

Application No: 22/0635N

Location: 22A, MARKET STREET, CREWE, CW1 2EG

Proposal: Construct basement and erect one additional storey to No. 22a Market Street, alter elevations and change use of property to medical / health facility - use class E(e). (re-submission of 21/4270N).

Applicant: Jaddou, Cheshire Medical Centre

Expiry Date: 05-Aug-2022

Summary

The application site is a vacant retail unit located within the Settlement Boundary and Town Centre Boundary for Crewe. Policy S.2 is not consistent with the NPPF and the proposed use is considered to be compatible with the town centre. The proposed use is considered to be acceptable in principle.

The highways implications of the development are considered to be acceptable and the proposed development would comply with the Council's parking standards. The proposed development would comply with Policies BE.3 of the C&NLP and C02 of the CELPS.

The amenity implications of the proposed development, including noise, air quality and contaminated land are considered to be acceptable and would comply with BE.1 of the C&NLP and SE 12 of the CELPS.

The detailed design would not appear out of character in this location and the proposal would have a neutral impact upon the setting of the nearby heritage assets. The proposal complies with the NPPF and Policies SE1 and SE7 of the CELPS.

The drainage and flood risk implications of the proposed development are considered to be acceptable and the development complies with Policies SE13 of the CELPS and NE.20 of the C&NLP.

Finally, the development of the site would have some economic benefits through additional employment, and this does attract some weight.

The proposed development complies with the development plan as a whole and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE with conditions

REASON FOR DEFERRAL:

This application is referred to Southern Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Critchley for the following reasons;

There is no question that there have been improvements on the original plans, however there are still things that need consideration. As the Ward Councillor, I would request that these are done in the public arena of a Planning Meeting instead of behind the scenes between Officers and the applicant.

The decision to put 2 applications in for this site is confusing, as both this and 22/0637N refer to the same building.

As already highlighted in the online portal of public comments, there is no disabled parking provided and none located near to the site. These proposals fail to meet the parking standards within the Local Plan Policy CO 2, which requires development proposals to adhere to the Cheshire East Policy CO 2 and Appendix C. Parking Standards for Cars and Bicycles set out in Appendix C The old TRAN9 Parking Standards). Likewise, there are is no cycle storage provided on-site, again falling under the above Local Plan policy.

In an area of the town where fly-tipping and waste are commonplace, even with conditions relating to waste disposal provision, there needs to be a condition relating to a waste disposal plan, which can be discussed by members at committee - there is currently nothing relating to waste in the plans.

As also stated in the online portal of comments, the operating hours are stated to be 0700-2200, therefore noise conditions should be added.

I will reiterate my comments that these proposals are much better than originally planned out, but given the nature of the unit - a private medical facility and the comments made above about the material considerations that need to be addressed, a planning committee should be able to debate and scrutinise the plans further. Making their decision in a public arena.

PROPOSAL:

This is a full application for the erection of an additional storey and a basement to No 22A Market Street and for the change of use of the property to Use Class E(e) (provision of medical or health services).

The applicant is Cheshire Medical Centre (CMC). The submitted Planning Statement states that the framework of CMC includes;

- Day surgery unit (such as general surgery, colorectal surgery, endoscopy, ENT surgery, Ophthalmic Surgery, Gynecology, Orthopedic Surgery, breast surgery, vascular surgery and plastic surgery)
- Poly clinics
- Renal dialysis unit
- GP Practice
- Laboratory facilities

- Pharmacy

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The application site is located to the eastern side of Market Street with its junction with Chester Street. The application unit forms the end unit of a parade of shops and is two-stories in height. The building is predominantly glazed at first floor with a vacant retail unit at ground floor level.

The site is located within the Crewe Town Centre Primary Frontage.

