

Application No: 14/0640N

Location: MOSS SQUARE, CREWE, CHESHIRE

Proposal: Redevelopment of existing car parks for the erection of a Lifestyle Centre (7,682 sqm) incorporating a Library (D1), Day centre (D1) with associated Offices (B1), Leisure centre (D2) with a 4 court Multifunction Sports Hall, Gym, studios, 25m and 17m pools; with vehicle and cycle parking provision, means of vehicular and pedestrian access, servicing, bin storage, plant, electricity sub-station and associated landscaping and public realm provision; involving the removal of the Church Hall and its covered walkway link and partial stopping-up of Crewe Street and opening-up of Moss Square as a through route.

Applicant: Steve Cottle, Cheshire East Council

Expiry Date: 15-May-2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

MAIN ISSUES

Impact of the development on:-

Principle of the Development

Highway Implications

Amenity

Air Quality

Trees

Impact upon the Setting of the Grade II Listed Building

Design

Archaeology

Ecology

Flood Risk and Drainage

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to the Southern Planning Committee as it relates to a major development of between 1,000sq.m and 9,999sq.m.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site of the proposed development extends to 0.95 ha and is located on an area of existing car-parking which is to the south of Crewe Police Station and Christ Church (a Grade II Listed

Building) and to the west of Vernon Way. The development will result in the demolition of the existing Church Hall. The site is within the Crewe Settlement Boundary and Crewe Town Centre Boundary. To the south of the site is retail warehousing occupied by Home Bargains and Dunelm Mill with the associated car-parking. To the east of the site are existing offices and a public house (Hops).

The land is currently level, although the retail units to the south of the site are set at a slightly lower level.

This application is accompanied by Listed Building application 14/0641N.

2. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for the erection of a Lifestyle Building on the existing car-parking. The lifestyle building would be rectangular in form and would accommodate the following:

- New public main swimming pool – 25m, 8 lanes
- New public small swimming pool – 17m
- New wet and dry leisure facilities
- New public library
- New fitness suite and studios
- New sports hall
- New day-care for adults and children (including offices, meeting rooms, family rooms, treatment rooms, training facilities and an external garden/play area).

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

14/0661S - EIA screening opinion for - Redevelopment of existing car parks for the erection of a Lifestyle Centre (7,682 sqm) incorporating a Library (D1), Day centre (D1) with associated Offices (B1), Leisure centre (D2) with a 4 court Multifunction Sports Hall, Gym, studios, 25m and 17m pools; with vehicle and cycle parking provision, means of vehicular and pedestrian access, servicing, bin storage, plant, electricity sub-station and associated landscaping and public realm provision; involving the removal of the Church Hall and its covered walkway link and partial stopping-up of Crewe Street and opening-up of Moss Square as a through route – EIA not required

4. POLICIES

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan policy

NE.20 (Flood Prevention)

BE.1 (Amenity)

BE.2 (Design Standards)

BE.3 (Access and Parking)

BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)

BE.5 (Infrastructure)

BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)

BE.11 (Demolition of Listed Buildings)

S.1 (New Retail Development in Town Centres)
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)
TRAN.5 (Cycling)
TRAN.8 (Existing Car Parks)
TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)
RT.17 (Increasing Opportunities for Sport)

Other Considerations

The EC Habitats Directive 1992
Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010
Circular 6/2005 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System
Interim Planning Statement Affordable Housing
Interim Planning Statement Release of Housing Land
Cheshire East Development Strategy
Cheshire East SHLAA
Pre-submission Core Strategy

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy

SD1 – Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD2 – Sustainable Development Principles
SC1 – Leisure and Recreation
SC3 – Health and Well-Being
SE1 – Design
IN1 – Infrastructure
IN2 – Developer Contributions
CO2 – Enabling Growth through Transport Infrastructure
MP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

5. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

United Utilities: No objection subject to the following condition:

- The site must be drained on a separate system with foul drainage to the public sewer and surface water draining in the most sustainable way
- Notwithstanding any indication on the approved plans, no development approved by this permission shall commence until a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface waters for the entire site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, surface water must drain separate from the foul and no surface water will be permitted to discharge directly or indirectly into existing foul or combined sewerage systems. Any surface water draining to the public surface water sewer must be restricted to a maximum pass forward flow that mimics existing site run plus 30% betterment for climate change. The development shall be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details
- UU will not permit building over the public sewers which cross the site and modification of the site layout or a diversion of the public sewer may be required
- Deep rooted shrubs and trees should not be planted in the vicinity of the public sewer and overflow systems

English Heritage: Within the context of the Grade II Listed structure the church hall and covered walkway are a 1960's addition which due to its lack of contextual design and visually disruptive impact upon a once enclosed setting and constitute a harmful impact upon the setting and significance of the historic site.

