

Application No: 22/0897N

Location: Land At, NORTH STREET, CREWE

Proposal: Manned eco car wash facility and electric vehicle charging, construction of four jet wash bays and four valeting bays, two self serve electric vehicle charging bays. A single, modular, amenity building containing a customer lounge, store and employee welfare area. Change of use as determined.

Applicant: Mr Simon Moxon, Carvana Limited and Monktondean Investme

Expiry Date: 08-Aug-2022

SUMMARY

The site is located within the Crewe settlement boundary where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The site is located on a large roundabout between North Street and Broad Street, and was formerly a car park associated with a Car showroom, which was recently replaced with a small retail arcade.

Whilst the noise assessment submitted outlines that the site would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the neighbouring receptors, it is considered that this may be true in terms of statutory noise nuisance but when considering the wider noise impact on the living conditions of the adjacent neighbours the change of use of the site from a car park to a car washing facility running 8am – 20.00pm every day including weekends and bank holidays would be unacceptable and would have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the adjacent neighbours.

The access, layout, and parking arrangement are acceptable from a Highway Safety perspective and the Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to an informative relating to the need for a S278 Agreement for the proposed off site works.

It is considered that the design is of a functional nature for its use, and subject to conditions in relation to landscaping and tree protection the scheme could be acceptable in those terms and would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the streetscene given the existing use.

Furthermore, subject to suitable drainage scheme the development would not have an adverse impact on floodrisk or drainage.

The development would have the positive benefit of some 'Eco' type uses and would create a small amount of job creation during construction an in operation.

Nevertheless, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme do not outweigh the harm identified in terms of neighbouring amenity and the potential impact on living conditions of the neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policies BE.1 (Amenity) of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan, SE12 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the NPPF and the emerging Policy HOU 10 of the SADPD.

RECOMMENDATION - Refuse

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This type of planning application would normally be dealt with under Delegated Authority, however the Application has been called in by Councillor Brookfield for the following reasons;

'I consider the location of this proposal on the Cross Keys 'roundabout' to be a significant issue in terms of safety and congestion. There are already 7 junctions from this gyratory and local ward councillors have requested further highway assessments are undertaken in respect of safety both from a motorist and pedestrian aspect.

I believe the access to the proposal is dangerous and will cause further queues to traffic. There is an issue in respect of pedestrian safety in terms of vehicles crossing the footpath.

Furthermore this 'roundabout' has received considerable change of use to the premises in terms of retail presence. The new retail units while very welcome by the neighbourhood means the popularity has seen a vast increase of traffic and pedestrians and as such I am worried that further "retail" would result in further safety concerns and congestion.

On this basis I would ask that this significant change of use on this site is put before Committee Members for their due consideration.'

PROPOSAL:

This is a full application for the change of use of a private car park to a manned eco car wash facility and electric vehicle charging, construction of four jet wash bays and four valeting bays, two self serve electric vehicle charging bays. A single, modular, amenity building containing a customer lounge, store and employee welfare area.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The application site is located on an area of land formerly used as a car park associated with a car show room. The land is currently vacant with access onto North Street.

The site is located on the corner of Broad Street and North Street, with a large roundabout in front.

The area is a mix of residential and commercial with a bowling green to the south-west.

RELEVANT HISTORY:

7/11106 – Customer car parking area – Refused 7TH June 1984

7/09946 – Residential Development – approved with conditions 7th June 1983

P01/0684 – Alterations, Extensions and Modifications to Existing Access – Approved with conditions 12 September 2001

7/15946 – Display and sale of motor vehicles and parking of employees and customer vehicle – withdrawn 4th January 1990

7/12150 – Staff Car Park – 27th June 1985

7/15077 – Display and sale of motor vehicles – Refused 3th February 1988

16/4052N – Residential development of 5 dwellings – Approved with conditions 24th Jan 2017

7/17584 - Redevelopment of existing premises, use of adjacent land for car display and workshop together with relaxation of condition number 7/12150 limit of overnight parking – approved with conditions 16th November 1989

POLICIES

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy

MP1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement Hierarchy

PG7 Spatial Distribution of Development

SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable Development Principles

EG1 Economic Prosperity

EG5 Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to retail and commerce

SE 1 Design

SE 2 Efficient Use of Land

SE4 The Landscape

SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

SE9 Energy Efficient Development

SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability

SE13 Flood Risk and Water Management

IN1 Infrastructure

CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport

Saved Policies of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan

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

Relevant Emerging policies for Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)

ENV 15 New Development and existing uses
HOU 10 Amenity
INF 3 Highway Safety and access

CONSULTATIONS:

United Utilities: No objections, subject to condition for sustainable surface water drainage condition, sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan.