Within the vicinity of the site are a number of Listed and Locally Listed Buildings as follows;

- The Tower of Christ Church – Grade II
- LNWR and LMS Crewe Tranship Shed War Memorial – Grade II
- All properties on Dorfold Street – Grade II
- All properties on Betley Street – Grade II
- All properties on Tollitt Street – Grade II
- 24 Market Street – Locally Listed Building
- 30 Market Street – Locally Listed Building

RELEVANT HISTORY:

21/4270N - Erect three additional storeys to No. 22a Market Street, alter elevations and change use of property to medical / health facility - use class E(e) – Withdrawn 11th November 2021

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

MP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

PG1 – Overall Development Strategy

PG2 – Settlement Hierarchy

PG7 – Spatial Distribution of Development

SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles

SE 1 - Design

SE 2 - Efficient Use of Land

SE 3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SE 4 – The Landscape

SE 7 – The Historic Environment

SE 9 – Energy Efficient Development

SE 12 – Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability

SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management

EG3 - Existing and Allocated Employment Sites

EG5 – Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce

IN1 – Infrastructure

IN2 – Developer Contributions

Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011

S.1 (Crewe Town Centre)

S.2 (Crewe Town Centre Primary Frontages)

NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)
NE.9 (Protected Species)
NE.17 (Pollution Control)
NE.20 (Flood Prevention)
BE.1 (Amenity)
BE.3 (Access and Parking)
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
BE.6 (Development on Potentially Contaminated Land)
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)
TRAN.4 (Access for the Disabled)
TRAN.5 (Cycling)

National Policy:

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

Of particular relevance are paragraphs:

11 Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

86-91 Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

92-97 Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

104-113 Promoting Sustainable Transport

126-136 Achieving Well Designed Places

189-208 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Neighbourhood Plans

There is no Neighbourhood Plan covering Crewe

CONSULTATIONS

United Utilities: No comments received.

CEC Environmental Health: No objection.

CEC Head of Strategic Infrastructure: No objection.

CEC Flood Risk Manager: No objection.

CEC Regeneration: Nothing to add to what other consultees have already said. Generally, from a regeneration perspective, we're supportive of uses that diversify the town centre offer and still drive footfall and this proposed use does that. Do share some concerns about design and servicing which have expressed.

VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Crewe Town Council: Crewe Town Council object to the application on the following grounds;

- The application should clearly represent and be linked with application 22/0637N
- The application should be considered by the planning authority in conjunction with application 22/0637N

- Negative impact on surrounding heritage setting, including Christ Church and 24 Market Street
- The effect of the proposal will be the unacceptably visually disruptive and uneven roof line along the development of commercial units, which will be read as distracting at a gateway location to the town centre.
- Inadequate detail and provision for waste management. Waste bins cannot be kept to the rear or in the public realm as they will obstruct the highway
- Inadequate provision for cycle storage
- The proposal constitutes over development of the site
- Lack of parking provision, particularly disabled parking, is against local planning policy
- The development proposal does not provide for any biodiversity, sustainability or renewable energy net gain, in opposition to the Climate Crisis recognized by Cheshire East Council
- That the committee reflects and supports the concerns raised by the Salvation Army neighbouring the proposed site
- That the Heritage Officer Comments should be submitted in response to this application

The Crewe Town Council Heritage Officer has commented as follows;

- The revised proposal addresses some of the issues outlined as part of the previous application.
- The proposals do not have a physical impact upon either a designated or non-designated heritage asset. However, the proposals do impact upon the setting of 24 Markey Street (locally listed) and Christ Church Tower (Grade II Listed).
- The Heritage Statement states that the proposals will reinstate urban grain and a sense of enclosure that would have existed in the area. Historical images show that Block Houses (now Hops) were the highest structures in the area. The current roofline of 22a and 20 Market Street are marginally lower, but the addition of another floor would take it well above.
- The proposals would take the structures above the roof lines of this end of Market Street, which contains older buildings on the left-hand side.
- This proposal would significantly alter the view to 24 Market Street. This view was taken into account during the 1960s redevelopment of the right-hand side of Market Street, with the roofline of the new premises at the Chester Street end reduced to improve the sightline of the structure from Chester Bridge
- The proposals will have a negative impact upon the heritage of 24 Market Street and Christ Church

REPRESENTATIONS:

One letter of general observation has been received which raises the following points;

- Increased noise (especially during construction) which will have an adverse impact upon the operation of the Salvation Army Church
- Concern that the development would cause disruption to the programme of charitable work provided by the Salvation Army
- Concerns over access to Sandon Street for deliveries and refuse collection
- Increase in vehicles during the construction of the development – difficulty accessing Sandon Street due to its width
- The adjacent buildings are of a lower size

One letter of objection has been received which raises the following points;

