

Application No: 18/4867M

Location: The County Hotel, HARDEN PARK, ALDERLEY EDGE, CHESHIRE, SK9 7QN

Proposal: Demolition of the existing County Hotel and redevelopment to provide 2 residential blocks comprising of 22no apartments and 4 townhouses, together with parking, landscaping and associated works

Applicant: MR ANDREW HALL, HARDEN PARK GARDENS LTD

Expiry Date: 31-Dec-2018

SUMMARY

The site comprises previously developed land in a sustainable location, with access to a range of local services and facilities nearby and has good public transport links. It would add to the stock of housing and its construction and occupation would result in social and economic benefits, albeit relatively minor.

The development would make effective use of a previously developed site and would also result in the removal of the existing unsociable use of the hotel and pub, given the proximity of existing residential properties. The development would improve the appearance of the site which has been vacant for many years, and has fallen into disrepair.

The proposed development is considered to have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, however very special circumstances are considered to exist which clearly outweigh the harm. The proposal also raises no significant design, amenity or highway safety issues.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions and s106 contributions

REASON FOR REPORT

Due to the scale of the proposal the application requires determination by the Northern Planning Committee under the terms of the Council's constitution.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises the existing County Hotel building, associated car parking area and outdoor amenity area. The site is located within the Green Belt as identified in the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the erection of 2no. replacement buildings comprising 22no. apartments within one block and four townhouses within the other, with associated landscaping and basement and above ground car parking. The four townhouses would each contain 4no. bedrooms and the apartments would contain 5no. one bedroom apartments, 15no. two bedroom apartments and 2no. three bedroom apartments.

The application follows a previously withdrawn application for two apartment blocks with basement parking. This was withdrawn following viability issues which would have reduced or removed any ability to contribute to affordable housing, public open space or sport and outdoor recreation funding.

RELEVANT HISTORY

17/4989M Demolition of existing County Hotel and redevelopment
Withdrawn 28 September 2018

12/4353M Full planning permission for the demolition of the existing former County Hotel building and construction of 14 No. residential units with car parking and associated landscaping and external works.
Approved with conditions 01 October 2013

11/4542M Full planning permission for the extension, refurbishment, alterations and conversion of the former County Hotel to create 6 residential apartments; erection of new four storey block of 8 residential apartments; together with car parking, landscaping and associated external works.
Withdrawn 06.03.2012

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – adopted 27th July 2017

MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

PG1 Overall Development Strategy

PG2 Settlement Boundaries

PG3 Green Belt

PG7 Spatial distribution of development

SD1 Sustainable development in Cheshire East

SD2 Sustainable development principles

IN1 Infrastructure

IN2 Developer Contributions

SC1 Leisure and Recreation

SC4 Residential Mix

SC5 Affordable Homes

SE1 Design

SE2 Efficient Use of Land

SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE4 The Landscape
SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE6 Green Infrastructure
SE7 The Historic Environment
SE8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
SE13 Flood risk and water management
CO1 Sustainable travel and transport
CO3 Digital connections

Appendix C – Parking Standards

Saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Policies

NE11 (Nature conservation interests)
DC3 (Amenities of residential property)
DC6 (Circulation and Access)
DC8 (Landscaping)
DC9 (Tree protection)
DC35 (Materials and Finishes)
DC36 (Road layouts and circulation)
DC37 (Landscaping in housing developments)
DC38 (Space, light and Privacy)
DC41 (Infilling housing or redevelopment)
DC63 (Contaminated Land)
GC1 (New buildings in the Green Belt)

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

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Framework (NPPG)
Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan – currently under consultation at regulation 7
The Cheshire East Borough Design Guide (2017)

National Policy:

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

Of particular relevance are Chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways: no objections

Environmental Health: no objections subject to conditions relating to noise and a travel pack

United Utilities: no objections, subject to conditions relating to drainage

Housing: no objections, subject to contributions

Education: no objections, subject to contributions

Public Open Space: no objections, subject to contributions

Alderley Edge Parish Council: *“The Parish council has no objection to this application but with conditions of retention of appropriate landscaping and screening on its boundaries thus preserving the historical character. To ensure considerate construction a requirement for a detailed construction and site management plan setting out methods for ensuring that during construction the site will operate within sociable hours and be self-contained in having materials, offices, vehicles and personnel on site with no or very exceptional spill over onto Harden Park. Harden Park to also be periodically swept.*

There are still concerns over increased vehicular ingress/egress from Harden Park to Wilmslow Road, whilst there is still a preference for a more extensive plan to improve the situation the parish council welcomes the creation of a pedestrian refuge.”

