

Application Reference	DC/065826
Location:	92-94 Church Lane Marple Stockport SK6 7AR
PROPOSAL:	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of mixed use development comprising 20 apartments and A1 retail floorspace (Amended Plans).
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	30.05.2017
Expiry Date:	29.08.2017
Case Officer:	Mark Jordan
Applicant:	Merepark Project Management LLP
Agent:	

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Marple Area Committee – 4+ objections.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of a variety of single, two and two and a half storey commercial / industrial buildings currently on site and the erection of a mixed use two and a half storey development, comprising 20 apartments and approximately 360 sq.m of retail (Use Class A1) floorspace.

The residential element would comprise 2 bed apartments, some contained within the upper floors above the ground floor retail (Use Class A1) unit, the remainder within two separate standalone blocks. Affordable housing is proposed as part of the development.

The Use Class A1 commercial unit proposed as part of the development, would operate between the hours of 0600 and 2300 Monday to Saturday and between 0900 and 1800 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays

Highway improvements are proposed to provide a formal two way vehicular access off Church Lane, together with pedestrian routes off both Church Lane and Hibbert Lane.

A total of 14 parking spaces (including 2 disabled bays) together with a servicing lay-by would be provided for the commercial uses, adjacent to the site frontage with Church Lane and off the main internal access road. A further 20 spaces (including 2 disabled bays) would be provided within the central part of the site to serve the residential element of the scheme.

Separate cycle and bin store facilities are to be provided within the development site.

Full details of the scale, siting, design and appearance of the development are included in the drawings appended to this planning report.

The application is supported by a substantial suite of documents, including, but not limited to the following:-

- 1) Planning Statement;
- 2) Design & Access Statement;
- 3) Drainage Strategy;
- 4) Landscape scheme;
- 5) Affordable Housing Viability Assessment
- 6) Sustainability Checklist;
- 7) Ground contamination assessment;
- 8) Flood Risk Assessment;
- 9) Ecological Assessments;
- 10) Crime Impact Statement;
- 11) Noise Assessment;
- 12) Transport Statement and Travel Plan;
- 13) Heritage Assessment.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land, covering an area of approximately 0.22 hectares, located off the southern edge of Church Lane.

The site currently comprises a variety of single and two and a half storey buildings including:-

- 1) Two former retail units with offices above and to the rear, which have been vacant for a number of years;
- 2) The Albert Schools building fronting onto Church Lane, which is partly occupied by a manufacturing use, with the remainder of the building appearing to be vacant;
- 3) Office buildings and a number of garages and workshop buildings exist towards the rear of the site.

The site is surrounded by a variety of uses including a newsagent and car sales / car wash to the north-east, and residential properties comprising both semi-detached and terraced houses to the remaining site boundaries.

Ground levels fall across the site from east to west.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ("PCPA 2004") requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan includes-

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review adopted 31st May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; &

- Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted 17th March 2011.

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

PSD2.1: RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES
 PSD2.5: OTHER DEVELOPMENT IN DISTRICT CENTRE
 EP1.7 DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK
 L1.1: LAND FOR ACTIVE RECREATION
 L1.2: CHILDRENS PLAY
 MW1.5: CONTROL OF WASTE FROM DEVELOPMENT

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

CS1: OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE
 SD-1: Creating Sustainable Communities
 SD-3: Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plans - New Development
 SD-6: Adapting to the Impact of Climate Change
 CS2: HOUSING PROVISION
 CS3: MIX OF HOUSING
 CS4: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING
 H-1: Design of Residential Development
 H-2: Housing Phasing
 H-3: Affordable Housing
 CS5: ACCESS TO SERVICES
 CS6: SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING THE SERVICE CENTRE HIERARCHY
 AS-1: The Vitality and Viability of Stockport's Service Centres
 CS8: SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT
 SIE-1: Quality Places
 SIE-2: Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments
 SIE-3: Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment
 CS9: TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT
 CS10: AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK
 T-1: Transport and Development
 T-2: Parking in Developments
 T-3: Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance does not form part of the Statutory Development Plan; nevertheless it does provide non-statutory Council approved guidance that is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) entitled 'Recreational Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments (adopted July 2006) and 'Affordable Housing' (adopted January 2003).