- No Basement Impact Assessment – more information required in terms of flood risk
- The additional floor at 22a and 20 Market Street wouldn't be too bad, but there is a unit between which does not received an additional storey. The development would lead to cumulative poor design and not respect the terrace. Infilling the unit should be investigated
- Any approval should include a condition to ensure the development is in tandem. A construction management plan should be secured through the use of a condition
- No disabled parking is provided. As a medical centre this fails to meet the requirements of the Local Plan
- No cycle parking provision is provided. This should be provided within the curtilage of the property
- No details of waste collection have been provided. A refuse waste management plan should be conditioned
- Operating hours are 0700-2200. Noise conditions should be imposed to not harm the amenity of the neighbouring commercial occupiers or residential properties.
- The applicant should install a green roof and solar panels
- EV Charging should be provided with disabled parking spaces

APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is a vacant retail unit which lies within the Settlement Boundary as defined by the C&NLP. The site is also located within the Town Centre Boundary.

The site is identified as having a primary retail frontage within Crewe Town Centre and is the subject of Policy S.2. Policy S.2 states that the change of use of ground floor A1, A2 or A3 uses to any non-retail use will not be permitted unless that use is a leisure/entertainment/civic use appropriate to a town centre.

Policy EG5 of the CELPS states that within the Principal Towns the main focus for high quality comparison retail, supported by a range of retail, service, leisure, tourism, office and other town centre-type uses, including residential. It also states that the use of upper floors in town and other centres for non-retail uses will be supported, where appropriate.

In this case Policy S.2 does not appear to be consistent with paragraph 86 of the NPPF which advises that planning policies should 'define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters'.

The application site is to the southern edge of the town centre in an area which suffers from a large number of vacant units. It is considered that Use Class E (e) the provision of medical or health services is an appropriate use within the town centre and on this basis the proposed change of use is acceptable in principle.

Economic Benefits

The proposed development will provide local jobs (70-100 for both applications) and bring a vacant unit back into use. This includes jobs as doctors, nurses, receptionists, lab technicians, security, office staff, porters and domestic work.

The economic benefits of the development would weigh in favour of the proposed development.

Highways Implications

The proposal is to extend the existing commercial building floor area and also change the use to a medical centre. The proposal is smaller than the previous one which was not objected to by Highways.

The site is within a sustainable location and is accessible by pedestrians, public transport users, and there are nearby public car parks. No on-site parking is to be provided which is acceptable in this location.

There is no vehicle access for the existing site, and this will remain the case for the proposal. Refuse collection and deliveries can continue as they have done in the past.

The site would not provide any cycle parking provision. However, the site is located within the boundary for Crewe Town Centre where there is provision for cycle parking.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure has confirmed that there are no objections to this application.

Amenity

The nearest residential properties are flats above the existing retail units to the opposite side of Market Street. The proposed additional storey would have a separation distance of 21.4m from the flats opposite and this separation distance is considered to be acceptable and the development would not harm residential amenity.

The other units surrounding the site are largely commercial (retail at ground floor level, office accommodation above, and Church Hall at the rear). The proposed operation of the site would not cause harm to the surrounding land uses.

The concerns raised in terms of noise and disturbance during the construction works are noted. This matter could be controlled via the imposition of a planning condition.

Design/Built Heritage

The proposal would result in the provision of an additional storey to the unit. The additional storey would be set in from the elevations with Market Street, Chester Street and Sandon Street by 2.4m on each side. The additional accommodation would include floor-ceiling height glazing which would largely line up with the glazing to the existing building.

This application follows an earlier application (21/4270N) which was withdrawn due to concerns over the design implications and the impact upon the setting of the nearby heritage assets. Application 21/4270N proposed an additional three-storeys to the building and this has now been reduced to one additional storey (as discussed above).

As noted above there are a number of heritage assets within Crewe Town Centre within close proximity to the site. However, the main impact would be on the setting of The Tower of Christ Church (Grade II) and 24 Market Street (Locally Listed Building).

The listing for the tower of Christ Church 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'

The local listing for 24 Market Street states as follows;

'Prominent red brick corner building over a rusticated stone plinth, decorated with white faience, dominating the street scene on Market Street'

The design of the existing building is not of high quality, but it does not dominate the street scene as it is two storey in height. A previous scheme for an additional three storeys was withdrawn following design and heritage concerns. The current proposal is a scaled back version of that scheme which aims to address some of the heritage concerns.