The demolition of the church hall and the covered walkway appear to constitute an enhancement of the significance of the site and therefore satisfies paragraph 131 of the NPPF. There is no objection to the removal of the church hall and walkway provided that great care is taken not to damage any historic fabric during the course of the works.

Given the archaeological potential of the development site in question with regards to remains of the 19th century railway housing, it will be important to condition a report and recording process as part of any approval in line with advice from the County Archaeologist.

Archaeology: There are, a number of issues relating to activities on and around the site over the last century and a half. In particular, the submitted report notes the presence of Christ Church, immediately to the north of the application area, and its surrounding cemetery area. An examination of the historic mapping indicates that the cemetery has never extended beyond its present southern boundary and, consequently, there does not appear to be any potential for the disturbance of human remains by the development. The application boundary does extend into the cemetery but this is to accommodate new path surfaces and no major ground disturbance is proposed in this area. There should, therefore, be no danger of burials being disturbed, although it would be helpful to remind contractors of the presence of human remains in this area as, if deep excavations prove necessary for unexpected reasons, a formal process will be required to secure a Licence from the Ministry of Justice.

The other consideration concerns the former presence of 19th century housing on the car park area. It is not suggested that this represents a major archaeological constraint or that a large programme of archaeological mitigation is required. This type of housing is, however, typical of the town and whilst aspects of Crewe's industrial heritage have been explored, the remains of the actual houses have not been explored. It is advised that this issue could be addressed by means by a simple strip and record exercise over the footprint of one house and yard (an area of c 6m by 20m) and the recording of details of foundations and activities within the yards. Any such work could be secured by condition and carried out in tandem with the initial groundworks programme. A report will also be required and a suggested wording for the condition is as follows:

No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has agreed a programme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

Strategic Highways Manager: The process for the assessment of transport issues related to the proposed development have followed the DfT Guidance on Transport Assessment Document and added first principle options for data collection which have been agreed with the Strategic Highways Manager.

The Jacobs TA is clear and detailed in its findings and provides an acceptable analysis of the related traffic impacts of the development.

The Strategic Highways Manager recommends that the following conditions be attached to any permission which may be granted for this proposed development:

1. Prior to first development the developer will provide a detailed signing strategy for the site to the satisfaction of the LPA.
2. Prior to first occupation the schedule of signs contained within the signing strategy will be provided and erected on site at the agreed locations, to the satisfaction of the LPA.
3. Within six months of occupation the developer will provide a detailed travel plan for the development to the satisfaction of the LPA.
4. Prior to first occupation all new and dedicated parking will be provided and marked out and the dedicated parking controls will be in place.
5. Prior to first occupation the real time information facility will be operational within the development facility.
6. Prior to first development the developer will provide a construction management plan for the proposals to the satisfaction of the LPA.
7. Prior to first occupation all related road closures and traffic regulation orders will be in place.

Environment Agency: The site appears to be less than 1ha in size and located within Flood Zone 1. Additionally there does not appear to be any other environmental constraints within our remit.

Natural England: Statutory Sites – No objection. General advice offered in relation to green infrastructure, local sites, biodiversity enhancements and landscape enhancements.

Environmental Health: Conditions suggested in relation to hours of operation, environmental management plan, external lighting, external plant noise, amplified music, public announcement system, electrical vehicle infrastructure, travel plan, dust control. An informative is also suggested in relation to contaminated land.

Sustrans: Sustrans offer the following comments:

- Sustrans are particularly interested in the quality of the public realm to be created around the site given its importance in the overall vision to regenerate this part of Crewe.
- Sustrans suggest that the design should be establishing the area essentially as a space for pedestrians and cyclists, with car use for the new amenity restricted to access from Vernon Way, with no through route for general traffic from Prince Albert Street/Crewe Street to Lyon Street and Vernon Way. This would allow Crewe Street, Forge Street and the southern end of Prince Albert Street to be treated in a manner to suit the wider vision.
- Sustrans would expect surfacing materials to be in keeping with the high quality established on the Municipal Square and for there to be tree/shrub planting wherever possible.
- The most convenient cycle access will be from the proposed Vernon Way footway/cycle track, Prince Albert Street/Crewe Street. Pedestrians can also use the alleyway from Market Street. In time we hope there will be a connection from this site directly south to the High Street/Mill Street junction as part of a boulevard pedestrian/cycle route from the town centre to the station.