Supplementary Planning Document entitled, 'Transport & Highways in Residential Areas' (adopted September 2006), 'The Design of Residential Development' (adopted December 2007), 'Sustainable Transport SPD' (adopted December 2007) and 'Sustainable Design and Construction (adopted November 2010).

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) initially published on 27th March 2012, subsequently revised and published on 24th July 2018 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The revised National Planning Policy Framework will be a vital tool in ensuring that we get planning for the right homes built in the right places of the right quality at the same time as protecting our environment.

N.B. In respect of decision-taking the revised NPPF constitutes a "material consideration".

Para.1 "The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied".

Para.2 "Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

Para.7 "The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development".

Para.8 "Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective*
- b) a social objective*
- c) an environmental objective"*

Para.11 "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".

Para.12 “.....Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed”.

Para.38 “Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way..... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.

Para.47 “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing”.

Para.124 “The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.

Para.130 “Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development”.

Para.153 states “In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:

- a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and
- b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption”.

Para.213 “existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”.

Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place (launched in March 2014) and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this specific proposal.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The owner/occupiers of neighbouring properties have been notified by letter and the proposal has been advertised as a Major Development by site and press notices.

To date 24 representations have been received;

23 against assert the following summarised objections:-

- 1) Insufficient parking for residents and visitors, meaning overspill parking affecting local roads and existing residents;
- 2) The excessive scale / height of the proposed buildings would have an overbearing / over-shadowing impact on nearby residential properties, impacting on 'right to light';
- 3) Loss of privacy to surrounding residential properties, with separation between the development and existing dwellings being well below Council standards;
- 4) Siting of the bin stores close to residential properties could result in odour and vermin problems;
- 5) Traffic on local roads already result in severe congestion and pollution, this would only be exacerbated by the proposed development;
- 6) The retail unit cannot be justified, noting there are many empty retail units in the local area;
- 7) Littering problems and increased noise disturbance;
- 8) Loss of trees and wildlife habitats;
- 9) Insufficient infrastructure (school places, doctors, etc) to support the development;
- 10) The design of the development would be out of character with the local area, particularly the introduction of apartments, resulting in visual harm ;
- 11) The proposal has limited green/garden areas for residents and safe areas for children;
- 12) The buildings that would be demolished on site, particularly the Albert Schools building, make a significant contribution to the streetscene and are of both historical and architectural importance;
- 13) The proposal would result in the over-development of the site, to the detriment of the amenity of local residents ;
- 14) Concerns over increased potential for crime;
- 15) There is a significant level of local opposition to the development;
- 16) Possible adverse impact on drainage;
- 17) The economic benefits of the scheme have been over-played;
- 18) The proposed access onto Church Lane is not sufficient to cater for the traffic movements associated with the proposal and would be to the detriment of highway safety;
- 19) Lack of any pre-application discussion with the Council;
- 20) An alternative solution would be to retain and convert the existing buildings fronting Church St, with a lower density development to the rear.

1 in support asserts the following:-

In favour of the development, except for the inclusion of a retail unit, as empty shops are already in the area.

A retail unit will lead to extra traffic activity in an already congested area. The pedestrian crossing will also become more hazardous, with parking on local roads already limited.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Highway Engineer: The applicant outlines that the site layout has been amended with the aim of addressing the issues raised in respect to pedestrian access routes, the location and design of disabled parking, cycle parking and bin storage. This includes providing additional and improved cycle storage facilities, relocating the totem sign and bollards and providing an enlarged bin store. Vehicle swept-path diagrams have also been submitted which demonstrate that large rigid HGVs, fire appliances and refuse vehicles will be able to turn into, within and out of the site. The applicant has also confirmed that refuse storage for the commercial unit will be within the plant room of that unit.

