

Application No: 11/3551N

Location: Church View Primary Care Centre, BEAM STREET, NANTWICH, CW5 5NX

Proposal: Conservation Area Consent for Demolition of Former Kiltearn Medical Centre and Construction of Retail Unit with Car Parking, Servicing, Landscaping and all Associated Works

Applicant: Mr S Binks, Keyworker Homes (Cheshire) LLP

Expiry Date: 07-Nov-2011

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions.

MAIN ISSUES

The main issues are:

Contribution of the Existing Building

Acceptability of the Proposed Replacement

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application has been referred to committee because it is a commercial building of over 1000 square metres in floor area.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is a 0.26ha brownfield site, positioned 80m to the east of the designated Nantwich town centre and within the Nantwich Conservation Area. The site is bounded by Beam Street to the north, an unnamed road to the east and south. The Civic Hall public car park to the south west and a pedestrian link connecting the car park to Beam Street to the west.

The site currently comprises a part single part two storey building dating from the 1970s, constructed from red brick. The single storey element has a flat roof whilst the central two storey element has a pitched slate roof. The building was vacated in 2007 and currently all openings are boarded up. A temporary security fence surrounds the whole

site. The building is in poor state of repair having suffered vandalism, including graffiti, and several slates are missing.

The building is positioned close to the northern and eastern site boundaries with surface car parking on the southern and western parts. The site has planting along the northern, eastern and southern elevation including some mature and semi-mature trees.

To the north of the site on the opposite side of Beam Street are two storey residential properties and a single storey Police Station. Also fronting Beam Street, in between the site and the designated town centre to the west, is Nantwich Library and the bus station. Beam Street, constitutes a secondary retail frontage for the town centre. The core of the town centre is approximately 230m to the south east and focuses around High Street

On the opposite side of the unnamed road from the application site, to the east, is the Fire Station and a three storey residential care home. Facing the application site and the unnamed road to the south is a new three storey medical centre including a Co-op Pharmacy.

Chatwins Bakery and Peter Wilson Auctioneers also adjoin the Civic Hall car park and are to the south west of the application site.

The buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site are a variety of ages and constructed from a mixture of materials; they do not have any one building style that visually ties them together. The new Medical Centre uses a variety of building materials including block work, yellow brick, slate and timber cladding. Chatwins is also a modern redbrick building which has a service access from the car park. Peter Wilson Auctioneers is an attractive Victorian single storey building with stone sills and detailing. The Civic Hall is a red brick built art deco building with a corrugated asbestos roof.

Nantwich library dates from the 1970s, is the equivalent of three storeys in height and constructed of brown brick. It faces the bus station which is positioned on the corner of Market Street and Beam Street. In the wider Conservation Area, which includes the primary retail area, half timbered buildings are prevalent.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application seeks Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing building in order to construct a new A1 retail building with 21 car parking spaces, landscaping and ancillary works. The proposal will create a net internal area of 972sqm (10,463sqft) with a net sales floor of 832sqm (8,956sqft). The building would be occupied by Marks and Spencers. A parallel planning application has been submitted and is referred to elsewhere on this agenda. (Application 11/3549N refers.)

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

There are no relevant previous applications relating to this site.

5. POLICIES

Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011

Policy BE.7: Conservation Areas

National policy

PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

English Heritage

- Do not wish to offer any comments on this occasion
- The application should, be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of the Council's own specialist conservation advice.

7. VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL:

The Town Council objects to this application on the following grounds:-

1. The Council considers the description of the development is misleading and the application should be re-submitted, since the public will not know the correct location of the site or nature of the development. The application site is described as the former Kiltarn Medical Centre, which it is not, as the Kiltarn Centre was in Hospital Street. (To add to the confusion, development is actually taking place on that site). The site is further described as being at Church View Primary Care Centre, Beam Street. There is a Church View Medical Centre off Beam Street with a Kiltarn Practice in it, but this is a recently built building on a different and separate location to the application site. The applicant's confusion about the location of the site they are developing and the mis-description means that the application has been wrongly identified and members of the public might easily not realise where the application is or what it relates to. It would be wrong to consider an application which has not given accurate information to enable public objection or comment to be received.
2. The design of the building does nothing to enhance or improve the Conservation Area in which the site stands. In a submission by Turley Associates accompanying the planning application it is said that the current building (the old Beam Street Medical Centre) "presents a bland and unremarkable elevation to Beam Street and does nothing to enhance connectivity with the town centre." The same could reasonably be said of the proposed development put forward by the applicant. It is a featureless, "off the shelf" Shed - a shop unit like hundreds of similar small supermarkets across the country. Turley Associates are scrabbling for justification for the design, when they say (Para 6.21) "the scale and massing of the new retail unit ... is consistent with the built form that has emerged over recent years on the periphery of the town centre." In other words, the buildings around it are mediocre and undistinguished – and this is yet another. The Town Council believes that the Cheshire East planners should be asking for something contemporary yet striking

which enhances this entrance to the town and makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

3. The Council is concerned about the fact that parking is in short supply in Nantwich and this application is likely to mean that increased parking in the adjacent Civic Hall (Beam Street) public car park, which is already restricted because of the building of a Medical Centre. Overflow from this retail development will take more spaces at this adjacent car park.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

Letters have been received from the following addresses: 4 Market St, 44 Marsh Lane, 8 Pepper Street, Nantwich, making the following points:

- The planning application is described as "Demolition of former Kiltern Medical Centre and Construction of Retail Unit". In fact, the former Kiltern Medical Centre was on Hospital Street; this building was the old Nantwich Health Centre and Tudor Surgery. The description could well cause confusion among the public and should be changed and re-issued.
- This site is part of an important gateway at the entrance to Nantwich town centre and is in a conservation area. The existing health centre buildings are far from attractive, but this is an opportunity to build something much more attractive and appropriate to this important location. The present proposal signally fails in this respect - it looks like many other modern retail sheds with a monopitch roof and if allowed to go ahead would repeat the mistakes of earlier generations, such as the existing building and the 1960's Swinemarket development.
- The Council should reject the application and tell the developers to come back with a much more appropriate design.
- Welcome an application to develop this unsightly plot on Beam Street but I am concerned change of use to retail. This is out of the town's retail zone and could have a negative impact on existing town centre retail outlets shifting the retail foot flow to another area of the town.
- There is concern about the pre-fabricated type of building proposed
- There is a danger of the Civic Hall car parking facility being taken up for this one store
- Allowing a major food retailer to open a mid-size store at this location could well jeopardise the future of the whole Snow Hill redevelopment. Therefore the Council should not allow the old health centre site to be used for retail purposes.
- Nantwich is still one of the few remaining town centres which has had a good mixture of independent shops and very few empty units.
- In recent years local traders have had to battle with the ever expanding supermarkets (larger Sainsbury's) and a tough economic climate and the council should be doing all it can to maintain a vibrant town centre.

- From experiences in other local towns where we have seen a large multiple retailer open in or near the town centre (M&S in Newcastle under Lyme and Congleton) small shops, and others in the town centre have struggled. Not in one instance has it lead to an increase in footfall in the town.
- There is no justification for the council to agree with such a proposal. It is not in the interest of the town traders and with a glut of supermarkets around the town I believe the local community is well served in terms of large supermarkets.
- There is a retail area in Nantwich, and further developments outside of this should not be allowed just to suit a large national retailer.
- Although there is little the council can do to help local traders in these tough times, it can at least not harm them by not allowing the development of Beam St Medical centre for a large national retailer.
- This is the view of a number of local traders.

Nantwich Health Centre

- Concern about the potential for traffic chaos and personal injury to the 22000 local residents who are registered at the 3 surgeries housed within Church View Primary Care Centre. Many are frail and elderly, some fairly disabled, with limited ability to walk safely from the local drop off points, the car park and the sheltered accommodation units adjacent to our surgery building.
- The planned conversion of the narrow road, with an acute bend right opposite the health centre building entrance and the very tightly sandwiched disabled car parking area located nearby, into a thoroughfare which will be regularly negotiated by a fair sized articulated lorry, is nothing short of a recipe for disaster.
- The narrow pavement is already partially blocked by ambulances and cars (belonging to disabled parking permit holders) parked on the double-yellow lines. The intended development will only add to the seriousness of the problem.
- There is a row of well-established trees intervening between Church View PCC and the development site. The latter are very healthy and mature trees, over 25 years old, right at the periphery of the development plot. They serve to maintain the green credentials of the locale, adding a touch of colour in the spring and autumn, supporting many local avian species and even providing a natural screen between the health centre and the environs. These ought to be preserved with good reason.
- Having viewed the drawing indicating traffic coming off the A530 (Beam Street) i.e. articulated lorries and refuse vehicles which need access to this site, they are anxious about the safety of patients going into and coming out of the surgery, vehicles using the pharmacy next to the surgery and adjacent car parking issues. This is a very busy area as people of all ages and abilities use the health centre

facilities from 8.00am - 6.00pm daily. Also, another consideration is that the large library van is being driven in and out of the adjacent area most days.

- Public safety is obviously a prime concern. The roads are not particularly wide so large vehicles will cause problems.

Nantwich Civic Society

1. **Principle: The Retail Capacity** figures used by the applicants are based on figures and growth projections that are now out of date. The Cheshire Retail Study was completed in 2008. They were based on economic and spending projections gathered BFC (Before the Financial Crisis). The whole economy is much worse now than had been predicted. Considerable care needs to be given to accepting the “spare retail capacity” claims for Nantwich because consumer spending is down and will get worse in future. Should there be no capacity, this extra retail unit will harm existing independent retailers and market traders who are the lifeblood and character of Nantwich. Sainsburys’ recent expansion on the edge of town, together with high parking charges, is still affecting many traders. Cheshire East officers should examine critically the claimed statistical “headroom” for new retail space and to report on this matter to the Committee in its written report. If the conclusion is that there is capacity for this, we think that a good quality food retailer would have overall positive effects on the retail offer and draw of the town.
 - The right kind of retailer could attract more shoppers to town, with a knock-on effect to independent shops giving a quality offer.
 - The developer, understandably, will likely sell to the highest bidder – and this could be any quality of retail operator, which could harm the rest of the town rather than being a positive attractor.
 - Yet, the planning authority has no powers to decide which retailer comes to this development.
2. **Location** – the site lies outside the retail area on the current Development Plan. As such, the L.P.A. must be satisfied that there is a) surplus local purchasing power – “headroom” - for the shop and b) no location available closer to the town centre. It is difficult to be equivocal about supporting the principle of a new retail unit in the light of these spending capacity questions and unknown retailer.
3. **Access & Road Safety**. - The current access road does not have to accommodate HGVs during the day. Car park users and patients at the large new health centre use the proposed access along the existing road to the car park. There is a right-angled bend just where there is: the Main Entrance; Doctors’ Car Park; Emergency lay-by; Pharmacy entrance; Cromwell Court (sheltered housing). It is already a source of congestion, with drop-offs, disabled parking and manoeuvres in and out of the parking areas.

Emergency access is required at all times for the doctors and for Cromwell Court. However, the right angle bend at the entrance to the health centre and Cromwell Court

is often blocked by, sometimes illegally, parked cars (usually belonging to disabled drivers and patients) and delivery vehicles using the surgeries and/or pharmacy.

