

Application No: 13/5093N

Location: REASEHEATH COLLEGE, MAIN ROAD, WORLESTON, NANTWICH, CHESHIRE, CW5 6DF

Proposal: New teaching facility, national centre for food futures and the environment and associated outbuildings including glasshouses and maintenance block

Applicant: Mr S Kennish, Reaseheath College

Expiry Date: 19-Mar-2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

- Policy;
- Loss of Golf Course;
- Design Standards and Impact on the Conservation Area;
- Amenity;
- Drainage;
- Sustainability;
- Archaeology;
- Landscape;
- Forestry;
- Highways;
- Ecology; and
- Other Matters

REFFERAL

This application is included on the agenda of the Southern Committee as the proposed cumulative floor area of the development exceeds 1000m² and therefore constitutes a major proposal.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

Reaseheath College is located approximately two miles north of Nantwich town centre and is accessed off the A51 ring road. The application site is located on the periphery of the college campus. Located immediately to the north of application site is the main college campus. The application site is located primarily on an existing 9 hole golf course and incorporates a number of trees, with more significant specimens located around the periphery. The

application site is located just outside the Reaseheath Conservation Area and is wholly within the open countryside.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a full application for a new teaching facility, national centre for food futures and the environment and associated outbuildings including glasshouses and maintenance block at Reaseheath College, Nantwich.

RELEVANT HISTORY

P06/0507 - Demolition of Shed and Erection of Construction Workshop. Approved 4th July 2006

P06/0512 - Change of Use from Manufacturing Building to IT Centre including Demolition of Oil Store and Erection of New Entrance. Approved 4th July 2006

P06/0991 - 96 Bed Two Storey Student Accommodation Building With Associated Car Parking And Landscaping. Approved 4th December 2006

P07/0024 – Erection of Electricity Generation Facility. Approved 26th February 2007

P07/0380 – Erection of Milking Parlour. Approved 21st May 2007

P07/0412 – 4 Isolation Pens. Approved 1st May 2007

P07/0517 – Replacement Animal Care Centre. Approved 20th July 2007

P07/0508 – Extension to Existing Calf House. Approved 31st May 2007

P07/0541 – Demolition of Store and Maintenance Buildings and Construction of Learning Resource Centre and Alterations to Parking. Approved 4th June 2007

P07/0638 – Demolition of Temporary Classroom Block and Construction of a New Estates Maintenance Workshop to Replace Facilities Demolished to make way for the New Learning Resource Centre. Refused 25th June 2007.

P07/0761 – New Engineering Academy Building Approved on 29th August 2007.

P08/1142 - Construction of Barn for Teaching, Barn for Staff/Student Services, Tractor/Tool Store, Landscape Workshop and Teaching Area, 3 Commercial /Teaching Glasshouses, 3 Polytunnels and Associated Works (Development to be Constructed over 2 Phases) – Approved – 11th December 2008

09/1155N - Demolition of the Cross College Building including Student Union Office to make way for the New Student Hub approved under application P08/1126 (Crewe & Nantwich) Conservation Area Consent – Approved – 5th June 2009

09/2160N - Refurbishment and Extension of the Existing Food Processing Department to Accommodate a New Student Training Facility – Approved – 22nd September 2009

10/0279N - Demolition of Single Storey Teaching/Amenity Block and Erection of New Two Storey Food Centre of Excellence for Business and Research Use – Approved – 16th April 2010

10/1345N - Removal of the Existing Flue (1m Diameter by Approx 10m High) and the Addition of Three Smaller Flues (1 x 514mm Diameter by Approx 10m High, 2 x 378mm Diameter by Approx 10m High) – Approved – 11th May 2010

10/3339N - Proposed Extension and Alterations to Provide Extended Catering Facilities, including an Enlarged Kitchen and additional Dining for Students and Staff - Approved

11/2450N - Construction of a New 2 Bay Silage Clamp Extension on Hall Farm within the College Grounds – Approved – 15th August 2011

11/2449N - The Construction of a New Calf House on Hall Farm within the College Grounds – Approved – 26th August 2011

12/1175N – Proposed 3 Storey 150 Bed Residential Student Accommodation Building – Refused – 16th August 2012

12/3548N – Proposed 3 Storey, 150 Bed Residential Student Accommodation Building and Associated Landscape Works – Approved – 30th October 2012

13/1688N - Variation of condition No 2 of permission 12/3548N – Approved – 27th June 2013

POLICIES

National Policy

The application should be determined in accordance with national guidance set out in:

