

Application No: 22/0566M

Location: Winstanley House, NORTHWICH ROAD, KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE, WA16 0AF

Proposal: Residential redevelopment of former Winstanley House site and demolition of associated garages. Replacement building containing 28 no 100% affordable apartments, car parking and landscaping.

Applicant: Mr Dan Brocklehurst, Peaks and Plains Housing Trust

Expiry Date: 26-Aug-2022

SUMMARY

The application proposes the erection of an affordable housing apartment block in a predominantly residential area of Knutsford. Within such locations, development is deemed to be acceptable in principle, subject to its adherence with all relevant policies of the development plan.

Of particular relevance in this instance are policies relating to affordable housing, heritage and design, neighbouring amenity, highway safety and trees.

The Council's Affordable Housing Officer is satisfied that the tenure mix and size of the units being provided (in terms of the number of beds) satisfy a local need and as such, is supportive of the scheme. This provision is to be secured via S106 Agreement.

The site lies adjacent to two Conservation Areas and as such, the impact upon the setting of these is a consideration. Following pre-application discussions and revisions received during the application process, both the Council's Heritage and Urban Design Officers are now satisfied with the latest set of plans, subject to conditions.

Following the receipt of an updated Noise Impact Assessment in order to consider the impact of any possible noise pollution from the substation, the Council's Environmental Protection Officer raises no environmental amenity concerns subject to conditions. No issues are raised in relation to neighbouring loss of privacy, light or visual intrusion, subject to an obscure glazing condition.

Although the proposals provide a below-standard number of parking spaces, the Council's Highway's Officer is satisfied with the level of provision proposed given that the units are 1 and 2 bed only. The site is also sustainably located. No concerns are raised in relation to access, traffic impact and highway safety.

TPO trees lie adjacent to the site but will not be impacted by the development. Three (3) C-category trees are sought for removal to accommodate the proposed development. The Council's Tree Officer raises no objections to the removal of these trees or the scheme overall, subject to conditions.

No issues are deemed to be created with regards to flood risk and drainage, the impact of the proposals upon Manchester Airport and the impact of the proposals upon local health provision subject to conditions and a commuted sum.

Matters in relation to Landscape shall be reported to committee in the form of a written update.

For the above reasons, the application is recommended for approval subject to satisfactory receipt of outstanding consultee responses, a S106 Agreement and conditions

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to satisfactory receipt of outstanding consultee responses, a S106 Agreement to secure the affordable housing provision and a commuted sum towards Healthcare, and conditions.

REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application is referred to Cheshire East Council's Northern Planning Committee as it comprises of residential development in excess of 20 dwellings.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

This application relates to the site of the former Winstanley House, a former two-storey block of x33 sheltered housing bedsits & flats, located on a corner plot between Northwich Road and Stanley Road, within a predominantly residential part of Knutsford.

The building was granted approval for demolition under 21/0231M.

On the opposite side of Northwich Road and to the immediate east of the application site is the Town Centre (Knutsford) Conservation Area. Beyond the immediate western boundary of the site and on land within the site to the south (garages), is the Heathfield Square (Knutsford) Conservation Area.

There are trees subject to Tree Protection Orders (TPO's) on and adjacent to the site.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to erect a block of 28, one and two-bed affordable housing apartments to replace the former sheltered accommodation on site with a more modern facility. The application has been submitted on behalf of 'Peaks and Plains' Housing Trust.

The tenure of the 28 units would be split up with 22 apartments being rented accommodation and 6 units being shared ownership.

Revised plans were received during the application process in order to address comments made by Officers based on the originally submitted scheme. A subsequent re-consultation was undertaken.

RELEVANT HISTORY

22/0567M - Residential redevelopment of former Winstanley House site and demolition of associated garages. Replacement building containing 28 no 100% affordable apartments, car parking and landscaping – Withdrawn 6th July 2022

21/0231M - Prior Approval for the demolition of existing 2 storey sheltered housing block and associated single storey garages – Approval not required 16th March 2021

09/2065M - Installation Of 2 No. Flues – Approved 2nd September 2009

65172P - Two Storey Extension of Existing Building to Provide Additional Eight Flats – Approved 5th December 1990

19949P - Prop Sub-Station – Approved 19th September 1979

ADOPTED PLANNING POLICIES

The Development Plan for this area comprises of; the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan (KNP), the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) and the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP). The relevant policies within these documents include:

Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan 2019 (KNP)

C4 – Utilities, D1 – The Knutsford Design Guide, D2 – Local Distinctiveness, D3 – Landscape in New Development, D4 – Sustainable Residential Design, E1 – Connections to the Countryside, E2 – Green and Blue Corridors, E3 – Habitat Protection and Biodiversity, E5 – Pollution, HW1 – Health and Wellbeing, HE1 – Landmarks, Views, Vistas and Gateways, HE2 – Heritage Assets, H1 – Housing mix, H2 – Previously Developed and Infill Development, SL1 – Open Space in New Developments, T1 – Walking in Knutsford, T2 – Cycling in Knutsford, T3 – Public Transport and T4 – Parking

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2017 (CELPS)

PG1 - Overall Development Strategy, Policy PG2 - Settlement Hierarchy, PG7 – Spatial Distribution of Development, SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East, SD2 -