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Comments have been received from the Harden Park Residents Group raising concerns regarding the increased traffic that the proposal will bring to the area.

Also, there is a wish to retain the stone wall to the front of the site and detailed landscaping to be approved. Doubts over the compliance of the scheme with Green Belt policy are also raised.

APPLICANT’S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The applicant has submitted a bat report, arboricultural statement, transport statement, design & access statement and planning statement. The planning statement concludes that:

- Redevelopment will remove an unsightly and imposing building, enhancing the setting and appearance of the site.
- There is an extant permission, 12/4353M, which establishes the principle of the development and allows an increase in the overall scale and massing of development when compared to existing.
- The current proposals seek to redevelop the site to provide two high quality residential blocks, carefully laid out and sited to minimise their visual impact. In this case, the proposals seek to divide a large form of development (permitted under the extant consent) into two smaller forms, breaking up the built form and massing that could be delivered on site, ultimately reducing the prominence of buildings on site.
- The habitable floorspace of the proposals at 2,390m² is in line with the extant scheme of 2,339m² and less than the 2,547m² of the recently withdrawn scheme that was recommended for approval.
- Alongside reductions in built form on site, the proposals include a substantial reduction in hardstanding areas across the site. The scheme results in 1,425m² of hardstanding compared to 1,648m² the extant scheme and 2,925m² on the existing County Hotel. The replacement of existing external hardstanding areas with significant areas of soft

landscaping will enhance the appearance and setting of the site, while adding to and enhancing the sense of openness.

- The proposals will provide a pedestrian refuge for crossing Alderley Road and a safe walking route into the village.
- Existing mature trees, supplemented by additional tree planting (details to be agreed), act as a natural boundary between the development site and wider area. Development within the confines of the site will therefore be screened from wider views, ensuring the proposals have no impact on the openness of the wider Green Belt.
- Overall, the design and layout principles applied ensure the proposed development will not conflict with the five main purposes of maintaining land in the Green Belt and will not result in a materially greater impact on Green Belt openness.
- The replacement of the former County Hotel with a building of a traditional design which reflects the architectural features of the original building would also be of positive benefit to the site and Green Belt.
- The layout and orientation of buildings, together with extensive tree planting and landscaping which acts a suitable screen between the site wider area, ensures the amenities of surrounding residents are maintained, from an privacy and outlook point of view. The redevelopment proposals also deliver significant improvements to the amenities of adjacent residential properties by enhancing their outlook (following the removal of the dilapidated County Hotel building) but also following the removal of the public house use and its associated potential for noise and disturbance.
- The proposal will not lead to highway safety or capacity concerns, ensuring safe access and sufficient car parking (100% provision) to serve the development.
- The proposals deliver new homes on a previously developed site, in an accessible location, where new housing is directed in accordance with national and local planning policy and guidance.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Green Belt

Paragraph 145 of the Framework identifies that the complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), which would not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development is not an inappropriate form of development. Also included is where the complete redevelopment would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

The key test for this aspect of Green Belt policy is not whether the proposal is materially larger than the existing; it is whether the proposal causes substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. For this reason, it is considered that the assessment should relate more to the overall scale, bulk and massing of the proposed development compared to the existing and the associated impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, rather than a comparative assessment of floorspace / footprint.

The proposed buildings are clearly larger than the one they replace. The floorspace figures indicate that whilst the footprints of the buildings remain similar, there is a 14% increase in floorspace, excluding the basement. As the basement is mainly subterranean there would be

limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt from the basement and so, although extensive it is not included in the assessment.