CEC Environmental Health: No objection, subject to conditions for implementation of noise impact assessment, and unexpected contaminated land and informatives for construction hours, pile foundations and site specific dust management plan and contaminated land.

Highways: No objection subject to informative for a S278 agreement.

Flood Risk Officer: No objections in principle subject to condition for the submission of a detailed drainage strategy and standard informatives.

Crewe Town Council:

That the committee objects to the application on the following grounds;

- i. There is no separate or independent treatment of contaminated water (with oil or petroleum) which will be in concentration on the site due to the proposed use.
- i. That access and egress at the site will have a dangerous and detrimental effect on local traffic, with risk of road traffic incidents in a high traffic volume area
- ii. The siting is poorly placed in consideration of nearby crossing and bus stop
- iii. That residents' concerns are taken into account and considered fully.

REPRESENTATIONS:

26 letters of representation have been received including a response from the Ward Councillor Brookfield. The main issues raised are;

- Impact on highway safety given the sites location on a major roundabout with 6 access points,
- Developers do not know the existing pressures on the highway at this point and would not propose this location if they did,

- Site could impact on Ambulances getting to Hospital quickly due to potential blockages created by the proposal,
- Already significant congestion on the roads around the proposal site and this will exacerbate the situation
- Water pressure in the area is low and question how it will be sufficient for a car wash facility
- The location is not suitable for business like a car wash where vehicles enter and exit regularly
- Impact on neighbouring amenity due to noise caused by the jet washers, radios, and staff on site.
- Operating hours don't appear to have been proposed and this raising concerns about long hours of noisy use of the site
- Already a car wash available on Bradfield Road an additional one is not needed in this area,
- Potential surface water drainage issue with the site and the impact of chemicals getting in the drainage systems
- No staff parking shown on the plan or bike storage area
- Plans appear to be very tight and any larger vehicles would struggle to fit in the bays and safely enter/exit the site
- The site should be used to create a greenspace on the roundabout
- The description that the site is a 'Eco Car Wash' seems to be a misrepresentation because jet washers use a significant amount of water and spread dirt and chemicals into the environment
- Pedestrian safety concerns with the entrance and access points across and in very close proximity to pedestrian refuges,
- Impact of the jet wash and chemicals on the adjacent bowling green lawn

A letter of support has been received. The main reasons are;

- Need for additional Electrical Vehicle Charging points. This will be a benefit to the area

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Policy PG 2 (Settlement Hierarchy) of the CELPS identifies Crewe as a principal town where;

“significant development will be encouraged to support their revitalisation, recognising their roles as the most important settlements in the borough. Development will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources to allow jobs, homes and other facilities to be located close to each other and accessible by public transport.”

The application site is located within the settlement of Crewe. The site is located within a mixed-use area but is predominantly residential with a small hub of commercial units in close proximity to the roundabout. It is therefore considered that in principle the use would be acceptable.

Therefore, it is considered that the main issues of this proposal are if the development is acceptable in terms of all other relevant planning policies such as amenity, highways safety, landscape impact, impact on trees and flood risk/drainage issues.

Amenity

The application site is located in a mixed-use area which is predominantly residential. To the immediate northwest of the site are the residential developments of Church Mews and Coppenhall Mews on North Street, opposite the North Street access are also residential properties. There is also a Church, Public Café/community hall, Public House, Post Office and Pharmacy in close proximity on North Street. There is a large roundabout to the east of the site, with residential and retail units beyond. To the south and south-west of the site is a Bowling Green with further residential properties beyond.

The application form states that the development will have operational hours of 8.00am – 20.00pm (Monday – Saturday) and also 8.00am – 20.00pm (Sundays and Bank Holidays). The site would use 1no. Karcher SB Jet Wash Station for 4 bays; 2no. Karcher WD 6p Wheeled vacuums; 2no. 2in1 Air and screen wash machines and 2no rapid charge vehicle chargers.

Saved Policy BE.1 (Amenity) of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan advises that new development should not be permitted if it is deemed to have a detrimental impact upon neighbouring amenity in terms of overlooking, visual intrusion or noise and disturbance. Emerging Policy HOU 10 of the SADPD (Amenity) is consistent with this policy, stating that, *'Development proposals must not unacceptable harm the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers of residential properties, sensitive uses or future occupiers of those properties due to; (inter alia)...4.environmental disturbance or pollution, 5. Traffic generation, access and parking'*.

Policy SE12 (Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability) states that,

'The council will seek to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, soil contamination, light pollution or any other pollution which would unacceptably affect the natural and built environment, or detrimentally affect amenity or cause harm. Developers will be expected to minimise, and mitigate the effects of possible pollution arising from the development itself, or as a result of the development (including additional traffic) during both the construction and the life of the development. Where adequate mitigation cannot be provided, development will not normally be permitted.'

This policy is consistent with Paragraph 185 of the NPPF which states that (inter alia),

'Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life'

The application includes a Noise Impact Assessment which was carried out in February 2022. The NIA relates to the proposed layout specifically. The impact of the noise from the use of the

proposed development has been assessed in accordance with the BS 4142:2014 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound. The Environmental Protection officer has assessed the report and agrees with the methodology. The Environmental Protection Officer notes that the report recommends that no noise mitigation measures are required to achieve BS8233:2014 and WHO guidelines to ensure that future occupants of nearby properties are not adversely affected by noise from the use of the site.

Nevertheless, whilst the development may not create an unacceptable statutory noise nuisance, the type of use is likely to have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties in particular in relation to noise and disturbance.

The current use of the site is a vacant car park with no current noise, albeit close to a busy road network. The site is in very close proximity to the dwellings on North Street, and there is very little screening between the site and the residential properties on Church Mews, which have very small external amenity areas which will be adjacent to the Jet Washing Bays and entrance of the site.

Car washes and valet facilities involve the use of items such as vacuums and jet washes which can generate significant noise levels, for short periods of time. It is considered that the actual noise levels created when these individual items are used would create a very different noise climate from the constant rumble which characterises the noise of traffic. The intermittent operation of the equipment which would produce bursts of high-powered noise throughout the day would be particularly disturbing. Moreover, if the noise generated from the use of a vacuum or jet wash during short periods could be significantly greater than the background noise level monitored, this would be particularly intrusive for neighbours using their back gardens, particularly at the weekends and bank holidays when it is not unreasonable to expect some peace within those private amenity areas, and the Bowling Green adjacent would be in use. In addition to the noise that would be generated from engines running and doors closing there could be sound systems and conversation which would be likely to be intrusive and disturbing to neighbours.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with regard to noise and disturbance. It would conflict with the relevant policies of the development plan and the NPPF.

The plans also show a large advertisement board in front of the side elevation of the adjoining residential property, which would block the light to two windows on that elevation. The application does not include the advertisements but it should be noted that the location is not appropriate and would likely impact on neighbouring amenity also.

The height of the building within the site are single storey in nature and therefore are not considered to caused any significant harm in terms of loss of light or overbearing impact.

Highways Implications

The proposal is for a car wash and electric vehicle charging stations on the site of the car park for the former car sales site on the opposite side of Broad Street. There is one existing access off North Steet.

The car park catered for in excess of 20 cars and the site also has had a previous approval for 5 residential dwellings.

The site is within the urban area of Crewe with sustainable connections available to frequent bus services and nearby residential areas, and the site is well suited to promote sustainable modes of travel by staff.

A one-way system is proposed with the entrance being from North Street and the exit via Broad Street.

The Strategic Highways Officer has assessed the application and amended plans have been received during the application process to address some of the initial concerns raised. The North Street access is existing but is wide and will be narrowed by approximately 2m which will make it more pedestrian friendly for crossing. The Broad Street exit will be new where drivers will have to exit left onto the carriageway before entering the roundabout. The Strategic Highways Officer notes that the 'exit only' will be enforced by design due to the angle of the exit and the junction radius, making it difficult to turn right out of, or left into, the site. There will also be 'No entry' road markings and this access arrangement is considered acceptable in Highway Safety terms.

The existing informal crossing across Broad Street will remain in the existing location and this pedestrian movement will not interact with exiting vehicles.

The site will provide 6 full-time equivalent staff and 2 staff car parking spaces. The site is in a sustainable location where staff can walk or get public transport to work, or car share, and the Strategic Highways Officer considers that the 2no. spaces proposed are acceptable.

The access, layout, and parking arrangement are acceptable from a Highway Safety perspective and therefore the Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to an informative relating to the need for a S278 Agreement for the proposed off site works.

Design

Policy SE1 of the CELPS sets out the design criteria for new development and states that development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings.

The proposal site is currently vacant and previously used as a car park. The site is on a prominent location on the corner of a roundabout and is highly visible within the street scene. The development includes canopies to cover the jet washing bays and valeting areas and a single storey office building is proposed in the corner of the site. Signage is also shown on the plans but this would be subject to a separate advertisement consent.