Sustainable Development Principles, IN1 – Infrastructure, IN2 Developer Contributions, SC3 – Health and Well-being, SC4 – Residential Mix, SC5 – Affordable Homes, SE1 - Design, SE2 - Efficient Use of Land, SE3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity, SE4 - The Landscape, SE5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland, SE6 – Green Infrastructure, SE7 – The Historic Environment, SE8 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, SE9 – Energy Efficient Development, SE12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability, SE13 – Flood Risk and Water Management, CO1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport, CO3 – Digital Connections, CO4 – Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP)

Relevant saved policies include:

NE11 - Nature Conservation, NE15 – Creation or enhancement of habitats, RT5 – Open Space Standards, RT7 – Cycleways, Bridleways and Footpaths, H9 – Occupation of Affordable Housing, WTC6 – Green Lane/Alderley Road Redevelopment Area, DC3 - Protection of the amenities of nearby residential properties, DC6 - Circulation and Access, DC8 – Landscaping, DC9 - Tree Protection, DC10 – Landscape and Tree Protection, DC13 and DC14 – Noise, DC17, DC19 and DC20 - Water Resources, DC35 - Materials & Finishes, DC36 – Road Layouts and Circulation, DC38 - Guidelines for space, light and privacy for housing development, DC40 – Children’s Play/Amenity Space and DC63 – Contaminated land

Other Material planning policy considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Cheshire East Council Pre-application advice: PRE/0358/21

Emerging Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (“SADPD”)

The Revised Publication Draft SADPD was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 April 2021. Following the examination hearings and report from the Inspector, Main Modifications were published for consultation between 19 April 2022 and 31 May 2022. The Council has recently published its report of consultation and the Inspector will take the representations into account in preparing his Examination report, which will be issued to the council in due course. The following policies are considered to carry moderate weight in the assessment of the application:

PG9 Settlement Boundaries, GEN1 Design principles, GEN5 Aerodrome safeguarding, GEN6 Airport public safety zone, ENV1 Ecological network, ENV2 Ecological implementation, ENV3 Landscape character, ENV5 Landscaping, ENV6 Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation, ENV7 Climate Change, ENV12 Air quality, ENV14 Light pollution, ENV15 New development and existing uses, ENV16 Surface water management and flood risk, ENV17 Protecting water resources, HER1 Heritage assets, HER3 Conservation Areas, RUR6 Outdoor sport, leisure and recreation outside of settlement boundaries, HOU10 Amenity, INF1 Cycleways, bridleways and footpaths, INF3 Highways safety and access, INF6 Protection of existing and proposed infrastructure and INF9 Utilities

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Head of Strategic Transport (CEC Highways) – No objections

Environmental Protection (CEC) – No objections are raised, subject to the following conditions: Implementation of noise mitigation measures, submission/approval of low emission boiler details, submission/approval of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, submission/approval of a Travel Plan, submission/approval of a Phase I contaminated land report, submission/approval of a contaminated land verification report, submission/approval of an imported soil verification report and that works should stop should contamination be identified. A number of informatives are also proposed.

Education (CEC) – *‘No claim to make’* (No objections)

Housing (CEC) – No objections, subject to the affordable provision being secured via a S106 Agreement

ANSA Greenspace – No objections

NHS CCG – Request a contribution of £18,864 to offset the impact of the development upon local NHS resource

Lead Local Flood Risk Authority (CEC) – Recommend a condition be added in the event of approval requiring the submission/approval of a detailed surface water drainage strategy and associated management and maintenance plan

United Utilities – Request detailed drainage plan upfront. However, advise that should planning permission be granted without this information, that a condition should be imposed requiring the submission/approval of drainage details. In addition, a condition is proposed requiring the submission/approval of a drainage management and maintenance plan

Manchester Airport – No objections, subject to the following conditions: Measures to minimise and manage dust and smoke should be implemented, that no pools or ponds should be constructed without approval, that all exterior lighting should be capped at the horizontal and that no solar panels should be installed without approval. A number of informatives are also proposed

Natural England – *‘No comments’*

Cadent Gas Ltd – No objections, subject to an infomative

Knutsford Town Council – The council raises the following concerns:

Procedural

- The specification for the substation fails to include dimensions on the plan and elevation drawings, there is indication the substation is higher than the boundary wall so this element cannot be fully considered until adequate information is submitted

- The council requests that neighbours are fully consulted regarding the boundary treatments and requests a condition the Construction Management Plan uses the Northwich Road entrance/exit for construction traffic.

Highway safety

- Has concerns over the details within the traffic assessment

Amenity

- There is no assessment of the noise impact

Landscape

- Shrubs proposed for planting in the narrow channel between the substation and the existing boundary wall
- The applicant intends to retain the existing wall but it only represents half of the western boundary. The plan shows the replacement for the backs of the existing garages as a wooden fence but has left a gap in the boundary.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

Letters were sent to the occupiers of adjacent properties; a site notice was erected, and the proposals were advertised within a local newspaper. At the time of consideration, 8 letters of representation had been received.