The last approval contained an increase of 14% of floorspace over the existing. This is still extant due to the commencement of the development within the three year time period. Substantial weight was previously given to the significant decrease in hardstanding, and associated car parking, and associated level of activity that also currently impact on openness during the operation of the existing hotel / pub use. It is accepted that the extent to which the existing use impacts upon the openness of the Green Belt is more than just the existing building. The current site does contain significant areas of hardstanding, which when fully occupied would have a significant impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. While the previous approval did go some way to decreasing the amount of hardstanding there was still a significant amount approved with 33no. above ground parking spaces in addition to the internal access roads. This hardstanding covered large areas of the site and would have still had an impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposed buildings comprise two blocks, rather than the one current building and one previously approved building which would spread the development over a greater area than the current situation. The development would be positioned closer to Alderley Road than the existing building and would spread further into the site to the rear. Although it is accepted that there is a gap between the two buildings which contributes to the openness at this particular point this gap would not always be evident from certain vantage points. The greater spread and increased volume/floorspace would contribute to the proposed scheme having a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

While this harm is not considered to be substantial harm the second bullet point in exception g), paragraph 145 of the NPPF would not be relevant to this proposal due to the development not contributing to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the proposed site.

Having regard to the factors noted above, the proposed development is considered to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Policy PG3 of the CELPS states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development, except in very special circumstances. Further to this, paragraph 144 of the Framework states *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*

The other considerations are explored in detail later in this report.

Affordable Housing

Policy SC5 of the Cheshire East Local Plan states that in developments of 11 or more dwellings (or have a maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 sq.m) in Local Service Centres and all other locations at least 30% of all units are to be affordable.

This is a proposed development of 26 dwellings therefore in order to meet the Council’s Policy on Affordable Housing there is a requirement for 8 dwellings to be provided as affordable dwellings. Typically, the Council would require 5 units for affordable rent and 3 for intermediate tenure.

The proposed development would consist of two blocks of dwellings, sitting on top of an underground parking garage. Due to the site being within the Green Belt, there are limitations in regards to external parking spaces. There would be a ground rent associated with this [defined by the developer as £400pa, indexed in line with RPI] as well as estate management service charge [defined by the developer as £2400 pa]. Consultation between the agent and Registered Providers (RPs) within the locale confirmed that there would be little interest from RPs in the units due to the leasehold status and the additional charges which would render the affordable units 'unaffordable'.

Following this, in line with CELP Policy SC 5, point 8, there were no alternate sites for off-site provision, hence a commuted sum in-lieu of the affordable units was proposed. Due to the proposed demolition of the County Hotel, vacant building credit (VBC) was applied to the scheme which resulted in an affordable requirement of 3 units.

The NPPG provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings. Where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use, or is demolished to be replaced by a new building, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of relevant vacant buildings when the local planning authority calculates any affordable housing contribution which will be sought. Affordable housing contributions may be required for any increase in floorspace.

In this case, the floorspace of the existing buildings is 2,296sqm and the proposed floorspace is 3,285sqm, an increase of 989sqm or 30% of the total proposed floorspace. To put that as numbers of dwellings - 30% of 26 dwellings is 8 dwellings. Therefore, the affordable housing contribution can therefore only be sought from 10 dwellings. 30% of 10 is 3 dwellings, which would be the requirement for this site. This equates to 11.5% of the total number of dwellings.

This application is for full planning permission for a development including 26 dwellings. There is therefore an affordable requirement, albeit much lower than the normal 30%, at 11.5%.

In line with CEC policy, the commuted sum amount was determined by obtaining open market values for the units, and offers from RP's. As per policy, the difference between the combined open market values and the combined RP offer provides the commuted sum amount. This amount has been accepted by Strategic Housing at CEC.

On this basis, the Council's Housing Officer does not object to this planning application.

Residential Mix

Policy SC4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan states that "*New residential development should maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities.*" The mix of one, two and three bedroom properties consisting of a mix of townhouses and apartments proposed would help to contribute to the mix of housing within Alderley Edge.