The plans show parking areas on the frontage and the development has no landscape buffer to soften its impact on the street scene. The plans show the existing boundary wall retained. Whilst the design of the canopies and building are functional for the use and are suitable for the use proposed. However, the lack of a landscape buffer is a negative of the scheme. Nevertheless, a condition could be used to require the submission of a landscape buffer.

The design is simplistic and could be improved but would not appear out of character given its proposed use.

Ecology

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the application and has raised no objections to the scheme.

Landscape and Trees

As noted above no landscape details have been submitted and this is a negative of the scheme. It is considered that if the development were approved a condition should be imposed to require the submission of a soft and hard landscaping scheme to help soften the impact of the development on the street scene.

There is a large tree located on the south boundary of the site and a hedge that runs along the southern boundary. No tree survey has been submitted with the scheme, but a generic tree protection detail has been submitted stating that the hedgerow will be protected during the construction phase of the development, but not the tree. The design and access statement sets out that the Plane Tree is located off the site and the roots may encroach on the site, they do not envisage any excavation in the area, and the existing surface will be retained. Nevertheless, it is considered it would be appropriate to condition that a AMS is submitted with the Tree and Hedge protection scheme included if the development were approved.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is not within any floodrisk zones, however due to the nature of the development the drainage of the site is an important element of the scheme. The Flood Risk Officers have considered the information submitted to date and have raised no objections to the principle of the development but have requested additional information and clarify on the management of the surface water on the site post development.

The Flood Risk Officers therefore have suggested that if the application is approved a prior to commencement condition should be attached to any permission for a detailed drainage strategy / design, boundary treatment, associated management / maintenance plan for the site is submitted for approval.

United Utilities have also commented on the development and state that the current Strategic Drainage Plan submitted on 24th February 2022 is not acceptable and also request additional information is submitted and clarified. United Utilities have therefore also suggested a condition is attached to any permission in relation to the submission of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and foul water drainage scheme to be approved prior to commencement.

The Applicant has confirmed that talks with both UU and Floodrisk are on-going and intend to address the issues up front. Nevertheless, the Consultee's have not objected to the scheme on these matters only suggested conditions and therefore it is considered that if no further update is received prior to the committee meeting, if the development was recommended for approval suitable conditions could be attached to the permission.

Other material considerations

The applicant states that the site is an 'Eco' car wash and notes that most hand car wash facilities are not purpose built and do not benefit from correct drainage or capture of wash debris. The applicant states that their wash stations offer a sustainable and eco-friendly solution. The applicant states that using Karcher wash equipment is low energy and reduced water consumption, designed drainage systems and environmentally friendly cleaning agents are sustainable. Also, the Applicant states that the availability of Electric vehicle chargers are sustainable in their own right. Whilst it is noted that these measures are beneficially and a positive of the scheme, it is not considered that the 'Eco' nature of the is significant and would not offer much weight to the balance of the decision. The benefit would not outweigh the harm identified above in terms of amenity.

CONCLUSION

The site is located within the Crewe settlement boundary where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The site is located on a large roundabout between North Street and Broad Street, and was formerly a car park associated with a Car showroom, which was recently replaced with a small retail arcade.

Whilst the noise assessment submitted outlines that the site would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the neighbouring receptors, it is considered that this may be true in terms of statutory noise nuisance but when considering the wider noise impact on the living conditions of the adjacent neighbours the change of use of the site from a car park to a car washing facility running 8am – 20.00pm every day including weekends and bank holidays would be unacceptable and would have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the adjacent neighbours.

The access, layout, and parking arrangement are acceptable from a Highway Safety perspective, and the Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to an informative relating to the need for a S278 Agreement for the proposed off site works.

It is considered that the design is of a functional nature for its use, and subject to conditions in relation to landscaping and tree protection the scheme could be acceptable in those terms and would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the streetscene given the existing use.

Furthermore, subject to suitable drainage scheme the development would not have an adverse impact on floodrisk or drainage.

The development would have the positive benefit of some 'Eco' type uses and would create a small amount of job creation during construction and in operation.

Nevertheless, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme do not outweigh the harm identified in terms of neighbouring amenity and the potential impact on living conditions of the neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policies BE.1 (Amenity) of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan, SE12 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the NPPF and the emerging Policy HOU 10 of the SADPD.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse for the following reason;

- 1. The proposed development by means of its location adjacent to residential properties is considered to be unacceptable and would have an adverse impact on the living conditions of the neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policies BE.1 (Amenity) of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan, SE12 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, the NPPF and the emerging Policy HOU 10 of the SADPD.**

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 his absence the Vice Chair) of 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