Of these 8 letters, 6 raise the following concerns/objections:

Heritage & Design

- 3-storey nature of the proposals will impact the setting of the Heathfield Square Conservation Area due to its bulk
- Limited number of 3-storey development nearby
- Overdevelopment of the site / scale of proposals too large
- Lack of detail/plans provided in relation to a proposed substation
- Proposed substation will impact the Heathfield Square Conservation Area – proposed in a prominent location
- Suggestion to provide pedestrian access onto Northwich Road

Highway safety

- Proposals will result in an increase in traffic, particularly on Racefield Road
- Figures within the submitted Transport Statement are contested with regards to their being a net reduction in traffic as a result of the proposed development

- Concerns regarding the use of Racefield Road for construction traffic. Recommend the submission of a Construction Management Plan
- Insufficient off-street parking proposed (resident and visitor). Proposals will lead to an overflow of car parking due to an uplift in resident numbers

Sustainability

- Impact of the development upon amenities such as schools etc.
- Pedestrian safety/sustainability - How will future occupiers have access to health (e.g. GP practice) and leisure facilities without private transportation and lack of pedestrian crossings and lack of streetlighting

Health and Wellbeing

- Proposals need to adhere with the Health and Wellbeing policies within the Neighbourhood Plan from page 59

Amenity

- Creation of additional air pollution as a result of increased traffic levels
- Loss of privacy and light to the back gardens of the properties on Northwich Road and Heathfield Square due to 3-storey nature
- Noise Assessment needs updating to include the substation
- Concerns about the internal size of the proposals – lack of storage space

Landscape

- Presence of shrubs between substation and boundary fence does not appear to have been fully considered. How will these survive?
- Seek to ensure the boundary treatment on the western boundary be of a suitable material – continuation of brick wall. Request that the full rear boundary be included for this boundary treatment

Other matters

- Question the boundary lines/ownership of part of the site
- Propose the inclusion of the side wall of garage 12 within the boundary replacement proposals
- As that neighbours be consulted on the western boundary treatment

Comments from 2 interested party offer's their support for the proposals.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The application site comprises of the site of the former Winstanley House and garaging located on the southern side of Northwich Road, to the west of the B5083 and to the north of Racecourse Road, Knutsford, in a predominantly residential area.

The proposal is to replace the largely demolished existing structures on site (formerly comprising of an apartment block of 33 affordable apartments) and associated garages and replace them with 28 new apartments for 100% affordable rent, built to current Nationally Described Space Standards.

Policy PG2 of the CELPS identifies Knutsford as a Key Service Centre (KSC). Within such locations, development of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctiveness of each individual town will be supported to maintain their vitality and viability. PG7 of the CELP states that within Knutsford, in the order of 15 hectares of employment land and 950 homes are expected to be accommodated during the local plan period.

Policy H2 of the Knutsford NP refers to development on Previously Developed Land. It states that on such sites, residential development that deliver the types set out in Policy H1 (Housing Mix) should be approved where they are able to meet a number of criteria.

Policy H1 states that affordable housing will be supported in line with CELPS policies then specifically states that *'The Neighbourhood Plan supports rented accommodation provided by a Registered Provider'*. The scheme is being provided by Peaks and Plains Housing Trust. As such, the proposal adheres with Policy H1.

Returning to Policy H2, housing should; ensure that the scheme has a plot ratio, scale and height which is commensurable with the surrounding townscape; preserves all mature vegetation including trees and hedgerows, especially where these are part of the street scene or a visually prominent boundary; provide on-site parking in accordance with Policy T4, including bin storage and refuse collection which does not dominate the street scene.

These matters will be considered later in the relevant section of the assessment.

As the application proposal seeks a reduction in the number of units on this site, in a sustainable position, the principle of such a proposal in this location is deemed acceptable, subject to its adherence with all other relevant development plan policies including those matters detailed by Policy H2 of the KNP. These are considered below.

Affordable Housing

The proposal relates to erection of 28 affordable apartments in the place of an affordable housing apartment block comprising of 33 units, which has recently been demolished. It is advised that the replacement facility would be built to Nationally Described Space Standards. An Affordable Housing Scheme accompanies the application.

The proposed tenure mix of the facility would comprise of 6 (2-bed) shared ownership (Intermediate tenure) units and 22 (1 and 2-bed) Affordable rent units. This would equate to a 21/79% split which is a departure from the 35/65% split set-out in policy. However, as the proposal leans towards more rented accommodation where there is a specific need in Knutsford, as detailed below, this split is welcomed.

The current number of those on the Cheshire Homechoice waiting list, which is used as an indication of need for affordable rented units in an area, who list Knutsford as their first choice as where they would like to live is 407. This can be broken down as below:

	How many bedrooms do you require?						
First Choice	1	2	3	4	5	5+	Grand Total
Knutsford	224	91	58	19	15		407

These figures strongly demonstrate the need for the proposals and support the number of 1 & 2 bed units proposed as well as the tenure split.

The Council's Affordable Housing Officer raises no objections to the proposed development, subject to the provision being agreed via a S106 Agreement.

Heritage & Design

Policy SE1 of the CELPS advises that proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of; sense of place, design quality, sustainable architecture, liveability/workability and safety.

Policy SD2 of the CELPS refers to sustainable development principles. Within this policy, it is advised that development will be expected to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of; height, scale, form, grouping, material choice, external design features, massing, green infrastructure and relationship to surrounding development amongst others. These policies are supplemented by the Cheshire East Design Guide SPD.

