildings and further down car show rooms, most of which have been modernised in the recent past. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and of design which is suitable for its use and location.

Landscape and Forestry

The site is located to the north of Weston Road (A532) in an established employment area and is prominent to public view. The existing development includes two large buildings and extensive areas of hardstanding.

There are existing trees within the vicinity of the proposed development. There is a belt of trees of mixed coniferous and deciduous species to the south east which is subject to the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council (Quakers Coppice and Land adjacent to University Way, Crewe) Tree Preservation Order 2006 and forms part of the green infrastructure in the wider area. There are also trees within landscaped areas on the site.

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) report dated 12/6/20 which incorporates a BS5837 tree survey. The report covers proposals for two development options. The survey includes records of 14 individual trees, 4 tree groups and a woodland together with 4 domestic hedgerows. Two further tree groups within the body of the site are referenced but the report indicates these were not surveyed in detail due to Covid 19 access restrictions.

The AIA indicates that the development would require the removal of 7 category C trees, and 1 Category B group together with approximately 8 unsurveyed trees (reported to be low to moderate value). The report indicates that all proposed tree removals are within the site and will have no impact on the wider amenity or landscape value outside the site.

Due to extensive hard surfacing on site, no new root protection area incursions are identified. Reference is made to the limited opportunities for mitigation and to 7 replacement trees in the landscape scheme.

The Forestry and Landscape Officer notes that the loss of healthy trees identified for removal would be regrettable. In particular, there are several semi-mature specimens in landscaped areas around the buildings which have some amenity value. The trees to the south west of the buildings provide interest and enhance an area where there are picnic tables for staff use. In terms of public amenity, the trees to the south west and off site trees on the roadside verge fronting Weston Road are the most visually prominent. As recognised in the AIA, the proposed layout would offer little opportunity for new tree planting with only 7 new trees in the landscape scheme resulting in an overall net loss.

Policy SE 5 (Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland) aims retain healthy trees, hedgerows, and woodlands that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historical character of the surrounding area. Although a small number of trees are to be removed they are mainly category C and 1 category B tree within a landscape area within the site. The wider TPO trees and tree outside the site on the road verge are to be retained and the development will have no impact upon. Therefore on balance it is considered that the development is in accordance with policy SE5.

Policy SE 4 (the landscape) states that all development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should wherever possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes. The policy aims to preserve landscape area, and whilst the loss of established trees and an outdoor recreational space for employees is regrettable, with limited internal soft landscape treatment within the site. The overall landscape value of the site

will be seen on the context of the off site trees and landscaping. The proposed landscaping scheme is limited but sufficient and is therefore considered to be on balance acceptable.

The landscape and tree implications are considered acceptable subject to a landscape implementation condition and conditions to secure an arboricultural method statement (AMS) and a tree protection scheme.

Access and Parking

The Strategic Highways officer has assessed the application and notes that the proposal is essentially a refurbishment of the existing site, which will use the existing access onto the highway and which will also reduce the building floor area.

The Strategic Highways officer notes that the parking provision is largely the same as existing and considers that the highways impact will be negligible.

Therefore the Strategic Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development.

Car parking would be reorganised, including the provision of 21 rapid electric vehicle charging bays and cabling for a future 20 bays, 70 cycle storage spaces are also proposed, this is positive of the scheme and is in accordance with paragraph 110e and 181 of the NPPF, which to encourages the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles and ensure the development is sustainable..

Ecology

The Council's ecologist has considered the proposal and the submitted ecology report and have made the following comments.

Woodland Habitats and Lighting

The woodland located on the sites eastern boundary appears on the national inventory of priority habitat. Habitats of this type are a material consideration for planning. The proposed development will not result in a direct loss of this habitat, but lighting associated with the scheme may have an adverse impact upon the woodland and species associated with it.

The submitted lighting scheme shows high levels of light pollution on the edge of the site adjacent to the woodland and levels in excess of 1 lux falling through much of the woodland. The Council's Ecologist has advised that the levels of lighting proposed are likely to have an adverse effect on the woodland and species associated with it.

The Council's Ecologist however states that he is conscious that the site is in current usage and is likely to be subject to existing levels of light pollution. It has therefore been recommended that the applicant submits a survey of the current levels of light pollution

occurring on the woodland on the site's eastern boundary. This survey would enable a baseline to be established to allow an assessment to be made of the currently proposed lighting. Regardless of the current level of lighting on site the lighting scheme must look to minimise light spill onto the eastern woodland.

The applicant has confirmed that an existing light survey and scheme is being carried out and the submission of the results are imminent. The survey and ecologists updated comments will be recorded in an update report to the committee.

Nevertheless, the Ecologist notes that the light spill needs to be reduced and this can be done through a suitable lighting scheme submission. It is therefore considered that this in itself would not amount to a reason for refusal and can be dealt with by condition. This matter will form an update to the committee.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site is over 1ha in size and therefore a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted. The Flood Risk Officers have considered the report and raised no objections subject to conditions in relation to implementation in accordance with the FRA and a detailed drainage management scheme.

United Utilities have also been consulted on the application and raised no objections to the proposal subject to a conditions for surface water drainage scheme, foul and surface water to be drained separately and Management and Maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems condition.

As such, it is not considered that the proposed development would create any significant flooding or drainage concerns, subject to suitable conditions as set out below.

Residential Amenity

The application site is situated within an existing employment park where there are no residential properties. The development therefore is unlikely to cause any impact on residential amenity.

Planning Balance and conclusion

The application site is situated within an existing employment area within the Crewe Settlement Boundary, off Weston Road; where retention of employment uses are considered to be acceptable in principle.

The proposal would visually improve the appearance of the site within a prominent location in Crewe, and represents positive investment in an employment use on the site. The design is considered to be acceptable for the proposed use in this location.

The loss of some semi-mature trees and landscaping within the site are negatives of the scheme, but can be mitigated in part by a suitable landscape scheme. None of the protected mature trees off site are to be affected by the development and will help to maintain a softened appearance of the site when seen in views from Weston Road.

Furthermore, the impact on light pollution on the adjacent woodland and its wildlife is an outstanding matter, and a lighting scheme and existing light survey is to be submitted. Nevertheless, it is considered that this matter could be conditioned for approval prior to commencement (if necessary).

There are no issues in relation to amenity, highways safety or floodrisk of the site.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposal is considered to be in general accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are notable economic benefits arising from investment in the employment site in favour of the development. It is therefore considered that proposal is acceptable and recommended for approval subject to conditions, as set below.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Subject to conditions

- 1. Standard Time**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. External Material details to be submitted**
- 4. Landscape Implementation Scheme**
- 5. Submission of a Tree Protection Scheme**
- 6. Submission of a Arb Method Statement**
- 7. Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging infrastructure**
- 8. Provision of Ultra Low Emission Boilers**
- 9. Submission of Phase II contaminated land report**
- 10. Submission of a verification report in accordance with the remediation scheme**
- 11. Prior approval of a soil contamination verification report**
- 12. Development should stop if contamination is encountered**
- 13. Development to be in accordance with FRA**
- 14. Submission of a detailed strategy / design, associated management / maintenance plan for sustainable drainage**

15. Foul and surface water to be drainage separately

In order to give proper effect to the Board'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 his absence the Vice Chair) of Strategic Planning Board, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice