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Policy

The principle issue surrounding the determination of this application is whether the development is in accordance with the following policies within the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011:

| | |
|--------|------------------------------------------------|
| BE.1 | (Amenity) |
| BE.2 | (Design Standards) |
| BE.3 | (Access and Parking) |
| BE.4 | (Drainage, Utilities and Resources) |
| BE.5 | (Infrastructure) |
| BE.7 | (Conservation Areas) |
| BE.9 | (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions) |
| BE.16 | (Development and Archaeology) |
| NE.2 | (Open Countryside) |
| NE.5 | (Nature Conservation and Habitats) |
| NE.9 | (Protected Species) |
| CF.2 | (Community Facilities) |
| RT.9 | (Footpaths and Bridleways) |
| TRAN.5 | (Provision for Cyclists) |
| TRAN.6 | (Cycle Routes) |
| TRAN.9 | (Car Parking Standards) |

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy

Members are aware that the submission version of the new local plan is now in the public domain. This will be presented to the Strategic Planning Board and full Council at the end of February. Subject to this being accepted an update will be provided in relation to this issue.

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

English Heritage: No objections

United Utilities: No objections

Natural England: No objections

Cheshire Garden Trust: It appears that the detailed application is for the new Horticulture dept on the golf course. From the aerials, it looks like mainly young trees that will be removed. However the east side of the proposed development appears to abut the mature woodland which is part of the historic designed landscape (it screens the road). Removal of a group of large trees is proposed here. Strangely the boundary of the woodland is not shown on the tree removal plan, so it is impossible to understand the impact and comment on this with certainty.

The rest of it appears to be development strategy, blocks of colour but no detail. There is not enough detail to say how much if any impact on the remaining kitchen garden walls and bothy there will be from the accommodation development.

The kitchen garden wall and bothy should be avoided as one of the site's few remaining heritage assets, especially as they have a direct link to the horticultural history of the site and should therefore be of added importance to a horticultural college.

Environment Agency: No objections subject to drainage conditions

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

No representations received

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Two letters of representation have been received. The objectors raise the following points:

- I am particularly concerned about the living conditions of local people which are currently affected during College term time in fairly negative ways. The approach to the Wettenhall Road entrance is blighted by litter discarded from cars to the extent where local resident regularly litter pick. This area is also affected by vehicles being parked along the highway in front of Old Hall and, if on the rare occasion when the barrier is down, partially on the entrance. The speed limit here is 60mph, I believe. Other approaches are similarly blighted and whilst not all litter may be directly attributable, there is a significant improvement at week-ends and during holiday periods;
- The College also has a no smoking policy which drives students off campus to pursue their habit. Where this would be given the location of the proposed new Halls of Residence would be interesting;
- It is hoped there will be some discussion of the optimal size for this campus in this rural context and whether ultimately it will out-grow its location rather than it come to dominate. Local people near to MMU in Crewe are experiencing a range of problems such as being unable to park and anti-social behaviour of an unwanted nature;
- There is already planning permission given for 1000 dwellings in the Nantwich area, which has caused considerable local disquiet. The Reaseheath application to build accommodation for some 300 students would add the equivalent of some 50 or more houses to this total apart from adding to the already considerable traffic congestion in the area; and

- If however, planning permission is given to Reaseheath College it should not be on the proposed site which includes the golf course. This would involve the wanton destruction of some lovely mature parkland (apparently subject anyway to a restrictive building covenant) and it would also remove a valuable facility for some 300 local Nantwich men and women who play golf. The college already has an alternative plan on land to the north of existing college buildings. This should be the preferred option.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement

Tree Survey

Sports Statement

Flood Risk Assessment

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Policy

The principle issues surrounding the determination of this application is whether the development is in accordance with Policies BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Car Parking and Access), NE.2 (Open Countryside), NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats), NE.9 (Protected Species), TRAN.9 (Car Parking) and CF.2 (Community Facilities) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011. These policies seek to ensure that the proposed development respects the scale, form and design of the existing buildings and the general character of the area.

In summary, these policies seek to protect the character and appearance of the open countryside whilst allowing for appropriate development. Policies also protect residential amenity and ensure safe vehicular access and adequate parking. A new building will not be permitted unless it harmonises with its setting and is sympathetic in scale, form and materials to the character of the built form and the area particularly adjacent buildings and spaces.

Loss of Golf Course

As part of the application the applicant has submitted a Sports Planning Statement which concludes that the Green Space Strategy makes no reference to golf provision, but recognises the need for additional pitch facilities in Nantwich.

The applicant goes on to enunciate that the original purpose of the golf course was for student training is no longer relevant as course numbers have dwindled and work place training has taken over. Membership of the golf course has also declined steadily to a current low of approximately 300.

Furthermore, there has never pro or coaching structure at the golf course. Membership has been in decline and the course has an elderly membership profile.