- Many old or infirm people are always in the vicinity of this corner using walkers, pushchairs, and disability scooters or are simply unsure on their feet. Introducing heavy goods vehicles, reversing, is far too dangerous.
- Emergency vehicles will be prejudiced when this corner is blocked.

The submitted plans show articulated HGVs in the delivery area behind the new retail unit. The L.P.A will not be able to enforce the size of delivery vehicle, so we must assume there will be articulated lorries delivering here.

Any large delivery vehicle coming in to the retail unit will have great difficulty negotiating the bend, even with no parked cars in the area. With just one badly-parked vehicle, the driver will have got half way round the corner before realising that the lorry would be unable to go further. Reversing back out on to Beam Street would also be impossible, as incoming cars would gather behind it. The result would be deadlock, especially during the day.

In addition, the plans show that lorries will have to reverse in to the retail unit's car park from the public access road to the main car park, parallel to the disabled spaces for the Health Centre, getting very close to customers' and public's parked cars. This manoeuvre appears very difficult to complete easily.

Reversing will take place close to the point where the pay machine is located and where maximum vehicle numbers and pedestrians using this town centre car park. This is a recipe for damage, accidents and traffic jams.

The Civic Society recognise that this is a town centre location where there is no optimum safe access but local knowledge shows just how much re-consideration of the delivery issues must be given. Can this matter be subject of clarification between officers and developer before the application goes to Committee - and the issue be addressed in the Committee report?

- Would like consideration to be given to an alternative: Create a new access direct off Beam Street – between the retail unit and rear of library. There used to be a road in this location – called Crowsfoot Lane. Make the existing access road to health centre and residential units a cul de sac.
- A new access here would separate health centre users and traffic from lorries and would enable the current pedestrian crossing to be moved closer down to the town centre and bus station, where it would be more useful.
- The loss of the landscaped area in the application's proposals would be easily outweighed by the improvement to highway safety and traffic flow.
- Alternatively, the current road from Beam Street to the new health centre could be closed off entirely and a cul de sac made from the new road for the health centre. The new building could be moved across the former road area. But – this would involve the loss of good trees – see later section.

4. **External appearance.** - We accept that this is a modern building – but it does not have to look like this proposal. Much better quality is required here. It lies on a very prominent corner, on Beam Street and at the point where there is the only access to a

main car park in town. It is, however, within the Town Centre Conservation Area – as such, new buildings must respect, maintain and enhance the character of the historic qualities of this conservation area.

The LPA has to make a critical assessment of the design and the statement by the applicant - with regard to national and local planning policies. In Conservation Areas the requirements are very strict Improvement, enhancement or at least no harm is the requirement for new developments.

The submitted Design Statement does not stand up to serious critical examination because it glosses over the need for a better design and materials for the Conservation area. The statement takes an easy way out to try to justify what is basically a regular retail “shed” disguised with a glass entrance, brick panels and a disastrous, distracting colour scheme. Their contention - that the area does not currently have good architecture in it - is no justification for accepting this poor design. Neither do the Civic Society want poor precedents to be an excuse for poor design in this new development.

By this, in particular, Civic Society allude to the following. The town recently has been blessed with a wonderful new facility and good service new Health Centre. The problem lies with the unedifying and unfathomable design and materials. The building’s appearance has been allowed to run roughshod over Conservation and Design Principles (with which other smaller property owners have to struggle to comply). It was part of a job lot of similar health buildings for a regional contract – Hence; it looks like it has nothing to do with Nantwich. It is basically a building parachuted in from any number of anonymous metropolitan areas without our serious heritage to respect. The proposed design of this retail unit displays similar characteristics.

The use of random coloured panels of green, white and black presents a totally unacceptable and alienating introduction to the historic Elizabethan and Georgian Town Centre for which Nantwich is rightly famous.