Policy D1 of the Knutsford NP states that new development of all types and scales should be of a high design quality and complement its surroundings. Design solutions must positively respond to localised conditions, landscape and built vernacular. All planning applications must demonstrate how schemes comply with the Design Guide or justify why they do not.

Policy D2 of the Knutsford NP states that all development should respond to the local townscape character.

Policy H2 of the KNP states that housing should; ensure that the scheme as a plot ratio, scale and height which is commensurable with the surrounding townscape.

As well as general design considerations, heritage is also a consideration.

On the opposite side of Northwich Road and to the immediate east of the application site is the Town Centre (Knutsford) Conservation Area. Beyond the immediate western boundary of the site and on land within the site to the south (garages), is the Heathfield Square (Knutsford) Conservation Area.

As such the impact of the proposed development upon the setting of the Town Centre (Knutsford) Conservation Area and the impact of the development upon both the setting and directly upon the Heathfield Square (Knutsford) Conservation Area is a consideration.

In response to the originally submitted scheme the Council's Urban Design Officer was generally supportive of the design but did suggest a number of amendments with regards to pedestrian access, materials, further detailing into the gable ends and additional landscaping.

Revised plans were subsequently received and in response, the Council's Urban Design Officer advises that the alterations are positive on the whole and subsequently is supportive of the scheme.

With regards to heritage, the Council's Heritage Officer advises that the developer has worked with officers to address concerns relating to the scale, massing and detailing at both pre-application stage and during the course of this application. The building has been amended so that it drops down in height where it borders the Heathfield Square Conservation Area so that it connects to and respects the adjacent, modest, semi-detached houses in terms of scale and form.

The design and materials clearly reference the earlier buildings within the two Conservation Areas, with the 18th, 19th century terraces and town houses of Gaskell Avenue and the inter war properties at Heathfield Square, albeit in a contemporary form. By using a palette of traditional materials found within the immediate area and wider town the building will respect its setting. The Design and Access statement clearly sets out how the building has responded to the context in particular Heathfield Square adjacent, including building lines, proportions, decoration, string courses, materials.

The Council's Heritage Officer advises that the architectural design fits well with the two Character Area 3 Northwest Knutsford and Mere Heath Park and Area 4 The Heath) set out in The Knutsford Character Assessment 2018 (in support of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan) and responds positively to local landscape and townscape character.

In the view of the Council's Heritage Officer, the replacement building is of a higher quality than the original structure. The entrance will face the street, with improved building lines and clear references to the adjacent buildings in terms of materials and the design of the elevations. Subsequently, the Council's Heritage Officer concludes that the proposals will not cause harm to the adjacent Conservation Areas. In the event of approval, the Council's Heritage Officer recommends that due to the sensitive location of the site a condition requiring the submission/approval of facing and roofing materials be included. In addition, it is recommended that details of all windows and doors, including cross-sections and glazing bars be conditioned.

Subject to these conditions, the scheme is deemed to comply with the policies SD2, SE1 and SE7 of the CELPS, the saved heritage policies of the MBLP, the KNP and emerging SADPD heritage and design policies and Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

Highways

Saved Policy DC6 of the MBLP considers accessibility, servicing and parking provision and details a number of requirements. Most notably, these include that; consideration needs to be given to safe vehicular and pedestrian access, including for special needs groups, access to bus routes, space for manoeuvring vehicles and provision for service / emergency vehicles. Emerging Policy INF3 of the SADPD is largely reflective of this policy. Policies CO1 and CO4 form the highways related policies within the CELPS.

Access

The existing access will be used for the development. The Council's Highway's Officer has advised that it provides sufficient visibility and previously served a development for a greater number of units. As such, the existing access is acceptable to serve this development.

Parking

Concerns were originally raised by the Council's Highway's Officer regarding the amount of parking proposed in association with the development proposals. In response, the applicant has submitted a revised plan that provides an extra 8 car parking spaces bringing the total to 37 spaces.

The Council's Highways Officer advises that whilst it is recognised that 37 spaces still falls short of the car parking standards (50 spaces), the additional spaces do make a difference in catering for the development parking demand. There are no 3 and 4 bed units proposed on the site which are much likely to be family accommodation. The site is also deemed to be sustainably located and within easy walking distance of the town centre.

Therefore, the revised layout that includes the additional car parking spaces is considered to provide an acceptable level of parking given the type of development.

Accessibility

The site is well located in regard to its distance to Knutsford town centre, approximately 500m from the town centre although pedestrians need to cross the busy A50 to access the town centre. There are bus services within easy walking distance of the site on Northwich Road. Overall, the accessibility of the site is good.

Development Impact

The former use of this site generated traffic movements on the road network, the number of trips generated was likely in excess of the level of traffic generation by this proposal and an overall reduction in trips will result from this proposal. In these circumstances, the Council's Highway's Officer advises that there are no concerns regarding traffic impact of the proposal.

Highway conclusions

For the above reasons, the Council's Highway's Officer raises no objections to the proposals. The development is therefore deemed to be acceptable in highways terms.