The elevations of the proposal have been revised and the height of the corner plot reduced which means it would not over dominate the street-scene. The existing ground and first floor external envelope will be reworked. The previous scheme proposed to replicate the ground and first floor detailing, which was not considered to be of high quality or a benefit to the local street-scene. The current scheme is revised to present new reworked elevational treatment and with one additional story (stepped back to no 22a). The heritage statement mentions that the area will be improved by the creation of landmark buildings to the corner plots, however this will only work if those landmark buildings are of a quality which will not dominate the streetscape or harm the setting of the heritage assets. This scheme shows little such detail and to ensure that the scheme is of suitable quality further drawings and details would be required, and these details could be secured via the imposition of planning conditions. The proposal is considered to have a neutral impact upon the heritage assets.

In terms of the detailed design, the additional storey would be recessed from the side elevations, and this reduces the visual effect of the increase in height.

The Urban Design Officers concerns about this being a piecemeal development are noted (and that other units along this row may apply to add additional stories in the future). However, each application is determined on its own merits. It is not uncommon for a variation of building heights within a town centre and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in design terms.

The detailed design would not appear out of character in this location and the proposal would have a neutral impact upon the setting of the nearby heritage assets. The proposal complies with the NPPF and Policies SE1 and SE7 of the CELPS.

Ecology

Breeding Birds

If planning consent is granted, a condition could be imposed to safeguard breeding birds in terms of the timing of works.

Ecological Enhancement

Local Plan Policy SE 3(5) requires all developments to aim to positively contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development in accordance with this policy. If planning permission is granted a condition could be attached which requires the submission of an ecological enhancement strategy.

Flood Risk/Drainage

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) based on the Environment Agency Flood Maps.

In this case the Councils Flood Risk Manager, has been consulted as part of this application and has raised no objection to the proposed development. As a result, the development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its drainage and flood risk implications.

Energy Efficient Development

Policy SE 9 (Energy Efficient Development) of the CELPS sets out that;

“non-residential development over 1,000 square metres will be expected to secure at least 10 per cent of its predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources, unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that having regard to the type of development and its design, this is not feasible or viable.”

The proposed basement and additional storey would create 455m² of floor space and would not trigger a requirement for decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy.

Waste Management

The issue of bin storage is noted. The existing unit is located within the town centre and does not benefit from any outdoor space to store bins. This take place within Sandon Street to the rear of the site and this would continue for the operation of this development.

CONCLUSION

The application site is a vacant retail unit located within the Settlement Boundary and Town Centre Boundary for Crewe. Policy S.2 is not consistent with the NPPF and the proposed use is considered to be compatible with the town centre. The proposed use is considered to be acceptable in principle.

The highways implications of the development are considered to be acceptable and the proposed development would comply with the Council's parking standards. The proposed development would comply with Policies BE.3 of the C&NLP and C02 of the CELPS.

The amenity implications of the proposed development, including noise, air quality and contaminated land are considered to be acceptable and would comply with BE.1 of the C&NLP and SE 12 of the CELPS.

The detailed design would not appear out of character in this location and the proposal would have a neutral impact upon the setting of the nearby heritage assets. The proposal complies with the NPPF and Policies SE1 and SE7 of the CELPS.

The drainage and flood risk implications of the proposed development are considered to be acceptable and the development complies with Policies SE13 of the CELPS and NE.20 of the C&NLP.

Finally, the development of the site would have some economic benefits through additional employment, and this does attract some weight.

The proposed development complies with the development plan as a whole and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the following conditions;

- 1. Standard Time – 3 years**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Details of all materials to be submitted and approved**
- 4. Breeding birds – timing of works**
- 5. Ecological enhancements to be submitted and approved**
- 6. Final design and details of all fenestration to be submitted and approved**
- 7. Details of parapet/coping, and design of the entrance to be submitted and approved**
- 8. Low emission boiler provision**
- 9. Waste Management Plan to be submitted and approved**
- 10. Construction Management Plan to be submitted and approved**

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 has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chair of the Southern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

