

Application No: 15/3840N
Location: 48 , Wistaston Road, Crewe, Cheshire East, CW2 7RE
Proposal: Proposed construction of apartments on land
Applicant: GHP4 Limited
Expiry Date: 15-Oct-2015

SUMMARY:

The site is within the settlement boundary of Crewe where there is a presumption in favour of development.

Following amendments the design and layout is considered to be appropriate in this location.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon amenity, highways, and design.

The scheme represents a sustainable form of development and that the planning balance weighs in favour of supporting the development subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

CALL IN

This application has been called in to Southern Planning Committee by Councillor Jill Rhodes for the following reason:

“Access for motor vehicles on what appears to be a narrow point of entry. A three storey building where all other properties are two storey. This is not in keeping with the street scene and area. Inaccuracies in the design statement Lack of disabled access.”

PROPOSAL

This is an application for full planning permission for the erection of an apartment block to accommodate nine apartments, with associated parking and bin storage. The building would be three storey to the front, with a basement level at the rear containing plant room, and cycle store and other storage areas. The materials would be a mixture of red brick and render with grey roof tiles.

Access would be taken from the existing access to the site off Wistaston Road.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a vacant parcel of land on the southern side of Wistaston Road, Crewe. Aerial photographs indicate that the site has previously been used for the motor trade. Wistaston Road has a mix of residential and commercial uses.

The site is approximately 0.7 miles from the town centre and is designated as being within the settlement boundary of Crewe.

RELEVANT HISTORY

There are several historic applications on this site, none of which are relevant to this application.

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs 7, 14 and 19.

Development Plan:

The Development Plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, which allocates the site as being within the within Open Countryside.

The relevant Saved Policies are: -

- BE.1 – Amenity
- BE.2 – Design Standards
- BE.3 – Access and Parking
- BE.4 – Drainage, Utilities and Resources
- BE.5 – Infrastructure
- RES.2 – Unallocated Housing sites
- NE.17 – Pollution Control

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

- SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
- SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles
- SE 1 Design

SE 2 Efficient Use of Land
SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 9 Energy Efficient Development
SE 12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
PG 1 Overall Development Strategy
PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy
EG1 Economic Prosperity

CONSULTATIONS:

Highways:

Originally objected to the application due to parking and bin storage provision. These objections have now been addressed.

Environmental Protection:

Recommend conditions/informatives relating to pile driving, contaminated land, noise and vehicle charging points.

United Utilities:

No objection subject to conditions relating to foul and surface water drainage.

Parish Council:

Object to the proposal on the grounds of inadequate parking and bin storage.

REPRESENTATIONS:

Neighbour notification letters were sent to adjoining occupants and a site notice posted.

At the time of report writing 2 representations have been received which can be viewed on the Council website. They express concerns about the height of the building, over bearing appearance, access and damage to their property, there are enough flats in the area and impact on the neighbouring car wash.

APPRAISAL

The key issues to be considered in the determination of this application are set out below.

Principle of Development

The site is within the settlement boundary of Crewe where there is a presumption in favour of development. This is a mixed residential and commercial area where apartments are considered to be an acceptable form of development and therefore acceptable in principle.

The issue in question is whether this proposal represents sustainable development and whether the requirements of the policies contained within the development plan are complied with..

Sustainability

There are three dimensions to sustainable development: - economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Design & Layout

The proposed apartment building would be three storeys at the front with a partial basement element to the rear. As originally submitted the proposal had slightly higher ridge height and a more monolithic appearance to the front elevation. The proposal has been amended by slightly lowering the ridge height, and design changes breaking up the front elevational detail, including a low wall with railings and the addition of chimney features. Whilst the building does contain three storeys, the ridge height of the building would only be approximately 1m higher than the neighbouring property, which is not considered to be excessive.

The materials used would be a mixture of brick and render, with a grey tiled roof, which would be appropriate in this area.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy BE.2 of the adopted local plan.

Highways

As originally submitted, the proposal was not considered to be acceptable due to issues with the parking provision and the Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) recommended refusal of the application. Subsequently revised plans were submitted which have addressed the concerns of the HSI and he is satisfied that the access and parking arrangements are acceptable.

The HSI's concerns were that there was a shortfall of one parking space and that the bins were not stored in an area that would be accessible to refuse collectors and the amended plans show an additional parking space and the bin storage area re-located closer to the entrance to the site.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of access and parking and in compliance with Policy BE.3 of the adopted local plan.

Locational Sustainability

The site is sustainably located close to the town centre of the Principal town of Crewe.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The Framework includes a strong presumption in favour of economic growth.

Paragraph 19 states that:

‘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’

With regard to the economic role of sustainable development, the proposed development will provide employment in the short term during construction and bring direct and indirect economic benefits to Crewe, including jobs in construction and economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Residential Amenity

The proposed apartment building would be situated in a mixed residential and commercial area with a residential property to the east and a commercial car wash to the west.

The property most impacted by the development would be 46 Wistaston Road, which is a traditional terraced property. There are no windows in the side elevation of this property, meaning that privacy and light to this elevation would not be affected. The occupier of this property has expressed concerns that an additional boundary wall would be oppressive to their garden area, which is at a lower level. However the proposal does not include any additional boundary treatments and merely retains the existing wall.

To the west of the site is a car wash and as this is already situated within an existing residential area, a refusal on the grounds of the residential amenity of the future occupiers of the building could not be sustained. However a condition requiring submission of noise mitigation methods should be imposed.

The neighbouring car wash has expressed concerns about dust during construction having an adverse impact on his business. This is an issue that can be controlled under other legislation and does not need to be included as a planning condition.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of amenity and in accordance with Policy BE.1 of the adopted local plan.

Contaminated Land

The application site has a history of works, brewery and depot use and therefore the land may be contaminated. As such a Phase 1 Contaminated Land Report should be submitted to fully assess the ground conditions at the site. This should be secured by condition.

Air Quality

In terms of air quality the site is within the vicinity of the Wistaston Road Air Quality Management Area. As such it is considered reasonable to require the provision of electric vehicle charging points on each of the parking spaces within the site, as this would encourage the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles that in turn would be of benefit to local air quality.

Housing Land Supply

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. The proposal would assist in providing much needed housing without resulting in any loss of greenfield or agricultural land.

Open Space

With regard to private amenity space, the plans show a paved area to the rear of the building where residents could sit outside and washing could be dried. Whilst this would not meet the requirements of 50sqm per dwelling, given the small size of the units, it is not considered that this would not constitute family accommodation, the proximity to the town centre and existing public open space means that this is considered to be acceptable.

Furthermore, no Public Open Space is provided within the proposed development. Policy RT3 states that *“in small residential developments likely to be occupied by less than 50 people, contributions will be required towards the provision of children’s play equipment and casual recreational open space which is reasonably related to the nature of the development proposed, provided that such contributions would secure provision in an easily accessible location and where it would directly benefit the occupiers of the new development.”*

The site has ready access to the existing Public Open Space at Valley Park which is within easy walking distance of the site. However, given the small scale of the development it is not considered that a financial contribution would be “reasonably related in scale and kind” to the development and would not meet the requirements of the CIL Regulations.

Response to Objections

The representations of the members of the public have been given careful consideration in the assessment of this application and the issues raised are addressed within the individual sections of the report. The matter of keeping the access road clear at all times is a private matter between land owners.

CONCLUSION – THE PLANNING BALANCE

The site is within the settlement boundary of Crewe where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Following amendments the design and layout is considered to be appropriate in this location.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon amenity, highways, and design.

The scheme represents a sustainable form of development and that the planning balance weighs in favour of supporting the development subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions:

- 1. Commencement**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Materials in accordance with the details submitted with the application**
- 4. Restriction on hours of piling to 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm Saturday and no working on Sundays or public holidays and submission of a piling method statement**
- 5. Submission of details of external lighting**
- 6. Submission of a Phase 1 Contaminated Land Report**
- 7. Submission of noise report and mitigation measures**
- 8. All parking spaces laid out and available for use prior to first occupation of any of the units**
- 9. Provision of electric vehicle charging points to all parking spaces**
- 10. Bin/recycling facilities to be provided and available for use prior to first occupation of any of the units**
- 11. Submission of drainage scheme to include the disposal of foul and surface water**

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 Head of Planning (Regulation) 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.