After reviewing the submitted plan I would conclude that these amendments and additional information essentially address my previous concerns, although I would consider a small number of minor revisions be made (e.g. tweaking the radii to the west side of the site access). This, together with other matters of detail, however, can be dealt with by condition. This will need to include the requirement to submit and have approved a servicing method statement in order to limit the types of vehicles that can service the site (to those capable of accessing the site), the method of servicing and details of refuse storage facilities for the commercial unit.

The Technical Note includes a more-detailed assessment of the impact that the traffic generated by the development will have on the highway network. As outlined in my previous response, it is estimated that the development will result in an increase of 25 vehicle movements during the AM peak, 37 vehicle movements during the PM peak and 24 vehicle movements during the Saturday peak travelling to and from the site. 4 (AM peak), 6 (PM peak) and 2 (Sat peak) of these movements will be associated with the residential use and the movements associated with the retail use are expected to be already on the network (e.g. someone who previously would have driven to Asda will instead drive to the development). With respect to the impact of these, the Note outlines that the site access is predicted to operate within capacity, with minimal queues or delays, there will only be a small net increase in vehicle movements through the Church Lane / Hibbert Lane roundabout junction (up to 4 vehicles per hour) and the proposal could result in a net reduction in vehicle movements through the Stockport Road / Hibbert Lane signal controlled junction (as residents who live in south Marple and presently drive to Asda or the Co-op, divert to the proposed store, thus no longer driving through that junction). As such, it concludes, the development should not have a material impact on the safety or operation of the local highway network.

Having regard to this assessment, I would conclude that whilst I would question some of the assumptions and methodology used, I would agree with its overall conclusions that the site access should operate within capacity and, although there is likely to be an increase in vehicle movements through the Church Lane / Hibbert Lane roundabout junction and a change in turning movements (e.g. with drivers diverting to the site), such an increase and change will be of a scale and nature that could not be considered as having a severe impact on the highway network warranting a recommendation of refusal. In addition, whilst the new store could result in some drivers no longer making journeys through the Stockport Road / Hibbert Lane signal controlled junction, it may draw some customers of existing

stores who live in the north of Marple to it. This, however, is likely to balance out and therefore I would conclude that any impact on this junction should be minimal.

I can therefore confirm that the Technical Note and revised site plan addresses the issues raised in my previous comments and therefore, subject to matters of detail which can be dealt with at detailed design stage / by condition, I raise no objection to this application, subject to conditions.

Property Services: The submitted viability appraisal indicates the potential for an element of affordable housing as part of a viable development.

LLFA (Drainage): Additional drainage details are required in order to allow a full review.

Conservation Team: The application site has an entry on the Historic Environment Record which reads "Albert Schools were built in 1868, primarily as a Congregational Sunday School at the instigation of Thomas Carver of Hollins Mill; later became a full-time day school (Marple Local History Society 1993 The History of Marple and District, 59). Of 2 storeys, built of machine-made brick; façade of 7 bays, with wider central bay which projects forward slightly and has gable with terracotta decoration; 'Albert Schools' inscribed in stone over doorway. Gabled range to rear, with yellow brick detailing. Exterior unaltered but now used as commercial premises (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 17/10/2005) (1)."

In addition to the Albert Schools buildings the application site includes the building immediately to the south-east, at 92-94 Church Lane, which is an early 20th century two storey building with pitched roof, constructed of red brick with tiled roof, positioned on the same building line as the former Sunday School. To its front elevation is a later timber and brick shopfront insertion, at single storey level and positioned on the same building line as the Albert Schools building fronting Church Lane.

The application site is within the setting of a number of locally listed buildings within the immediate vicinity, namely The Pineapple Inn, which is directly opposite the site, 103 Church Lane, and the Carver Theatre, and as such contributes to the group value of these buildings.