However, against this backdrop provision in the Reaseheath area for golf is high, and even the loss of the Reaseheath course would leave the area well supplied compared with the average. The applicant acknowledges that participation is difficult to estimate in detail.

Nevertheless, according to current statistics national and regional participation is on a downward trend, and regional participation is lower than the national average.

Overall, it is considered that the loss of a nine hole course, which may have a niche role in catering for those with less time for a full round or learning opportunities. It is not considered to be crucial in view of the presence of 2 alternative nine hole courses in the immediate area, and others within a 20 minute catchment area. It is therefore considered likely that the loss of the Reaseheath course would not have a detrimental effect on local golf course provision.

Design Standards and Impact on the Conservation Area

This application has been subject to extensive negotiations between officers and the applicant and his agent.

Guidance advocated within NPPF supports well designed buildings. Policy BE.2 (Design Standards) is broadly in accordance with this guidance but places greater emphasis on the impact to the streetscene and encouraging development which respects the character, pattern and form of development within the area.

As a matter of fact, the NPPF states *'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'* (paragraph 64)

However, the NPPF clearly states that *'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness'* (paragraph 60).

The design of new development should be of a high standard and wherever possible the built environment and surroundings should be enhanced. It is important that the relationship with the existing street scene is considered and improved, and not harmed by new development.

According to the submitted plans both of the buildings are single storey and sit adjacent to each other to form an integrated front elevation to main campus. They are connected with a partially glazed café/shop area which acts as a public entrance to the plant sales area contained in the courtyard between the two buildings. To the rear the functional elements of the building are contained around an external landscape and service zone area.

The glass houses are located to the south of the new teaching facility. The glass houses are subdivided into a range of climatic zones and will be used as a teaching aid for students on relevant courses.

In addition to the above, located to the east of the glass houses is a maintenance shed to be used for the storage of equipment and to support the operation of the practical areas of the department and grounds maintenance of the college estate.

The proposal to locate all these buildings to the south of the proposed new sports hall (application 13/5091N), which itself lies directly to the south of an existing area of new

buildings lying outside the conservation area, will serve to integrate them visually with this backdrop of existing buildings which currently form the setting of the conservation area.

Overall, the proposed single storey height should be visually sympathetic as a new visual edge to the setting of the conservation area and the proposed use of timber and brick is also in keeping with the wider rural setting. The proposed areas of render however will need to be visually in keeping with adjacent building. The proposed green wall should comprise native species befitting the wider rural setting and this will be conditioned accordingly.

As with application 13/5091N for the replacement pitches and new sports hall it will be important that the existing tree cover around this site is retained and strengthened, in order to protect the visual impact of this mass of buildings on the setting of the conservation area/the open countryside/the moated site.

In addition it will be important that the existing areas of raised land which currently form visual buffers between the proposed new development site and the outer edges of the college when viewed from outside the site are also retained, in order to minimize the impact of this new development. Conditions will be attached to the decision notice regarding materials, surfacing materials and landscaping to help minimise its impact on the locality. Overall, it is considered that the proposal complies with policies BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.7 (Conservation Areas) and BE.9 (Listed Building: Alterations and Extensions).

Amenity Considerations

Policy BE.1 (Amenity) states that development will be permitted provided that the development is compatible with surrounding land uses, does not prejudice the amenity of future or neighbouring occupiers, does not prejudice the safe movement of traffic and does not cause an increase in air, noise, water pollution which might have an adverse impact on the use of land for other purposes.

The development of the site for teaching facilities and associated works within an existing college campus area is considered to be compatible with the surrounding land uses. The proposals are also unlikely to result in noise, air or water pollution. A principle consideration in determining this application is its effect upon the amenity of adjacent occupants. This primarily includes the residents of cottages located to the south east of the application site. The general thrust of Policy BE.1 requires that development does not have a prejudicial impact on the amenity of occupiers in an adjacent property.

It is considered that the proposal will have a marginal impact on the residential amenities of the occupiers of these cottages. According to GIS there is a distance of approximately 110m separating these dwellings from the application site. Therefore, considering the separation distances, the intervening boundary treatment and the nature and scale of the proposed development will all help to mitigate any negative externalities. It is considered that the proposal complies with policy BE.1 (Amenity).

Drainage

Development on sites such as this generally reduces the permeability of at least part of the site and changes the site's response to rainfall.

The NPPF states that in order to satisfactorily manage flood risk in new development, appropriate surface water drainage arrangements are required. The guidance also states that surface water arising from a developed site should, as far as possible, be managed in a sustainable manner to mimic the surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development.