- Sustrans would expect the new amenity to be signed from the Crewe town pedestrian/cycle network, as this is developed.
- Cycle parking for the public should be located at the main entrance, based on the Sheffield stand and be under cover, such as from the canopy of the building. Currently there are six racks at Nantwich pool; we suggest installing a modest number at first, say 15, at this new Crewe amenity, with room to expand if required. It is important that the racks are set at the correct distance apart and from adjacent walls.
- Also there should be cycle parking for staff at conveniently sited, secure locations around/within the building.
- As part of the planning process Sustrans would expect there to be travel planning with targets and monitoring, and a sense of purpose.

8. VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Crewe Town Council: The Town Council welcomes the proposals from Cheshire East Council to build a lifestyle centre in the Town. The Council raises the following points and questions and asks Cheshire East to consider these matters as part of the overall implementation of the project.

1. Full consultation with the public is essential and Cheshire East is asked to make a concerted effort to liaise with groups and users from the disabled community to ensure ongoing input is provided at both planning and construction stages.
2. The Council asks that Cheshire East consider utilising the geothermal heat source under Crewe to reduce the running costs of the centre and to provide for wider connections to the supply.
3. The Council asks that the new building is connected to the rest of the Town through an enhanced network of walking and cycling routes. If possible a direct foot bridge connection to the retail park would be welcomed.
4. There should also be secure and covered cycle storage at the site.
5. The Council wishes to see integration with the public transport network and to have in place sufficient parking provision for the development as a whole.
6. Car-parking issues in general need to be considered carefully. If the site of the existing library is used, then it must not impinge in any way on the Civic Square and War Memorial. The Council wishes to see greater clarity as part of the on-going consultation as to the location and scale of parking provision that will support the needs of the centre and its users.
7. The Council wishes to better understand what the future is for what will be the former library. The building will become redundant once the library moves and the Town as a whole needs to understand what usage will be made of the vacated space.
8. The Council can see the benefit of an integrated library, but raises the question as to whether a separate library would be more beneficial for the town, so as to permit more space for other uses within the centre.
9. The Council wishes to see a statement on the proposed charging regime for chargeable services to be delivered at the centre. Such charges should be affordable for all of the community.
10. The design should have something of a 'wow' factor but should also be sympathetic to the area and especially to the historic Christ Church.
11. The pool will be 25 metres long and 8 lanes wide, is this a suitable replacement for the current Flag Lane facilities and provide for the necessary competition standard.
12. The Council would also wish to see assurances that the Flag Lane Baths once redundant is sympathetically developed and that the façade in particular is not lost to the Town.

13. The Council would wish to see the multi-use space in the building equipped such that facility can host conferences, seminars and conventions. This would include suitable seating, break out areas and appropriate projection and sound systems as an integral part of the build.
14. There should be a well-equipped room (as at the present library) available for local societies to hire for monthly meetings/small exhibitions. If the proposed University Technology College uses the Victoria site, there also needs to be a replacement for the large hall there which is used for large exhibitions etc.
15. The existing library based Family History Room, run by volunteers and well-used, providing an important additional resource to the library, needs protecting, indeed enlarging to form a Family/Local History Study Centre with a large exhibition/education room - not necessarily in the library, but as part of the proposed 'Cultural Quarter'.
16. The site itself is constrained on all four sides and the draft plans attempt to get as much use of the available space as possible. In view of the ambitions for Crewe and its future growth, it is essential that it remains fit for purpose for 50 years and is not found to be inadequate in a few years' time. The design as such may need to incorporate long term options for an extra floor or other means of expansion/development.
17. The Council seek to query whether the combined loss of other facilities is to be greater than the floor area provided by the new site. Crewe is a growing town and is already in need of an expansion of the infrastructure. As indicated at (15) the lack of the potential to expand may prove a hindrance in future.

Members noted comments to be submitted by the Chairman in connection with application 14/0640N (Crewe Lifestyle Centre) expressing that it is recognised that the lifestyle centre will bring benefits to the Town. However, there are serious concerns that the level of parking provision is inadequate especially given proposals to develop the undercroft car park. The facilities do not adequately replace those that will be lost in the Town in scale or extent. Traffic management aspects are unclear and may not be appropriate. The nature of the development does not add to the amenity of the area and the construction/appearance of the development does not enhance the character of the Town.

9. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of objection have been received from 3 local households raising the following points:

- Loss of 250 car parking spaces from the Town Centre
- The existing car parks are well used for the existing Town Centre shops
- Users of the nearby Hilary Centre require the use motor vehicle and the parking on the site
- The development will provide just 30 parking spaces
- The subsidised bus service is not available for all
- There would be no coach parking within Crewe Town Centre
- A multi-storey car park should be provided
- There are no bus stops within the vicinity of the site
- Lack of suitable parking within Crewe Town Centre
- The development will not increase footfall within the Town Centre
- Dangers to cyclists when using the roads within the vicinity of the site
- Pay and display parking will deter users of the proposed development

An objection has been received from HM Courts and Tribunals Service raising the following points:

- The main access for the Ethel Elks Child Contact Centre is located close to Lyon Street. There will be an increase in pedestrian activity especially children on Lyon Street which is frequently used by prison vans and police vehicles. The submitted plans do not indicate adequate crossing facilities. The proposal increases potential pedestrian/vehicle conflict.
- The submitted Construction Management Plan states that Lyon Street will provide access to the construction site. Lyon Street is a key vehicular access route and prison vans require clear uncongested routes. It is essential that access is maintained to the rear of the Courts at all times.
- Details relating to construction management should be subject to condition requiring a Construction Environment Management Plan to secure mitigation.
- Access routes should be maintained for HMCTS parking spaces within the Civic Centre Car Park
- Construction signage should be secured during the construction phase
- Potential noise disruption to the law courts.

A letter of concern has been received from the Autism Network raising the following points:

- Concerns over the impact upon the service for which users are dependent on local parking
- Will there be replacement parking provision?
- Most users have blue badges and will park outside causing parking problems
- Loss of parking

One letter of support has been received from a local resident raising the following points:

- Support the demolition of the Church Hall which has become a focal point for anti-social behaviour
- The demolition work must be carried out carefully to avoid any disturbance of graves within the Church yard

A letter of support has been received from Scottish Widows Investment Partnership raising the following points:

- Support investment within Crewe Town Centre
- The development will support a sustainable, balanced and vibrant town centre
- The proposal is compliant with national policy and the Town Centre first objective
- The development will provide opportunities for all
- The development will provide a boost to the local economy

The full content of the objections is available to view on the Councils Website.

10. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

To support this application the application includes the following documents:

- Drainage Design Statement (Produced by Clancy Consulting)
- Geo-Environmental Appraisal (Produced by Clancy Consulting)
- Air Quality Assessment (Produced by GEM Air Quality Ltd)
- Crime Impact Assessment (Produced by Cheshire Constabulary)
- Operational Statement (Produced by Cheshire East Council)
- Cultural Quarter Vision Statement (Produced by Cheshire East Council)
- Equality Impact Assessment (Produced by Cheshire East Council)
- Energy Statement (Produced by TACE)
- External Lighting Strategy (Produced by TACE)

- Utilities Statement (Produced by TACE)
- Landscape Design Energy Statement (Produced by Wardell Armstrong)
- Design and Access Statement (Produced by Pozzoni)
- Demolition Method Statement (Produced by Pozzoni)
- Acoustic Design Report (Produced by Environoise)
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Produced by Kier)
- Planning Statement (Produced by J10 Planning)
- Statement of Community Involvement (Produced by J10 Planning)
- Transport Statement (Produced by Jacobs)
- Ecological Assessment (Produced by JW Ecological Ltd)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Produced by Tree Solutions)
- Construction Management Methodology (Produced by Kier)
- Heritage Statement (Produced by Peter De Figueiredo)

These documents are available to view on the application file.

9. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Amongst other things the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies that leisure, recreational uses and offices are main town centre uses. The Framework states that in drawing up Local Plans that local planning authorities should:

‘Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability’

As a result it is considered that this development which is a main town centre use is acceptable within Crewe Town Centre as defined by the proposals map for the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan.

The Framework also includes a strong emphasis on securing economic growth and states that:

‘The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country’s inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.’

The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system’

The site would result in the loss of the existing car-parking and this issue is raised within the representations received and the comments from Crewe Town Council.

The existing car parks are covered by Policy TRAN.8 (Existing Car Parks) which states *'that proposals for new development involving the loss of existing car parks, as shown on the proposals map, will not be permitted unless the developer provides:*

- *Improvements to public transport systems in order to serve the development; or*
- *As part of the scheme, a direct replacement for the number of car parking spaces lost'*

In relation to parking provision the Framework states that:

If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:

- *the accessibility of the development;*
- *the type, mix and use of development;*
- *the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- *local car ownership levels; and*
- *an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.*

Highways Implications

This development proposal has been the subject of detailed pre-application negotiations and the scope for the supporting Transport Assessment has been agreed with the applicant highways consultant.

The use of local examples of similar facilities allowed a first principles approach to the production of representative trip rates and a close assessment of parking facilities in the local Crewe area provided a detailed and accurate assessment of available car parking throughout the town.

These numbers were ratified through the Authorities parking manager and also considered the loss of the car parks at the Christchurch site which led to the identification of a need for specifically allocated car parking for the Lifestyle Centre within 200 metres of the site.

Impact upon the Local Highway Network

The local highway network is made up of the A532 corridor (West Street / Vernon Way / Earle Street), which forms a radial link into Crewe town centre from Chester and Nantwich from the west; and east from Sandbach and the M6 at Junction's 16 & 17 via Macon Way / Manchester Bridge / Earle Street.

Dunwoody Way provides a route around the south of the town centre, giving access to a number of industrial and retail premises to the south and west of the town centre.

The town centre roads are subject to capacity constraints throughout the day, but most notably within the acknowledged morning and evening peak periods.

The TA identifies that the capacity of radial routes into the town centre is constrained by limited opportunities to cross the West Coast Mainline (WCML).

These more strategic issues are considered by the Strategic Highways Manager to be beyond the remit of the Crewe Lifestyle Centre proposal given that many of the trips associated with this development are already on the network.

In support of the application detailed traffic counts were undertaken to support the junction assessments for the site alongside parking survey work and also trip rate solutions which were derived from data collected from similar facilities locally in Cheshire.

Base year and future year assessments have been undertaken in accordance with GTA requirements and growth factors built in to inform future year predicted flows.

Due to a number of existing facilities being centralised at the new Lifestyle Centre existing trips from those facilities have been built into the traffic generation figures for the proposed development and these have been made robust as the normally considered: linked, pass-by and transferred trips that could have been deducted from the traffic generation have been left within the figures.

The derived figures show that given the robust assessment of trips and the available car parking that there will be sufficient parking available to accommodate traffic to the Lifestyle Centre in even the busiest times of use.

Local junction capacity has been assessed using the industry recognised standard programmes and with the exception of the Earle Street corridor the junctions are shown to operate satisfactorily at the peak times of use of the Lifestyle Centre.

The Earle Street corridor is a local network link which suffers congestion due to traffic patterns related to the retail park on that route. These congestion issues are something being dealt with separately by the Strategic Highways Manager and he finds that the issues related to this area are not a material consideration in regard to the development of the Lifestyle Centre and therefore the S.H.M. makes no recommendations against the proposed development on this basis.

Site Management Traffic

Around the site Forge Street will become one-way to regulate traffic flow. The primary route in will be via Prince Albert Street. Public Realm works will surround the site, managing the environment for pedestrians but designed in such a way that visitor traffic and coaches will have appropriate access.

Part of Crewe Street will be formally closed under the Town and Country Planning Act and the related Traffic Regulation Orders will be processed by Cheshire East Council via the Road Traffic regulation Act 1984.

As part of the vehicle access strategy, there would be new sections of highway created in the following locations. They would be for the purpose of traffic circulation for public transport (as required) and cyclists:

- Connection of Crewe Street with Moss Square at the northern site frontage.
- Creation of a one-way (westbound) link between Lyon Street and Moss Square, to facilitate the following:

- visitor access and drop-off / collection at the Ethel Elks centre;
- coach drop-off / waiting area from Vernon Way
- potential operation of public service buses northbound between Vernon Way and the town centre, as discussed further below
- The creation of new car parking alongside Forge Street and the conversion of the existing bays on Lyon Street for use by specified groups (Parent & Child and Disabled) would be implemented by the parking services department at CEC.
- Furthermore, there would be a requirement to advertise and consult upon the closure of the Christchurch car park.
- Drop-off facilities will be provided on the remaining length of Crewe Street and Moss Square.

Public Transport

The site has been assessed along with the need for the site to accommodate bus services and provide incentives and measures to promote public transport use. There are frequent bus services which would serve the site from a variety of locations and destinations which focus on the town centre.

The proximity of the railway station is some 1300metres or a 15 minute walk. Routes to and from for pedestrians are assessed and the potential improvements for the pedestrian/cycle link from the station via a development at Mill Street/Lockitt Street are identified.

It should also be noted that the site is accessible by pedestrian from the surrounding residential areas.

Town Centre Parking

A number of the representations have raised concern about the loss of the existing car park within Crewe Town Centre.

A full survey of the use and turnover of parking habits within the town centre shows that at the times of highest demand there is still 35% of parking available within car parks in proximity to the proposed site.

In addition there will be 90 car spaces dedicated to the Lifestyle Centre at the nearby Civic Centre and these spaces will be controlled for Lifestyle Centre membership.

As a result the loss of the car parks which is contrary to Policy TRAN.8 is considered to be acceptable and there would adequate parking provision within the town to serve this development.

Highways Conclusion

In conclusion the proposed development would have an access of an acceptable design. The traffic impact upon the local highway network would be limited and the site is within a sustainable location within Crewe Town Centre. The loss of the town centre car park would be contrary to Policy TRAN.8 but the supporting parking survey indicates that there is spare capacity within the Town Centre at peak times. It is therefore considered that the development complies with the local plan policy BE.3 and the test contained within the NPPF which states that:

'Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where then residual cumulative impacts of development are severe'

Amenity

There are no residential properties in close proximity to the site and the development would not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity through over-bearing impact, loss of light or loss of privacy.

The Environmental Health Officer has requested conditions in relation to hours of operation, environmental management plan, external lighting, external plant noise, amplified music, public announcement system, electrical vehicle infrastructure, travel plan, dust control. An informative is also suggested in relation to contaminated land. These conditions will be attached to any planning permission.

Air Quality

The proposed development is in close proximity to the Earle Street Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and an air quality assessment has been submitted in support of this planning application.

The method used to verify the air quality modelled predictions is considered to be acceptable by the Councils Environmental Health Officer after he raised initial concerns. The impacts of the Combined Heat and Power plant (CHP) emissions on short term air quality measures have been considered and the plant should be installed as per the specification provided within the application.

The cumulative impact of a number of developments in the area around Crewe (regardless of their individual scale) has the potential to significantly increase traffic emissions and as such adversely affect local air quality for existing residents by virtue of additional road traffic emissions. Whilst the impact of some committed developments has been included in the transport assessment, further developments including multiple residential proposals have not been considered. In addition this proposal in isolation would have small adverse impacts in two existing Air Quality Management Areas (Wistaston Road and Earle Street) and the impacts are therefore considered significant by this department and that mitigation measures are necessary.

The transport assessment submitted with the scheme makes reference to the accessibility of public transport, walking and cycling routes. The accessibility of low or zero emission transport options has the potential to mitigate the impacts of transport related emissions. However it is felt appropriate to ensure that uptake of these options is maximised through the development and implementation of a suitable travel plan.

In addition, modern Ultra Low Emission Vehicle technology (such as all electric vehicles) are expected to increase in use over the coming years (the Government expects most new vehicles in the UK will be ultra low emission). As such it is considered appropriate to create infrastructure to allow charging of electric vehicles in new modern developments which have an impact upon an AQMA.

As a result the Councils Environmental Health Officer has no objection to this development subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

Trees

There are a number of trees in the vicinity of the proposed development. The most prominent trees are outside the site within the grounds of Christ Church. The submission is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment which covers eleven individual trees and one group of trees.

The proposed development would require the removal of four trees located within a landscaped area adjacent to Forge Street car park; two Trees of Heaven, one Maple and one Whitebeam. Three of the trees are afforded grade B and one grade C in the tree survey. A proposed sub-station would be marginally within the RPA of a young Norway Maple tree. Protection measures are proposed for retained trees and an Arboricultural Method statement is provided.

The impacts on existing trees are not so significant as to be considered a major constraint to development. The landscape masterplan incorporates new trees which would mitigate for losses.

Impact upon the setting of the Grade II Listed Building

The tower of Christ Church is a Grade II Listed Structure and the Listing states as follows:

'Church tower, 1877 (Pevsner) by J W Stansby, Engineer. Yellow sandstone square tower linked to the mainly brick outer walls of the 1843 church by John Cunningham, which had its roof removed and was gutted in 1978. Tower is of coursed rock faced rubble masonry with reducing angle buttresses. The chevron pattern boarded west door is in a gothic opening, flanked by single shafts, and surmounted by hood mould with stops carved as faces. Above the entrance there is a large window with geometrical tracery. Windows in north and south faces are at two levels, in partly blind arcades formed by shafts, lancet at the lower level and trefoil headed above. Clock dials to four sides, set in flat diaper panels of square carved masonry blocks. There are treble louvred lancets at bell stage divided by coupled shafts with rings. Octagonal pinnacles with shafts and lancet sinkings form the angles and flank the stepped and crocketed gabled parapet'

In this case the church hall and covered walk way are attached to the walls of the Listed Building and therefore form part of the Listed Building. The Church Hall is a 1960s single-storey flat roofed building with a flat roofed canopy linking it to the Christ Church, both the flat roofed building and the canopy are of no architectural merit and their removal would be seen as an enhancement to the Listed Building and its setting. This view is supported by the Councils Conservation Officer and English Heritage.

The proposed development would be viewed in relation to the existing Listed Structure and would include detailing such as vertical fins which would tie in with the Buttress detailing on the existing Church. It is considered that the proposed two-storey structure would not have a detrimental impact upon the setting of the Listed Structure due to its scale, separation distance and detailed design (as discussed below). Furthermore no objection has been raised by English Heritage of the Councils Conservation Officer in terms of the impact upon the setting of the Listed Building.

Design

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) outlines the design requirements for the Lifestyle centre and the associated constraints in terms of the layout and operational needs of the building. The DAS includes a contextual analysis of the site and its surroundings, including an historical assessment, and urban design study, including massing, movement and usage within the area, all of which highlight that, compared to the historic situation, the site and its environs have gone through substantial change, some of which has not been positive but which creates a different context to inform new development.

Architectural design

Several options were initially considered. These initial options considered splitting the building, a different configuration of the uses, retention of the Church Hall within the layout and closing off Crewe Street. But these were considered less positive in terms of site constraints, operational needs, permeability and the general quality of the scheme in its context. The preferred option includes circulation all around the building with a pedestrian only route through the centre of a linked building along the route of Crewe Street and better operational layout, with the library at the threshold to the site. It also includes demolition of the Church Hall, a potential benefit to the heritage asset and more generally in securing a more successful design.

A key concern was the linearity of the building, especially as a uniformly 2 storey building. However, the nature of buildings in the area and the historic terraced streets provides a precedent of an established sense of linearity in the vicinity of the site, and historically. Further refinement of the concept design has been undertaken to reinforce the 4 distinct elements architecturally with a purposely 'light' section at the heart of the building on the Crewe Street alignment, emphasised by the 'eyebrow' framing above the main entrance, also mirrored on the Forge Street elevation. At the pre-application stage much effort went into ensuring that this central pedestrian link was as positive as possible; in effect creating a pedestrian street through the centre of the building. It was emphasised that the building needed to be 'a comma and not a full stop' in the townscape, to ensure positive links through the site, both in the short and longer term, to the site to the south (and indeed further south beyond that).

The detailing of the leisure section of the building with a closer relationship to the most sensitive part of the Church site was also a key point of pre-application discussion. Materiality and detailing were key architectural topics, emphasising the need for this to respect but not overpower or compete with Christ Church. As this part of the building is to be clad, discussions were about introducing verticality and an active frontage and introducing texture and finer detail, as well as the potential to create day and night-time architectural interest. The introduction of vertical projecting pairs of fins responding to the verticality of the buttresses on the retained church wall and associated lighting will create relief and interest, reflecting this established characteristic. Ensuring that the pattern and finish of cladding panels is appropriate will further reinforce verticality and texture and it is important that this is not too reflective.

Concerns in relation to Forge Street and the potential for this to become an unwelcoming environment for pedestrians have been partly overcome by creating a lighter more substantial entrance, and surveillance from first floor gym area, use of lighting and public realm enhancements. It is acknowledged that, at least for the time being, this will be more of a daytime, rather than a night time street, but the improvement of the environment in this area is important to ensure community safety is maintained.

Public realm/landscape design

The quality and extent of public realm uplift is crucial to reinforce the connected nature of the development, particularly in linking it to the site to the south and the Church and its environs to the north. It is also important that a key civic project such as this sets the tone and a benchmark for future enhancement of the public realm of the town centre. For these reasons the public realm associated with this project will be crucial to its success

Hard and soft landscaping information should be secured once the landscape/public realm masterplan is in a form that is acceptable. This should include details of street furniture and lighting within the street.