The historical and aesthetic heritage value of the Albert Schools building can be summarised as follows:

Aesthetic Value: The building makes a positive contribution to the streetscene. The 1868 building displays high quality design, materials and architectural features, representing a fairly restrained mid- 19th Gothic Revival style appropriate to its use as a Sunday School, with steep gables, strong vertical emphasis in windows and doors, and the use of decoration in the form of polychromatic and moulded brickwork. This building is evident on the 1st edition OS map for the area and is labelled 'Congregational Sunday School'. By the early 20th century the original building had been extended to the front and rear as evidenced by the 1909 OS and named as 'School'. The extensions take the form of a centrally positioned rear extension which is of two storeys with a pyramidal roof single bay 7 bay long range to the front of the original building, which has the effect of forming a double pile roof arrangement with the original building, and a single bay, centrally positioned rear extension which is of two storeys with a pyramidal roof. The original building is now located to the rear of the early 20th century frontage building but is still visible in

oblique views from Church Lane adding interest and variety to the streetscene. The frontage of site presents a symmetrical elevation to Church Lane, directly at back of pavement with a slightly projecting gabled central bay, which features a stone carved overdoor inscribed with 'Albert Schools'. Whilst this frontage presents a relatively plain, and certainly less decorated architectural style than the former Sunday School, it is nevertheless constructed of high quality materials with substantial sandstone dressings to the large, vertical window openings and with moulded terracotta and decorative brickwork to the gables, eaves and roof and makes an attractive contribution to the streetscene. More recently the buildings have been further extended to the side and rear of the rearmost early 20th century addition with flat roof extensions which are not of any architectural or historic merit.

Historic and Evidential Value: The site has association with the Carver family of Hollins Mill, with the construction of the 1868 Sunday School being instigated by Thomas Carver. The Carver family were the largest employer in the district and amongst the greatest benefactors of Marple, who were to have a huge effect on the development of the Marple area, being responsible for the provision or construction of a wide variety of community amenities. Whilst it is accepted that the 1868 building represents the most historic and architecturally significant part of the site, the frontage building nevertheless possess local interest and distinction and exhibits qualities in design and materials which ensure it makes a positive and valuable contribution to the streetscene and setting of the nearby locally listed buildings. Together with surrounding buildings dating from a similar period the site has evidential value providing an insight into the mid-19th to early 20th century development of this part of Marple.

The above mentioned buildings have previously been considered for possible inclusion on Stockport's list of buildings of local significance. Objection to the inclusion of the building on the local list was received from the building owner on the grounds of lack of historic significance and architectural merit.

In light of the additions, alterations and modern interventions evident at the site the building was not considered to meet the criteria of local listing, however the site retains its Historic Environment Record entry and continues to make a positive contribution to the streetscene, as evidenced by its identification and consideration for inclusion on the local list in the first place.

In light of the factors set out above, the building is considered an undesignated heritage asset for the purposes of the NPPF.

Para 131 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to take account of:-

- ☐ the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- ☐ the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- ☐ the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

As proposed, the scheme appears to involve total loss of all significance of the site.

The building at 92-94 Church Lane and the former Albert Schools buildings are proposed for complete demolition. New development in the form of a 3 bay, 3 storey

mixed use block (commercial at ground floor with residential above), is proposed on the site of 92-94 Church Lane whilst the site of the Albert Schools buildings would be used as surface car parking to serve the commercial element of the site. Whilst a Design and Access Statement has been submitted this makes only cursory reference to the building's Historic Environment Record and does not provide any analysis of its heritage value, its contribution to the streetscene or the impact of the proposed development on the area or the setting of the locally listed buildings.

The submitted Planning Statement does highlight the identification for inclusion on the local list and the subsequent decision to not include the building but does not make any analysis of the contribution that the buildings make to the character of the streetscene or the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the surrounding locally listed buildings. The report refers to commentary from the building owner stating that 'the plan layout, design and form will not easily lend itself to re-use and conversion in the future' (P16), however, the submission provides no justification for the loss of the building nor does it demonstrate that an option for its retention and conversion has been assessed.