Amenity

Saved Policy DC3 of the MBLP states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive uses due to (amongst other considerations): loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight, an overbearing impact and environmental considerations. Policy DC38 sets out separation standards as does the Cheshire East Design Guide. Policy SE1 of the CELPS states that development should ensure an appropriate level of privacy for new and existing residential properties. Emerging SADPD Policy HOU10 is largely reflective of these policies.

Neighbouring amenity

The closest neighbouring dwellings to the application site include: No.1 Northwich Road and No's 9, 11, 13, 15, 17 & 19 Heathfield Square, all to the east and the properties on Racefield Road to the south.

The proposed development would be set-back from the Northwich Road frontage to an extent where only the very front corner would oppose the rear corner of No.1 Northwich Road. As such, it is not deemed that the proposed development would have any direct impact upon the property itself at No.1 Northwich Road.

However, large parts of the development would directly face the rear, private amenity space of this neighbouring dwelling. As such, consideration needs to be given as to whether the privacy of this space would be retained and whether the development would have an overbearing impact upon this space and result in an unacceptable loss of light.

The proposed building would be inset from the boundary with No.1 Northwich Road by approximately 5.4 metres. At this juncture, the proposed building is 2 storeys tall. No openings are proposed in this section of the building that would face in a direction towards No.1 Northwich Road. Subsequently, there are no concerns about the proposed development resulting in a loss of privacy for the occupiers of this neighbour.

Whilst the proposed building is set-back from Northwich Road compared to No.1 Northwich Road and because this closest section of the building will be 2 storeys tall, there are likely to be impacts to this neighbouring property's rear windows and private amenity space with regards to loss of light and an overbearing impact. However, the building that was demolished to be replaced by the application proposals was also 2-storey's tall and not in a dissimilar position. Furthermore, the demolished building extended parallel the full length of the garden with No.1 Northwich Road whereas much of the proposed building is pulled much further away. As such, in many respects the impact upon the occupiers of No.1 Northwich Road would be reduced.

As such, it is not deemed that the proposals would injure the amenity of No.1 Northwich Road sufficiently to warrant refusal of the application.

Turning to the properties on Heathfield Square to the west of the application site, the application site borders the rear boundaries of these properties beyond the end of their rear gardens. The rear boundaries of No's 9 & 11 Heathfield Square directly adjoined the site on which the previous 2-storey facility was located whereas the rear boundaries of No's 13, 15, 17 & 19 Heathfield Square currently about a row of single-storey garages associated with the application site.

A two-storey section of the proposed building would be inset by approximately 14.7 metres from the rear boundary with No.9 Heathfield Square and would be approximately 47 metres away from the neighbouring dwelling itself. It is deemed that these distances are sufficient not to warrant concerns with regards to loss of privacy, light or an overbearing impact for this neighbour.

It is deemed that the proposed development is sufficiently far away as well as being offset from the rear amenity space of No.11 Heathfield Square so not to injure amenity. Although a substation is proposed to the rear of this neighbouring site, submitted plans show this to be single storey and it is not deemed that this would impact the occupiers of No.11 in terms of loss of light or an overbearing impact due to its minor scale. Matters relating to environmental amenity are considered later in this report.

In the place of the proposed garages which abut the rear boundaries of No's 13, 15, 17 & 19 Heathfield Square, in their place will be open parking spaces to serve the application building. This will result in no amenity issues for these neighbours in terms of privacy, light or an overbearing impact.

The plot of No.2 Racefield Road is effectively enclosed by the application site to the north and west. Prior to the demolition of the previous building on the application site, the blank, side elevation of this property was approximately 10.4 metres away from a two-storey section of the former building. Hard standing then encircles the curtilage of No.2 Racefield Road immediately to the north and west.

As proposed, 2-storey development would once again face this side elevation but would be set back a further 1.7 metres from this property.

Given that the side elevation of No.2 Racefield Road includes no side windows facing the application site, there are no direct loss of privacy concerns from the development site. The proposed building would extend further to the rear of No.2 Racecourse Road and as such, consideration should be given to any loss of light or an overbearing impact being experienced from the rear elevation of this property and its private amenity space.

It is deemed that the proposed building is sufficiently set-back from the boundary with this property and sufficiently off-set so not to cause an unreasonable loss of amenity and the relationship is not dissimilar to that before. To ensure as much privacy as possible is retained to the immediate private amenity space of No.2 Racefield Road, in the event of approval, it is proposed that the first-floor windows on the closest southern elevation of the application building which serve a hallway and an en-suite and x2 bedroom windows all to unit 19 be obscurely glazed.

It is not deemed that the application proposals would result in any notable neighbouring amenity concerns to any other side in consideration of privacy, light or an overbearing impact.

Amenity of future occupiers

Policy HW1 of the KNP states that development should demonstrate how they have considered health and wellbeing and encouraged healthier lifestyles as part of their application and, as a minimum, provide sufficient access to open space, including garden's.

No individual private gardens are proposed for the future occupiers. However, the scheme includes a shared space which has been broken-up into a sensory garden, wildflower area and orchard. It is deemed that this space is sufficient as outdoor space for the development, particularly considering that the site lies adjacent to park.