Open Space

Policy SE6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan requires 65 square metres per dwelling for the provision of public open space (POS) and recreation / outdoor sport (ROS) facilities. It appears that this cannot be provided on site and therefore financial contributions will be required for off site provision in line with policy SE6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

Based on 21no. dwellings of two or more bedrooms this would equate to £84,000 (in line with the Planning Obligations SPG for Macclesfield).

The POS commuted sum would be required and would be used to make additions, enhancements and improvements to the play [including teenage play and recreation] and amenity facilities at Alderley Park, Beech Road Play area and Chorley Hall. Commuted sums would be required on commencement of development and spend period would be 15 years.

The ROS com would be required on commencement of development and would be used to make additions enhancements and improvements in line with the PPS at Chorley Hall Playing Fields.

Education

The development of 26 dwellings is expected to generate:

- 5 primary children (26 x 0.19)
- 4 secondary children (26 x 0.15)
- 0 SEN children (26 x 0.51 x 0.023%)

The development is expected to impact on both primary school and secondary school places in the immediate locality. Contributions which have been negotiated on other developments are factored into the forecasts both in terms of the increased pupil numbers and the increased capacity at primary schools in the area as a result of agreed financial contributions. The analysis undertaken has identified that a shortfall of school places still remains at local primary and secondary schools.

To alleviate forecast pressures, the following contributions would be required:

- 5 x £11,919 x 0.91 = £54,231.00 (primary)
- 4 x £17,959 x 0.91 = £65,371.00 (secondary)
- 0 x £50,000 x 0.91 = 0 (SEN)
- Total education contribution: £119,602.00

Without a secured contribution of £119,602.00, Children's Services raise an objection to this application on the grounds that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact upon local education provision as a direct cause from the development. Without the mitigation, 5 primary children and 4 secondary children would not have a school place in Alderley Edge.

Residential Amenity

Saved Macclesfield Borough local Plan policy DC3 seeks to ensure development does not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearly residential properties through a loss of

light, overbearing effect or loss of sunlight/daylight with guidance on space distances between buildings contained in saved policy DC38 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and guidance within the Cheshire East Design Guide.

The objections have been carefully considered. The closest property to the proposed buildings is positioned 28.4m from the side of the townhouse block, Orchard Cottage. This property is not directly opposite the proposed buildings and the distance complies with the recommended distance of 21m between rear to rear of dwellings outlined in the Cheshire East Design Guide and more than the 25m outlined in saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan policy DC38. The elevation facing onto this property would also contain obscure glazing in order to prevent overlooking of the garden of Orchard Cottage.

The other surrounding dwellings are further still from the proposed buildings with surrounding vegetation further lessening any impacts.

Within the site the two blocks are positioned approx. 10m apart. There are habitable windows facing onto habitable windows at ground and first floors. In order to prevent overlooking an obscure glazing condition should be included to the side facing lounge/dining rooms. These are secondary windows so the impact should be acceptable.

With the above in mind an adequate amount of space, light and privacy is retained between the dwellings.

Air Quality

Having regard to the relative scale of the proposal and the existing lawful use of the site, no significant air quality concerns are raised. Environmental Protection have recommended a condition for electric car charging points to be provided, in the interests of air quality and to encourage the uptake of sustainable transport options for future occupants of modern housing, and also for a 'travel information pack' to be available for all new residents of the development.

Noise

Environmental Protection has noted that further information is required to ensure that a satisfactory level of amenity is maintained for future occupiers of the apartments due to the traffic related noise from the A34 road and by pass. It is therefore recommended that any approval is subject to a condition requiring an acoustic survey of the development, in order to ensure that internal noise levels defined within BS8233:2014 are achieved.

Contaminated Land

The contaminated land officer advises that this site is within 250m of a known landfill site or area of ground that has the potential to create gas. Therefore adequate gas protection measures are required which can be dealt with by condition.

Trees/Landscape

The Council's Arboricultural and Forestry Officer has provided the following comments:

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Statement by Cheshire Woodlands (CW/7373-AS-1) dated 1st October 2018.

Located off site to the west of the proposed development site within the grounds of The Merlin public house are a group of trees protected as part of the Macclesfield Borough Council (Wilmslow - College Flats) Tree Preservation Order 1992; the trees are protected as part of a Woodland designation.

The development proposals require the removal of four moderate value Category B tree groups (G3, G4, G6, & and several trees within G7) and four low value Category C individual trees (T3, T4, T6, & T9) and four Category C groups (G1, G2, G5, & G8); the majority of the trees are located on the south, south eastern boundaries of the site. The removal of an unclassified Goat Willow T5 has also been identified.

The only large mature high canopy tree identified for removal is a Lime located within G3; the tree exhibits signs of reduced vigour and vitality, with dieback and reduced twig development noted. The remaining trees are closely spaced specimens some of which exhibit reduced vitality, an etiolated form or compromising the adjacent stone boundary wall; Elm regeneration was also noted which is likely to succumb to Dutch Elm Disease within the next few years. The collective contribution of these trees is not considered significant, any impact on the amenity of the immediate area and the wider landscape is considered to be moderately low.

The remaining individual trees (T1, T2, T7 G7) associated with the immediate development area are unaffected by the development proposals. It was noted that T2 appears to be decline with significant dieback identified within the trees upper canopy.

A reduction in the excavation for the proposed basement parking area compared to the previous submission enables implementation to be facilitated without any direct impact on retained trees and their respective Root Protection Areas (RPA).

The off site trees G9 protected as part of the Macclesfield Borough Council (Wilmslow - College Flats) Tree Preservation Order 1992 can be retained and protected in accordance with current best practice. The social proximity of the boundary trees associated with G9 to the existing building in some areas is not considered sustainable; the proposed development doesn't establish an inferior relationship to what exists at present. Pruning to establish and maintain adequate clearance will be an ongoing requirement, but this will not have a significant impact on the trees or affect external views of the trees.

The landscape details don't appear to have been submitted as part of the supporting documentation. In order to compensate for the proposed tree losses it is important to maximise the landscape space available to accommodate semi-mature high canopy replacement planting; this is particularly pertinent along Alderley Road and Harden Park where the buildings are set back into the site.

Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal will have an acceptable impact upon landscaping and trees within the site, in accordance with saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan policy DC9 and policy SE5 of the Cheshire East Local Plan.

Ecology

Great Crested Newts

A number of ponds are located within 250m of the proposed development and a small population of great crested newts is known to occur at a pond located just over 130m from the application site boundary. The application site however offers limited habitat for great crested newts. The better quality habitat, located to the north of the site, will however be used as a community garden as part of the proposed development.

In order to minimise the risk of Great Crested Newts being harmed during the works the applicant's ecologist has recommended the implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures.

Considering the distance between the proposed development and the adjacent ponds and the small area of better quality habitat affected by the development, provided the recommended measures are implemented the proposed development would be unlikely to result in a breach of the Habitat Regulations. Consequently, it is not necessary for the Council to have regard to the Habitat Regulations during the determination of this application.

However, as there is a loss of some suitable habitat for great crested newts, albeit on a minor scale, it is advised that the proposed development should include some proposals to compensate for this loss. The Council's Ecologist suggests that this should take the form of the provision of a small additional pond and a hibernacula. The submitted layout plan should be amended to include the provision of these features and a condition is recommended to cover this.

Bats

Evidence of bat activity in the form of a minor roost of a relatively common bat species has been recorded within the existing hotel building on a number of occasions. Whilst it is now sometime since the last detailed bat survey was undertaken it is advised that it is unlikely that the level of roosting activity has changed. The usage of the building by bats is likely to be limited to small numbers of animals using the buildings for relatively short periods of time during the year and there is no evidence to suggest a significant maternity roost is present. The loss of the roosts associated with the buildings on this site, in the absence of mitigation, is likely to have a low impact upon on bats at the local level and a low impact upon the conservation status of the species as a whole.