Archaeology

The Councils Archaeologist has analysed the historic maps for this area and the cemetery never extended beyond its present southern boundary and as a result there does not appear to be any potential to disturb human remains.

The application site once included the presence of 19th century housing and there is archaeological potential on this site. The Councils Archaeologist, Conservation Officer and English Heritage all recommend the imposition of a planning condition to secure a scheme of mitigation for this site.

Ecology

The site is an existing car park and it is not anticipated that there are any significant ecological issues associated with this development. Conditions will be used to secure nesting bird mitigation measures.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency Flood Maps and as the site is less than 1 hectare in size there is no requirement to submit a Flood Risk Assessment.

In this case the application site is made up of car parking and hard surfacing and there would be no increase in the amount of impermeable area for this development. The site will be split between two possible outfalls to the existing public surface water system. The southern network would take 25% of the site run-off with the northern network taking 75% of the run-off.

The foul water will flow to the existing public foul sewer crossing the site.

United Utilities have been consulted as part of this application and have raised no objection to the proposed development. As a result, the development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its flood risk/drainage implications.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The site is within the Crewe Town Settlement Boundary and the Crewe Town Centre Boundary. The NPPF identifies the uses within the proposed development as main town centre uses. As a result it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable.

The proposed development is of an acceptable design and the removal of the church hall and covered link structure would provide an enhancement to the Grade II Listed structure. It is not considered that the development would not have a detrimental impact upon the setting of the Listed Building.

The issue of the archaeological potential of the site can be dealt with through the use of a planning condition.

The proposed development would provide a safe access and the development would not have a detrimental impact upon highway safety or cause a severe traffic impact. The loss of the car parking although contrary to Policy TRAN.8 is considered to be acceptable.

In terms of Ecology it is not considered that the development would have a significant impact upon ecology or protected species.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon residential amenity , air quality and drainage/flooding and it therefore complies with the relevant local plan policy requirements for residential environments

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard 3 years**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Prior to the commencement of development details of the external materials shall be submitted to the LPA for approval in writing.**
- 4. Prior to the commencement of development landscaping details (soft and hard) shall be submitted to the LPA for approval in writing.**
- 5. Completion of Landscaping**
- 6. Notwithstanding any indication on the approved plans, no development approved by this permission shall commence until a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface waters for the entire site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
- 7. Demolition of the Church Hall and canopy to follow the submitted method statement**
- 8. No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has agreed a programme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.**
- 9. Prior to the removal of any vegetation or the demolition of buildings between 1st March and 31st August in any year, a detailed survey shall be carried out to check for nesting birds. Where nests are found in any building, hedgerow, tree or scrub or other habitat to be removed (or converted or demolished in the case of buildings), a 4m exclusion zone shall be left around the nest until breeding is complete. Completion of nesting shall be confirmed by a suitably qualified person and a further report submitted to and approved**

in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any further works within the exclusion zone take place.

10. Prior to the commencement of development detailed proposals for the incorporation of features into the scheme suitable for use by breeding birds shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved features shall be permanently installed prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter retained, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
11. Implementation of the submitted tree protection measures and method statement
12. Prior to first development the developer will provide a detailed signing strategy for the site. Prior to first occupation the schedule of signs contained within the signing strategy will be provided and erected on site at the agreed locations, to the satisfaction of the LPA.
13. Within six months of occupation the developer will provide a detailed travel plan for the development to the satisfaction of the LPA.
14. Prior to first occupation all new and dedicated parking will be provided and marked out and the dedicated parking controls will be in place.
15. Prior to first occupation the real time information facility will be operational within the development facility.
16. Prior to first development the developer will provide a construction management plan for the proposals to the satisfaction of the LPA.
17. Hours of Construction
18. Lighting to be completed in accordance with the approved scheme
19. Details of external plant noise
20. Amplified music level set at 80 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$.
21. Public Announcement System set at 80 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$.
22. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
23. Dust Control Measures
24. Contaminated Land

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.

Should this application be the subject of an appeal, authority be delegated to the Planning and Place Shaping Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Southern Planning Committee, to enter into a planning agreement in accordance with the S106 Town and Country Planning Act to secure the Heads of Terms for a S106 Agreement.

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