Environmental amenity

Concerns have been raised by some local residents regarding the possible noise impact of the proposed substation. Following correspondence with the Council's Environmental Protection Officer, they requested that the originally submitted Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) be updated to include this. This was updated and has since been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Protection Officer who raises no objections to the scheme on noise grounds, subject to the suggested noise mitigation within the NIA being conditioned to be implemented.

The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has raised no objections in relation to all other environmental amenity matters, subject to the following conditions: submission/approval of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, submission/approval of low emission boilers, submission/approval of a Travel Plan, submission/approval of a Phase I contaminated land report, submission/approval of a contaminated land verification report, submission/approval of an imported soil verification report and that works should stop should contamination be identified. A number of informatives are also proposed. The condition recommended by Environmental Protection relating to low emission boilers is not considered to be reasonable or necessary to make the development acceptable, and therefore does not meet the tests for conditions set out in the NPPF.

Amenity conclusions

Subject to the inclusion of the above conditions and informatives, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in terms of amenity and would adhere with the relevant amenity requirements of the development plan.

Ecology

Policy SE3 of the CELPS refers to Biodiversity and Geodiversity. The crux of the policy is to protect and enhance these considerations. Saved Policy NE11 is largely reflective of these requirements as is emerging Policy ENV2 of the SADPD. Policy E3 of the KNP should also be considered.

The application is supported by an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a Daytime Bat Survey. This, along with all other ecology considerations is considered below.

SSSI Impact Zone

The proposed development falls within Natural England's SSSI impact zone. Natural England ask that for proposed developments in this location they are consulted on the potential risk from 'Any residential developments with a total net gain in residential units'.

Natural England have reviewed the proposals and advised that they have no comments to make in this instance. As such, no concerns are raised with regards to the impact of the proposals upon the SSSI.

Ecological Enhancement

Policy SE 3(5) of the CELPS requires all developments to aim to positively contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development in accordance with this policy.

The applicant has submitted a *Landscape General Arrangements plan* (Saville Landscape Design, Drawing number 01 Rev E, June 2022) which includes provisions for bats and birds, and native species planting. The Council's Nature Conservation Officer advises that this is sufficient to satisfy ecological enhancement requirements and should be conditioned to be implemented in the event of approval.

Breeding/nesting birds

In the event of approval, a condition should be included to ensure that nesting birds are protected.

Schedule 9 Species

The applicant should be aware that Rhododendron, Montbretia and Cotoneaster are present on the proposed development site. Under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 it is an offence to cause this species to grow in the wild.

Disturbance of soil on the site may result in increased growth of these species on the site. If the applicant intends to move any soil or waste off site, under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 any part of the plant or any material contaminated with Rhododendron, Montbretia or Cotoneaster must be disposed of at a landfill site licensed to accept it and the operator should be made aware of the nature of the waste. This will be added as an informative in the event of approval.

Subject to the above recommended conditions and informatives, the proposed development is deemed to adhere with policies SE3 of the CELPS, E3 of the KNP, saved policy NE11 of the MBLP and emerging Policy ENV2 of the SADPD.

Landscape

Policy SE4 of the CELPS is the over-arching landscape policy of Cheshire East Council. Policy SE4 seeks to conserve Cheshire East's landscape character and quality and where possible, enhance landscape features that provide a positive contribution. Emerging Policy ENV4 of the SADPD is largely reflective of this policy.

The application is supported by a Landscape plan which has been updated during the course of the application. This was updated to reflect changes made in response to comments made from the Council's Highway's Officer and Urban Design Officer. More specifically, the amount of on-site parking was increased, the priority on the hard surface off Northwich Road was amended to reduce car prioritisation and, to the front of the building, facing the Heath sensory spaces were introduced.

A number of objectors have raised concerns about possible deficiencies in the proposed boundary treatments proposed along the western boundary and question the material choice in this sensitive location. A further revised plan has been received to rectify some of these concerns. However, in the event of approval, it is proposed that a further revised boundary treatment plan still be conditioned to allow consultation with the immediate local residents and for the final materials to be agreed.

At the time that this report was finalised, no consultation response had been received from the Council's Landscape Officer. An update on the acceptability of this revised scheme, which includes proposed boundary treatment, will be reported to committee in the form of a written update.

Trees

Policy SE5 of the CELPS refers to Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland. Policy SE5 states that development proposals which will result in the loss of, or threat to, the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows or woodlands, that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historic character of the surrounding area, will not normally be permitted, except where there are clear and overriding reasons for allowing the development. Emerging Policy ENV5 is largely reflective of this policy.

A group of trees on the northern boundary of the application site adjacent to Northwich Road are protected by the Knutsford Urban District Council (The Heath, Toft Road and Parkgate Lane) Tree Preservation Order 1972. The group is scheduled as G12 within the Order and comprises of 4 Sycamore and 1 Black Pine. A mature Sycamore shown located on the western boundary of the site (scheduled as T1 in the Order) appears to be incorrectly plotted on the original TPO map.

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) submitted by Tree Solutions (Ref 21/AIA/CHE/(E)/214) dated January 2022 and includes a Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Method Statement.

The Council's Tree Officer advises that the assessment accords with the definition and criteria in BS5837:2012 and accepted as an accurate assessment of the quality of trees on the site.