It is possible to condition the submission of a satisfactory drainage scheme in order to ensure that any surface water runoff generated by the development is sufficiently discharged. This will probably require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) which include source control measures, infiltration devices as well as filter strips and swales which mimic natural drainage patterns. Concerns have been raised that if the proposal was to be approved, it will exacerbate flooding in the immediate area and it is considered prudent to attach a condition relating to drainage, if planning permission is to be approved. Furthermore, colleagues in United Utilities have been consulted and raised no objection subject to the imposition of a drainage condition. Overall, it is considered that the application is in accordance with policy BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources).

Sustainability of the site

The NPPF identifies that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that significant weight should be attached to proposals which enable economic growth and the delivery of sustainable development. With regard to the urban economy, the Framework advises that developments should be located and designed where practical to:-

- Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- Give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;
- Create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians;
- Consider the needs people with disabilities by all modes of transport

The document goes on to enunciate that

‘Plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised’. (paragraph 34).

The site would be sited in a sustainable location alongside the existing buildings on the campus. The site would have easy access to the college, a shop and food outlets. Furthermore, the college is within walking distance of Sainsburys supermarket and Nantwich town centre. A condition relating to secured, covered cycle provision should be attached to any approval. Furthermore, it is considered that, in order to encourage some sustainable forms of transport, a condition relating to a travel plan should be attached to any permission. The NPPF advocates the use of Travel Plan stating:

‘All developments which generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan’ (Para 36).

Overall, it is considered that the site is in a sustainable location and the proposal is in accordance with Policy BE.3 (Access and Parking) and advice advocated within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Archaeology

The proposals will affect an area c 200m to the south of the remains of Reaseheath medieval moated site, which are designated as a Scheduled monument (SM 13493) and under statutory protection. There is, however, no physical effect on the moat from the proposed development and the intervening land is occupied by car parking and modern buildings so issues of 'setting' are unlikely to arise in this instance. The area to the south of the moat was formerly covered in well-preserved medieval ridge and furrow which is very clear on the 1940s aerial photographs. These earthworks, however, have all been obliterated by recent development, including the laying out of the car park and landscaping associated with the golf course.

In these circumstances, and given the fact that it has not been possible to identify any features of particular interest on the historic maps, it is unlikely that significant archaeological deposits are preserved within the proposed development area which would be damaged by development. Therefore, no further archaeological mitigation is advised in this instance and as such the proposal accords with Policy BE.16 (Development and Archaeology)

Landscape

No comments have been received at the time of writing this report from the Landscape Officer. Members will be updated in the update report once these comments have been received.

Forestry

No comments have been received at the time of writing this report from the Forestry Officer. Members will be updated in the update report once these comments have been received.

Highways

No comments have been received at the time of writing this report from the Highways Officer. Members will be updated in the update report once these comments have been received.

Ecology

No comments have been received at the time of writing this report from the Council Ecologist. Members will be updated in the update report once these comments have been received.

Other Matters

It is noted that one of the objectors is concerned about anti social behaviour, for example, dropping litter etc. Whilst the concerns of the objector are noted, this is not a material planning consideration to justify refusing the application. The planning system is not here to

duplicate other legislation, if there is any forms of anti social behaviour, this may be pursued by the Police via their legislation.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

Having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area and other material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development would be in accordance with Policies BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Access and Parking), BE.4 (Drainage Utilities and Resources), BE.5 (Infrastructure), NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats), CF.2 (Community Facilities), TRAN.5 (Provision for Cyclists), TRAN.6 (Cycle Routes), TRAN.9 (Car Parking) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, and that it would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area or the privacy and living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and would be acceptable in terms of highway safety.

Approve subject to conditions:

- 1. Standard**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Surfacing Materials to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 5. Landscaping plan to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 6. Landscaping Implemented**
- 7. Drainage scheme to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 8. Details of green walls to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 9. Limiting the maximum discharge of surface water from the proposed development to the current 'greenfield' rate of 5.0 litres/second.**
- 10. Provision of sufficient flow attenuation volume to ensure that all flows up to and including the critical 100-year event (plus adjustment for the future impact of climate change) are safely retained on the site.**
- 11. Proposed finished floor levels to be constructed 150mm above surrounding levels.**
- 12. Details of Cycle Shelters to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 13. Pile Foundations**
Monday – Friday 09:00 – 17:30 hrs
Saturday 09:00 – 13:00 hrs
Sunday and Public Holidays Nil
- 14. Details of any External Lighting to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 15. Noise mitigation scheme**

- 16. Travel plan to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 17. Details of dust suppression to be submitted and agreed in writing**
- 18. Contaminated land details to be submitted and agreed in writing**

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Planning and Place Shaping Manager has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Southern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