The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places

(a) in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, and provided that there is

(b) no satisfactory alternative and

(c) no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range

The UK has implemented the Directive in the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 2010 (as amended) which contain two layers of protection (i) a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (“LPAs”) to have regard to the Directive’s requirements above, and (ii) a licensing system administered by Natural England and supported by criminal sanctions.

Saved Macclesfield Borough Local Plan Policy NE11 and policy SE3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan states that the Council will seek to conserve, enhance and interpret nature conservation interests. Development which would affect nature conservation interests will not normally be permitted.

The NPPF advises LPAs to conserve and enhance biodiversity: if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) or adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, planning permission should be refused.

Natural England’s standing advice is that, if a (conditioned) development appears to fail the three tests in the Habitats Directive, then LPAs should consider whether Natural England is likely to grant a licence: if unlikely, then the LPA should refuse permission: if likely, then the LPA can conclude that no impediment to planning permission arises under the Directive and Regulations.

In this case it is considered that the proposal will result in a more sustainable form of development than the existing, particularly in terms of energy efficiency, and any alternatives are likely to involve significant works to the existing building, which would have a comparable impact upon the species. The submitted report recommends the installation of bat boxes on trees and the incorporation of features for roosting bats into the replacement residential building to compensate for the loss of the existing roosts and the supervision and timing of the works by a licensed bat worker to mitigate the risk posed to bats during the works.

The nature conservation officer advises that the proposed mitigation/ compensation is acceptable and it is highly likely that the favourable conservation status of the species concerned will be unaffected by the proposed development. However, if planning consent is granted a condition requiring the development to proceed in accordance with the recommendations made by the submitted Ecological Scoping Survey is recommended.

A number of trees will be removed as part of the proposed development. Whilst the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal states that the trees on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats no information on this has been included with the submitted report. A survey of the bat roost potential of the trees affected by the proposed development is required prior to the determination of this application. This has not been provided so an objection is raised with regard to the lack of information.

To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated with the development it is recommended that if planning permission is granted a condition should be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed with the LPA. Suggested wording:

Nesting Birds

In the event that planning permission is granted a suitable condition should be included

relating to nesting birds.

Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are a biodiversity action plan priority species and hence a material consideration. There are records of hedgehogs in the broad locality of the proposed development and so the species may occur on the site of the proposed development. If planning consent is granted a suitable condition is recommended.

The nature conservation officer raises no objections to the proposal subject to the conditions referenced above.

Highways

There are two existing access points to the site, one of these points is to be closed and the site access is taken using an existing access to Harden Park that leads to the basement car park.

There is now only one access proposed to serve the site that is 6m wide, this access leads to a surface car park that has 38no. car parking spaces. A further 12 spaces are located in the basement. The residential accommodation proposed is 5 No. 1 bed apartments, 17 No, 2 and 3 bed apartments and 4 No. 4 bed townhouses, the 50no. car parking spaces provided accords with CEC car parking standards.

Refuse collection will take place from the internal site access road and tracking details have been provided.

The level of traffic generation is modest from 26 residential units and is not considered to have a material traffic impact on the local road network. Additionally, the former use of the site has also to be taken into consideration as this did generate similar traffic movements to the site.

It is also proposed to create a pedestrian refuge on the Wilmslow Road to the front of the site. This will enable a safe crossing point and link to the pedestrian footpath providing a safe walking route into Alderley Edge.

Therefore, the proposals are considered acceptable and no objections are raised by the Council's Strategic Infrastructure Manager.

Design

The existing site is an eyesore with years of neglect leading to the existing dilapidated building currently on site.

Following discussions between the Council's Design Officer and the applicant amended plans have been received with minor alterations to the design of the buildings. These do not materially affect the design of the buildings and there is no increase in footprint.

The amendments address the concerns raised within the design response to a point where the design is considered to adequately respond to the context of the immediate vicinity and

character area.

The Southern and Eastern elevations have been redesigned to provide a corner feature that addresses the prominent position of the site and replaces the existing strong architectural features with a modern interpretation and visually creates a strong 'gateway' into/out of Alderley Edge.

The materials proposed reflect the commonly used London (white) brick work that is used in and around Alderley Edge.