The Assessment has considered 19 trees and three groups of trees located within or immediately adjacent to the site. Three low (C) category individual trees and a low category group of trees will require removal to accommodate the development. The trees are not protected by the Tree Preservation Order and the Council's Tree Officer advises that their removal will not have a significant adverse impact on the wider amenity of the area.

Proposed parking bays and roads are as existing hard standing and will be re-surfaced. The Council's Tree Officer agrees that this will have no adverse impact on retained trees. Pedestrian footpaths are proposed which will encroach within the Root Protection Areas (RPA) of three trees (Lime T12. Black Pine T14 and Sycamore T18). A no dig, three-dimensional cellular confinement system (CCS) is suggested to minimize disruption to the rooting environment of trees. The Council's Tree Officer advises that details of installation are provided in the accompanying Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement (Appendix 4 & 5) and subject to an Engineering specification, are acceptable and accord with the design requirements of BS5837:2012.

The Council's Tree Officer advises that the impact of trees and their relationship/social proximity to new development is considered acceptable. One tree, a mature Sycamore (T18) adjacent to the western boundary of the site will benefit from an improved relationship to the new structure than what was there previously.

The provision of underground services have not been provided to the consultant Arboriculturist. The Council's Tree Officer advises that any services should utilize existing service runs where possible or if this is not possible, shall be located outside the Root Protection Area (RPA) of trees or otherwise supported by an agreed methodology for construction within the RPA.

Subject to conditions requiring the development to proceed in accordance with the AIA, Tree Protection Plan and Method statement, the submission/approval of an engineered no-dig construction specification and the submission/approval of detailed surface and foul drainage layout plan, the Council's Tree Officer raises no objection to the proposed development.

Subject to these conditions therefore, the proposals are deemed to adhere with the requirements of Policy SE5 of the CELPS and emerging Policy ENV5 of the SADPD.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site falls within a Flood Zone 1, the lowest category of flood zone and indeed the category afforded to all parts of England unless flooding is known to occur where in such cases, these sites are referred to as falling within Flood Zone 2 or 3.

The application is supported by a preliminary drainage strategy. This has been reviewed by the Council's Flood Risk Officer who advises that no objection to the approach outlined within the report however, as the strategy is only preliminary, they would request a surface water drainage condition is added in the event of approval.

United Utilities originally advised that they preferably have sight of the proposed drainage plan for the site upfront. However, their consultation response goes on to state that should planning permission be granted without this information, that a condition should be imposed requiring the submission/approval of drainage details. In addition, a condition is proposed requiring the submission/approval of a drainage management and maintenance plan.

Subject to the above recommended drainage conditions the application is deemed to adhere with Policy SE13 of the CELPS and the other drainage policies of the development plan.

Health

Knutsford Medical Partnership (KMP) is a GP partnership, currently working across 4 sites to deliver care to 22,950 patients of Knutsford and its surrounding areas. The sites are referred to as Toft Road, Manchester Road, Annandale and Town Lane (Mobberley).

The existing premises occupied by Knutsford Medical Partnership have been documented as being unable to support the current and future provision of services by the GP Practices therein. The condition of the various GP premises involved requires significant improvement, as there are numerous aspects of the premises that are non-compliant with modern regulatory requirements, and the available space is restricting the amount and type of services that can be provided. The Lease of one of the existing premises is also due to expire in 2024 with no options to extend.

The following building size estimates are based on using the NHS Project Appraisal Unit Primary Care Consulting/Examination and Treatment Room Estimator Tool, however further

space analysis will be undertaken with the GP's should this new build development gain approval, as it is anticipated that there may be some areas for economies of scale within the new building.

Individual Practice List Size versus Recommended Healthcare Building Size:

Practice	List Size (Nov 2020)	GIA (m ²) for Clinical/Waiting Areas	NHSE Guidance GIA (m ²)	Shortfall GIA
Annandale Medical Centre (inc. Town)	6,123	311	909	-66%
Manchester Road Medical Centre	7,998	443	1157	-61%
Toft Road Surgery	9,829	424	1405	-70%

Collective Partnership List Size versus Recommended Healthcare Building Size:

Practice	List Size (Nov 2020)	GIA (m ²) overall	NHSE Guidance GIA (m ²)	Shortfall GIA
Knutsford Medical Partnership	22,950	1,178	3,307	-64%
Recommended no. of Consulting, Examination & Treatment Rooms			40 Rooms	18 Rooms

Noting the above, the NHS CCG therefore advise that a development of this scale will have a detrimental effect on the GP Practices within Knutsford; therefore the CCG request section 106 monies as per the below.

Initial calculations in conjunction with NHS Property Services, and other neighbouring CCG's is based on occupancy x number of units in the developments x £360

Size of Unit	Occupancy Assumptions Based on Size of Unit	Health Need/Sum Requested per Unit
1 bed unit	1.4 persons	£504 per 1 bed unit
2 bed unit	2.0 persons	£720 per 2 bed unit
3 bed unit	2.8 persons	£1,008 per 3 bed unit
4 bed unit	3.5 persons	£1,260 per 4 bed unit
5 bed unit	4.8 persons	£1,728 per 5 bed unit

As the housing mix has not been identified within the application form, a provision is made as follows:

- 1 bed unit x 6 = £3,024
- 2 bed unit x 22 = £15,840

Total: £18,864

It has been confirmed that the money will either be spent towards a new medical facility in Knutsford or improvements at the existing sites.