Given the sum of the heritage value described above, the applicant should be asked to explain why it is not possible to make use of the existing buildings within viable development proposals for the wider site. I would suggest that the internal significance could be adequately preserved by record and intervention to the exterior elevations (including demolition of the most recent extensions to the rear which would be welcome) could be countenanced provided the street presence of the building, and the 1868 building (both of which are free from more recent extensions) are not compromised.

The present proposals for complete loss of the physical heritage value seem disproportionate to any wider public benefit which will accrue, and this should be considered when coming to a balanced judgement on the application. In light of the above I cannot support the application with a positive recommendation and I would suggest that the scheme is refused or withdrawn with a view to amending the proposal to include retention and conversion of the street frontage (Albert School) and the original Sunday School building.

Planning Policy (Housing): No response received, therefore no objection.

Planning Policy (Energy): No objection subject to an appropriate condition.

Planning Policy (Open Space): No response received, therefore no objection.

Planning Policy (Retail): The rear part of the site is within a Predominantly Residential Area (where proposed blocks B and C are located) and the front part of the site (where proposed block A is located) is within Marple District Centre.

The proposal involves the provision of 361sq.m. A1 use within Marple District Centre, which provides an uplift in A1 use at the site of 183sq.m. consistent with the NPPF sequential test for main town centre uses and Core Strategy policies CS5, CS6 and AS-1. It is considered that the proposal would enhance the vitality and viability of the District Centre, consistent in this aspect with the NPPF, Core Strategy policies CS5, CS6 and AS-1 and saved UDP Review policy PSD2.5.

The part of the site fronting Church Lane falls within a Business Frontage (Type B) of Marple District Centre. Saved UDP Review policy PSD2.2 indicates that where proposals involve loss of retail use within Type B Business Frontages that change of

use to B1 use only will be allowed for. However, given the proposal involves an overall uplift in A1 use and the provision of a modern retail unit, it is considered that the proposal does not conflict with PSD2.2 because overall there is an uplift in A1 use at the site within the frontage and furthermore the proposal would enhance the attractiveness of the District Centre to shoppers and its vitality and viability, strengthening its retail component.

Planning Policy (Employment): No response received, therefore no objection.

Pollution Prevention: Recommend a condition so that the development is constructed as per the submitted noise report.

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land): The Phase 1 report for the site has been reviewed. The report recommends further investigation. No objection subject to appropriate subject conditions.

Greater Manchester Ecological Unit: The bat survey accompanying the application is by a licenced and experienced bat consultant whose work is known to the Ecology Unit. The survey found no evidence of bats at the time of survey and overall considered the site to have low roosting potential. However, due to the mobile nature of bats the use of precautionary measures was recommended. We would therefore advise that the following condition be attached to any permission, should it be granted:

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a method statement detailing the Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) to be adopted in order to avoid and/or minimize any unforeseen disturbance impacts on local bat population during the course of the development shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the RAMs detailed in the approved method statement.

Breeding birds

The site supports scrub habitat that may be used by nesting birds. As all wild birds, their nest and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), we would advise that the following condition (BS 42020:2013) be attached to any permission:

No removal of or works to any trees or shrubs shall take place during the main bird breeding season 1st March and 31st July inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Biodiversity Enhancement

In line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposals should include measures to enhance biodiversity at the site to ensure that there is an overall net gain. We would therefore recommend that a condition requiring such measures to be submitted to and approved by the council be attached to any permission. Once approved the measures should be implemented in full.