- One example is the use of random coloured panels in Sheffield Brightside on a new huge Tesco Extra unit. Panels of white, orange and maroon are a stark shock (– and this is in a run down industrial former steel-making valley – and not in an historic rural market town).
- Another suggestion is to use glass completely for the elevations – clear and obscure, where necessary.
- Or to use high quality sandstone (ashlar) on the walls up to a high level with a glazed clerestory band at the top, below the roof. Crisp detailing could make this a timeless, quality building.
- This particular style of random cladding is only a short-lived designers’ fad that will soon become forgotten by architects in search of the next fashion.
- The much-criticised Oat Market/Swine Market 1970s retail development is a reminder of how ignoring the historic character in new developments has had a lasting, blighting effect.

The Civic Society hope that planning officers and councillors will agree that we cannot allow our town to have this incongruous visual shock. The Civic Society suggest that any cladding panels are kept to a simple colour scheme and pattern. Nantwich is

known as a black and white town. Our half – timbered Elizabethan buildings give its readily-recognised visual brand. Why not use much larger white panels with black for edges, recesses and/or surrounds (or vice versa)? This would not be (the all- too - easily trotted out retort of being) a “pastiche” of the historic character of Nantwich. Instead, this locally-derived colour scheme would acknowledge and signal the existence of the historic conservation area’s character and give a visual clue and traditional anchor to this entrance to town. A black and white colour scheme would simply say, “This building belongs to Nantwich”. The brickwork panels seem to be placed randomly on the elevations too – with little bearing on the form or function of the building. Reassessment of their design is needed and if used should look like traditional Cheshire brick.

5. **Landscaping.** - The proposals are to clear all of the trees away. Currently, there are around 18 good trees surrounding the building - including a lovely old pear tree, still laden with fruit opposite the pharmacy and health centre, together with many good birches and alders. They give a welcome variety to this part of the Conservation Area.

This semi mature tree cover critically shields from public view the new health centre and the rears of the library and civic hall. Despite new planting, the sudden loss of tree cover will open up to view these unsatisfactory buildings to detriment of the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. More pressure is needed from Cheshire East to keep as many existing trees as possible, despite the developer’s desire to make things easy. Individual businesses and householders in Conservation Areas have to comply with strict rules and planning decisions for their own buildings and trees.

6. **Public Realm** -It is a very poor public realm design. It completely misses a good opportunity to create a high quality, self-contained, distinctive area of public realm in front of the store entrance off Beam Street. Instead the floorscape appears to reflect the lines of the rear emergency vehicle access to the Library, generating a series of awkward junctions with existing and proposed buildings, and lacking any sense of place. There are opportunities here to provide seats, lighting and public information.

NB The landscape plans do not include tree planting between car parking bays as shown on the ‘3-D model’ (Figure 13, Page 21), which means the latter is misleading.

7. **Conclusion.**

As one of the most significant and highly visible new buildings in the Nantwich Conservation Area, the LPA has a duty to take great care and time to get the design and access right for this particular site. This fashion disaster of multi coloured panels must not be allowed. It is not good enough in design; it clears away all the mature trees, and has dangerous, congesting delivery access. It needs to be revised complement the local building signatures with the strong requirement for sympathetic materials. A colour scheme which pays due respect to the historic character of Nantwich is essential. The Civic Society hope that officers and councillors alike will not be swayed by the “pastiche” justification for avoiding redesigning the building to be more local in its character and of higher architectural quality. Quite simply - We should

have a top quality building that respects and belongs in Nantwich's Historic Conservation Area.

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- Statement of Community Involvement
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Planning and Retail Statement
- Preliminary Risk Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Tree Survey

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Main Issues

According to Policy BE.7: Conservation Areas of the adopted Local Plan development involving demolition of an unlisted building will not be permitted where the building makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area: unless there is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses, or find viable and compatible alternative uses; and that these efforts have failed. These efforts should embrace financial, structural and technical matters. Demolition of an unlisted building meeting the above criterion will only be permitted if detailed proposals for the re-use of the site, including any replacement building or other structure, have been approved. The main issues in this case, therefore, surround the contribution of the existing building to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the acceptability of the detailed proposals for its replacement.