The additional contextual street scenes adequately show that the scale and massing of the proposal is appropriate to the existing built form adjacent to the site.

The narrative behind the concept explains how the detail and proportion of the local architectural styling has been referenced to create a contemporary design that sits well within the existing traditional built form.

The reduction of hardstanding will also facilitate the creation of a substantial landscaped frontage to Alderley Road, which will represent a significant visual benefit compared to the existing situation.

Flood Risk

No comments or objections have been received in relation to flood risk; however appropriate conditions relating to drainage would be included with any approval.

HEADS OF TERMS

If the application is approved a Section 106 Agreement will be required, and should include:

- Secondary education contributions of £119,602.00.
- Open space and recreation outdoor sports contributions of £84,000.00.
- Affordable housing contribution of £362,000

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations

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

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

The provision of public open space and affordable housing is necessary, fair and reasonable to provide a sustainable form of development, to contribute towards sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities and to comply with local and national planning policy.

All elements are necessary, directly relate to the development and are fair and reasonable in relation to the scale and kind of the development

Very Special Circumstances

The site benefits from an extant permission to demolish the current buildings and erect a large replacement apartment building. The overall size of this extant permission would be similar to the current proposal; however the extant scheme would contain one building resulting in a more compact development with less overall spread over the site, but the proposed development has reduced massing at second floor level to compensate for this. The presence of this extant permission and the stated intentions of the applicant should this permission be refused make this a genuine fall-back which should be afforded substantial weight.

The current proposal contains above ground car parking along with some basement parking like in the extant permission, however the extent of the above ground hardstanding is now limited to 1,425sqm of hardstanding compared to 1,648sqm for the extant scheme and 2,925sqm with the existing development enabling additional landscaping in the proposed scheme which would soften the impact of the proposed buildings, and also help to improve the visual impact of the site.

Due to the reduction in hardstanding the area to the front of the site, adjacent to Wilmslow Road, would contain a significant increase in soft landscaping which would significantly improve the appearance of the site from this critical viewpoint.

While the increased spread of the development creates greater harm to the openness of the Green Belt it does help to break up the mass of the buildings leading to an improved design of the proposal when compared to the extant scheme.

The proposed pedestrian refuge on Wilmslow Road associated with the proposed scheme would also benefit existing and future residents of the area when walking into Alderley Edge and help encourage walking rather than car use.

The above benefits to the proposal over the extant scheme are considered to comprise very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness. The application is therefore considered to comply with the relevant Green Belt policy outlined above.

CONCLUSION

The site comprises previously developed land in a sustainable location, with access to a range of local services and facilities nearby and has good public transport links. It would add to the stock of housing and its construction and occupation would result in social and economic benefits, albeit relatively minor.

The development would make effective use of a previously developed site and would also result in the removal of the existing unsociable use of the hotel and pub, given the proximity of existing residential properties. The development would improve the appearance of the site which has been vacant for many years, and has fallen into disrepair.

The proposed development is considered to have a materially greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, however very special circumstances are considered to exist

which clearly outweigh the harm. The proposal also raises no significant design, amenity or highway safety issues with an enhancement in the form of the proposed pedestrian refuge on Wilmslow Road.

The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and a s106 agreement.

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

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accord with approved plans
3. Submission of samples of building materials
4. Pile Driving
5. Landscaping - submission of details
6. Landscaping (implementation)
7. Landscaping to include details of boundary treatment
8. Scheme for noise mitigation to be submitted (acoustic survey)
9. Gas protection measures to be submitted
10. All arboricultural works shall be carried out in accordance with Cheshire Woodlands Arboricultural Statement
11. Pond to be installed
12. Bat mitigation
13. Lighting
14. Nesting birds
15. Breeding birds
16. Hedgehog mitigation
17. No gates
18. Foul water
19. Surface water
20. Travel information pack
21. Electric vehicle infrastructure
22. Contaminated Land

23. Contaminated land (verification report)

24. Contaminated Land (soil)

25. Contaminated Land

26. Pedestrian refuge to be implemented