Director of Public Health: Sustainable Transport / Active Travel: the proposal could contribute to opportunities for residents of all ages to access the site using active

travel options. Currently the predominant transport mode chosen for commuting into Stockport Town Centre is by private vehicle with some small rises in recent years for walking and cycling

Stockport's Core Strategy Policy CS9 supports development that reduces the need to travel by car which reflects the growing congestion and emissions issues on Stockport's roads. In Stockport 18.3% of adults are not physically active enough (SAL Survey 2016/17) to maintain their health in the medium to long term (as measured against the Chief Medical Officer for England guidance) and appropriate infrastructure is critical to enabling cycling and walking. Well-designed developments that enable active travel choices are critical to enabling the retention of (and improvement upon) Stockport's excellent rates of physical activity reported for 2016/17 (69.4% of adults achieve the recommended 150 minutes of activity / week).

The provision of sufficient secure cycle parking at this site would be welcomed on public health terms since promoting active travel (which includes all aspects of infrastructure for active travel modes) contributes to management of good public health in the Borough, especially healthy weight. In addition an appropriately designed and accessible built environment can contribute to reducing social exclusion, whilst encouraging use of cycle and pedestrian routes for recreational users.

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service: The proposed development does not threaten the known or suspected archaeological heritage. On this basis there is no reason to seek to impose any archaeological requirements.

Coal Authority: The application site does not fall within the defined Development High Risk Area and is located instead within the defined Development Low Risk Area. This means that there is no requirement under the risk-based approach that has been agreed with the LPA for a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to be submitted or for The Coal Authority to be consulted.

In accordance with the agreed approach to assessing coal mining risks as part of the development management process, if this proposal is granted planning permission, it will be necessary to include The Coal Authority's Standing Advice within the Decision Notice as an informative note to the applicant in the interests of public health and safety.

Design for Security: The proposed development should be designed and constructed in accordance with the recommendations contained within section 3.3 of the submitted Crime Impact Statement dated and a planning condition should be added to reflect the physical security specification listed within sections 4 & 5 of the appendices within the submitted Crime Impact Statement. In summary, our support for this application is dependent on the recommendations made within the Crime Impact Statement being incorporated into this proposal.

Transport for Greater Manchester: No response received, therefore no objection.

United Utilities: No objection to the proposed development subject to appropriate conditions.

ANALYSIS

The application site is covered by two separate policy designations as identified on the Proposals Map of the adopted SUDP Review. The front portion of the site, which

comprises the bulk of the existing buildings falls within Business Frontage Type B of the Marple District Shopping Centre, whilst the rear part of the site falls within a defined Predominantly Residential Area.

The following matters are material to the assessment of the current application:-

Policy Principle

The site falls within both the Marple District Centre and a Predominantly Residential Area, where the provision of Use Class A1 retail floorspace and residential development are permitted.

Policy CS4 sets out the spatial priorities for the distribution of housing within the borough, and states that the priority for development is previously developed land within urban areas.

The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Housing Supply

The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to identify and maintain at least a 5 year housing land supply against its housing requirements. Stockport is in a position of under-supply. In these circumstances paragraph 47 of the Framework notes that local planning authorities should boost significantly the supply of housing. As such the residential element of the proposal will make a positive contribution towards housing supply.

Affordable Housing

Core Strategy policy H-3 is applicable and would normally expect to see a 30% provision (7 units) of affordable housing as part of this development.

National policy provides an incentive for brownfield development on sites containing vacant buildings. Where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use 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 particular instance the application has been supported by an economic viability appraisal, which sought to demonstrate that the development would not be viable if there was a policy requirement to provide any affordable housing. As such the proposal as originally submitted contained no affordable housing offer.

Following the submission of additional information relating to the viability of the development and after a detailed analysis by a suitably qualified professional, officers remained of the view that an element of affordable housing should be provided as part of the proposal.

In this respect and following further discussions with the applicant, the provision of a single affordable unit is being offered as part of the latest proposal. Whilst this equates to an approximate 5% affordable housing offer, suitably qualified professionals who have carried out the detailed analysis of the submitted economic viability appraisal, are of the view that the development could not

sustain a higher level of affordable housing provision, without rendering the development unviable and ultimately un-deliverable.