Contribution of the Existing Building

In exercising Conservation Area controls, Councils are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in question; and, as with listed building controls, this should be the prime consideration in determining a Conservation Area Consent application.

In the case of conservation area controls, however, account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole.

The general presumption is in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

As stated above, the existing building on the application site is a medical centre, built in the 1970s and typical of this building type and age. It is architecturally simple and does not fulfil the potential the site has to offer. It is predominantly a low rise flat roofed single storey building with one central two storey section with a pitched roof. It has a range of tall vertically orientated windows and is predominantly of red brick construction with

elements of cladding on the two storey section. Columns flank the entrance to the building. Overall, the building is introverted in orientation and emphasis, set around a courtyard and presenting bland and unremarkable elevations to Beam Street and the access road (unnamed). There is a planted border around the periphery of the site containing a mix of shrubs and trees that obscure and screen the low elements of the building, to the extent that it is barely noticeable when travelling along Beam Street into the heart of the town centre.

The building has a simple form and a neutral appearance within the context of the conservation area, it has however become a negative element in its current state of dereliction at the entrance to the town centre and lining a key route within the conservation area. The fabric of the building has deteriorated since it was vacated in 2007 and it is now dominated by boarded openings and security measures to deter entry and prevent vandalism.

The existing building is a comparatively modern structure of no architectural merit, which makes no contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is noted that no objection has been received from English Heritage or the Conservation Officer to the proposals.

Acceptability of the Proposed Replacement.

The proposed store has been sited at the eastern edge of the site with the back of the building running along the access road to the car park. The front elevation of the building, containing the main entrance, will be at 90 degrees to Beam Street, fronting onto a new public square to be created between the new store and the library. This area currently forms a narrow pedestrian route between Beam Street and the Civic Hall car park.

Initially officers had a number of concerns about the layout of the scheme, particularly in terms of the general orientation of the building towards the library which resulted in lack of active frontage to Beam Street and the long blank elevation to the car park access. Officer's preference at the time was for the entrance to be at the Beam Street / access road junction. However, it is now accepted that, given the retail use, it would be preferable to orientate the building so that the entrance was close to the town centre to encourage connectivity with the existing shops. I was also considered that orientating the main entrance onto a new public square, created an opportunity to enhance the existing link through from Beam, St. behind the library to the car park, which appears to be well utilised. Therefore it is considered that in principle, the creation of the public space in front of the building with the main doors opening on to it is acceptable.

To turn to the matter of elevational detail, PPS1 now states that good design should integrate new development into the existing urban form and contribute positively to making places better for people. It goes on to state that design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted. Furthermore, the site is located within a Conservation Area, where BE7 of the adopted Local Plan clearly states that within a conservation area *"a new building will not be permitted unless it would harmonise with its setting by being sympathetic on scale, form and materials to the characteristic built form of the area, particularly the adjacent buildings and spaces"*

As originally submitted, officers had a number of concerns relating to the design as originally submitted, and these were echoed in the comments of the Town Council and third parties. The initial plans showed a large single storey rectangular building with a single mono-pitched roof-form, characteristic of modern out-of-town retail park sheds.

The desire to create an active frontage and main entrance onto the new public square had resulted in a long, monotonous blank elevation to the carpark access road to the rear and lack of active frontage to Beam Street. This created the impression that the Beam Street elevation, despite being on the principal through route and the most important in terms of its visual relationship with surrounding buildings and the conservation area, appeared very much as a secondary side elevation. The single block-monopitch of the building ran from east to west, which meant that the gable fronted onto Beam Street, exacerbated this problem. There was also a lack of any form of focal point / architectural feature on the prominent corner of Beam St / carpark access road which is an important gateway into Nantwich town centre.