It is advised that the trigger for this contribution prior to first occupation of the approved development. The applicant advises that they are agreeable to this contribution.

Manchester Airport

Manchester Airport advise that they have no objections to the application proposals, subject to the following conditions: Measures to minimise and manage dust and smoke should be implemented, that no pools or ponds should be constructed without approval, that all exterior lighting should be capped at the horizontal and that no solar panels should be installed without approval. A number of informatives are also proposed. Conditions to ensure that these matters are secured shall be added in the event of approval.

Other matters

The Council's Education Officer and ANSA Open Space Officers advise that they have no objections to the proposed development.

Heads of Terms

If the application is approved, a Section 106 Agreement will be required to secure the following:

- On-site affordable housing provision and stipulations
- Contribution of £18,864 towards mitigating the impact of the development upon local Health provision

CIL Regulations

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 it is necessary for planning applications with legal agreements to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following:

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The affordable housing is to be secured via a S106 Agreement to ensure the site operator is a Registered Provider (RP) and to ensure that stipulations are included that require the affordable homes be let or sold to people who are in housing need and have a local connection. The local connection criteria used in the agreement should match the Council's allocations policy.

A contribution of £18,864 is deemed necessary to ensure the impact of the future occupiers of the development upon local health facilities is mitigated.

The requirements are therefore considered to be necessary, fair and reasonable in relation to the development. The S106 recommendation is compliant with the CIL Regulations 2010.

Conclusions

The application proposes the erection of an affordable housing apartment block in a predominantly residential area of Knutsford. Within such locations, development is deemed to be acceptable in principle, subject to its adherence with all relevant policies of the development plan.

Of particular relevance in this instance are policies relating to affordable housing, heritage and design, neighbouring amenity, highway safety and trees.

The Council's Affordable Housing Officer is satisfied that the tenure mix and size of the units being provided (in terms of the number of beds) satisfy a local need and as such, is supportive of the scheme. This provision is to be secured via S106 Agreement.

The site lies adjacent to two Conservation Areas and as such, the impact upon the setting of these is a consideration. Following pre-application discussions and revisions received during the application process, both the Council's Heritage and Urban Design Officers are now satisfied with the latest set of plans, subject to conditions.

Following the receipt of an updated Noise Impact Assessment in order to consider the impact of any possible noise pollution from the substation, the Council's Environmental Protection Officer raises no environmental amenity concerns subject to conditions. No issues are raised in relation to neighbouring loss of privacy, light or visual intrusion, subject to an obscure glazing condition.

Although the proposals provide a below-standard number of parking spaces, the Council's Highway's Officer is satisfied with the level of provision proposed given that the units are 1 and 2 bed only. The site is also sustainably located. No concerns are raised in relation to access, traffic impact and highway safety.

TPO trees lie adjacent to the site but will not be impacted by the development. Three (3) C-category trees are sought for removal to accommodate the proposed development. The Council's Tree Officer raises no objections to the removal of these trees or the scheme overall, subject to conditions.

No issues are deemed to be created with regards to flood risk and drainage, the impact of the proposals upon Manchester Airport and the impact of the proposals upon local health provision subject to conditions and a commuted sum.

Matters in relation to Landscape shall be reported to committee in the form of a written update.

For the above reasons, the application is recommended for approval subject to satisfactory receipt of outstanding consultee responses, a S106 Agreement and conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to satisfactory receipt of outstanding consultee responses and a S106 Agreement to secure the following:

S106	Amount	Trigger
Affordable Housing	100% on-site provision	N/a

Health – Commuted Sum	£18,864	Prior to occupation
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And the following conditions:

- 1. Time (3 years)**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Submission/approval of facing and roofing materials**
- 4. Submission/approval of window and door details**
- 5. Implementation of supporting tree documents/plans**
- 6. Submission/approval of an engineer designed no-dig hard surface construction for hard surfacing within RPA's**
- 7. Landscape – implementation**
- 8. Submission/approval of levels**
- 9. Obscure glazing – Far southern elevation, first-floor corridor and unit 19**
- 10. Implementation of Noise Mitigation**
- 11. Submission/approval of electric vehicle charging infrastructure**
- 12. Submission/approval of a Travel Plan**
- 13. Submission/approval of a Phase I contaminated land report**
- 14. Submission/approval of a contaminated land verification report**
- 15. Submission/approval of an imported soil verification report**
- 16. Works should stop should contamination be identified**
- 17. Nesting birds**
- 18. Implementation of ecological enhancement plan**
- 19. Submission/approval of boundary treatment plan (*in consultation with residents beyond western boundary*)**
- 20. Submission/approval of a detailed surface & foul water drainage strategy (*drainage and trees*)**
- 21. Submission/approval of a drainage management and maintenance plan**
- 22. Submission/approval of a dust and smoke management plan (construction and demolition)**
- 23. No open pools or ponds should be created**
- 24. All exterior lighting shall be capped at the horizon**
- 25. No solar panels**

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



Zoom to scale



X

Y

Go Mouse Coordinates (EPSG:27700): Position outside of map...

Zoom: 7 Current scale: 1:2500 Basemap Projection: EPSG:27700 Map Center