In terms of materials, the applicants proposed the use of chequerboard green and white cladding for which there is no precedent for in Nantwich. The high blank brick wall and flat roofed element on the corner immediately opposite the health centre entrance also caused concern. Overall, it was officer's view that the building as initially proposed would not harmonise with the surrounding conservation area in terms of scale form or materials and would be contrary to the policies outlined above.

Whilst it was agreed that it would be undesirable to construct a pastiche copy of one of the many historic buildings in Nantwich town centre, and therefore a modern building would be acceptable, any such building on the site must clearly reference, in terms of materials, form, or architectural elements, the traditional buildings in the town centre.

Following extensive negotiations an amended design has been submitted, which breaks down the overall mass of the building into 3 distinct parts, each utilising different materials. Diminishing overall ridge heights, moving away from the Beam Street frontage ensures that there is a visual hierarchy and that the part of the building closest to the Beam Street frontage is the dominant element with subordinate elements, being located closer to the rear of the site.

Monopitched roofs have been used on the two front sections and a flat roof has been added to the rear section over the service area. The monopitch on the front section has been orientated at 90 degrees to that on the middle section to emphasise the Beam Street frontage, create a corner feature to the Beam St / access road junction and help to break down the mass of the building. The front section utilises predominantly brick, which is the dominant material in this part of the conservation area, but incorporates glass and cladding panels to introduce articulation to the elevation and break up the mass of masonry. The panels are arranged so as to give the building more vertical emphasis, which is a characteristic of Nantwich buildings. The glazing to the side elevation facing the public space, has been wrapped around the corner of the building and now extends along the whole of the Beam Street front elevation to create an active frontage to both sides of the building. The glazed element, which will house the in-store cafe, projects under a pitched roof canopy which also adds visual interest to this part of

the building. The canopy oversails the building slightly and provides some shelter for part of the outdoor cafe seating area which will be provided within part of the public square.

The middle section is to be finished in grey cladding over a blue engineering brick plinth, which will help it appear subordinate to the front section. The plinth corresponds in terms of height and proportions to the glazed element on the front section which helps to unite the two elements. The monotony of the access road elevation has been broken up through the use of varying roof heights, different materials, and the addition of a tower feature to the southern corner of the middle section and fenestration. Replacement landscaping will also be provided. The massing of the high blank brick wall to the service yard has been broken up through the use of green screening to the outside.

Overall it is considered that the scheme as now presented is a considerable improvement over the previous proposal. Whilst a building of this nature would not be acceptable in the centre of the conservation area, the site lies at the periphery, and is surrounded to the west and south by the large scale modern buildings of the library and health centre and to the north and east by modern residential development. Whilst it remains a large contemporary building, the proposal now references the predominant characteristics of the surrounding area and adjacent buildings and spaces in terms of form and materials. It therefore complies with policies BE2 and BE7 of the local plan in respect of design and new development within conservation areas.

Other Matters Raised

A number of other matters have been raised by third parties, including, retail impact, landscaping and highway safety. These matters fall outside the scope of a Conservation Area Consent application. However, they are dealt with in full under the associated planning application.

11. CONCLUSION

The existing building is typical of its type and age. It is bland and unremarkable architecturally and does not contribute to the significance of the conservation area. It is a neutral building but its current derelict and dilapidated state is damaging to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The principle of demolition is therefore acceptable. Detailed proposals for the re-use of the site, involving the construction of a replacement building, which would harmonise with its setting and would be sympathetic in terms of scale, form and materials to the characteristic built form of the area, including the adjacent buildings and spaces, have been submitted. The proposal therefore complies with policies BE2 and BE7 of the local plan in respect of design and new development within conservation areas. For the reasons given above and having due regard to all other matters raised it is concluded that the proposal complies with Policy BE.7: Conservation Areas of the adopted Local Plan and it is recommended accordingly.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Re-development to take place in accordance with planning permission 11/3549N within 3 years of the date of this consent.**