The delivery of the affordable housing and the use of a clawback mechanism, so as to ensure a greater affordable housing offer in the event that the viability of the scheme improves, would be dealt with via a S106 Agreement.

Retail Impact

The comments of the Council's Planning Policy (Retail) Officer are set out in detail earlier in this report. In this respect no objections are raised. It is therefore considered that the proposal would positively contribute towards the vitality and viability of the Marple District Centre.

Loss of Employment

Under Core Strategy Policy AED-6 the proposal should normally be expected to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable as an employment use. In this instance a case has been made that various buildings within the site have been actively marketed for alternative uses. Furthermore a number of buildings have remained vacant for a number of years.

Whilst some of the buildings currently on site remain occupied, this loss of employment needs to be balanced against the wider regenerative benefits of the proposal. This includes (1) the re-development of a brownfield site in a period of housing under supply (2) the provision of affordable housing (3) the removal of non-conforming uses in terms of garages / workshops within a predominantly residential area, and (4) the provision of an overall uplift of retail floorspace within the Marple District Centre, which in itself is expected to provide an estimated 20 – 25 jobs.

Having regard to all of the above, the proposal is on balance considered to comply with Policy AED-6.

Highway Safety & Parking

The detailed comments made by the Council's Highway Engineer are set out earlier in this report, with the conclusion being that a refusal of the current application on the grounds of highway safety and parking would not be justified.

In assessing the impact of the proposal, Officers are mindful of the concerns of local residents in respect of increased traffic congestion and overspill parking. In this respect the scheme has been revised since its original submission, in order to address the Council's initial concerns regarding the proposed vehicular access onto Church Lane and parking / cycle provision. Subsequently the Council's Highway Engineer, whilst accepting that the proposed development would result in an increase in traffic generation when compared to the existing uses on site, the local road network has sufficient capacity to accommodate these increases without resulting in undue harm to highway and pedestrian safety.

In respect of on-site parking provision, the Council's Highway Engineer raises no objection. It should be noted that the site falls within an accessible location, close to public transport links and partially within the Marple District Centre, all of which justify that the level of parking proposed on site is acceptable.

The proposed pedestrian routes into and out of the site, together with improved cycle parking facilities are supported by Officers.

Subject to the use of appropriate conditions as suggested by the Council's Highway Engineer, the application is considered to comply with relevant development plan policies and the NPPF.

Heritage Assets

The comments of the Council's Conservation Officer are noted and set out in detail earlier in this report.

Whilst it is acknowledged that clear concerns have been expressed by the Conservation Officer, these need to be considered in a wider context.

It is recognised that the buildings currently on site do not benefit from any statutory heritage protection, i.e. listed building status or within a Conservation Area. The site does however form an un-designated heritage asset by virtue of a Historic Entry being recorded against some of the buildings on site (see consultee response).

Notwithstanding the above, due regard should be given to the absence of any objections from Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service to the demolition of the buildings on heritage grounds. Furthermore Officers have in recent years considered the buildings for inclusion on the Council's non-statutory list of buildings of local significance, but in light of previous additions and alterations the buildings were not considered to meet the criteria of local listing.

In support of the proposal the applicant has undertaken a heritage assessment, which when considered in conjunction with an economic viability appraisal that has also been produced, indicates that the cost associated with the retention and conversion of the Albert Schools building would render the development un-viable and unlikely to be delivered.

In considering the application a balance therefore needs to be reached between the retention of a non-designated heritage asset and the wider regenerative benefits associated with the application, these being the re-development of a brownfield site boosting housing supply, the provision of affordable housing and the enhancement of the retail offer within Marple District Centre. In conclusion, whilst the loss of the Albert Schools building is regrettable, Officers do not believe that a refusal of the application on the grounds of its impact on a non-designated heritage asset could be substantiated at appeal.

Residential Amenity

The overall purpose of the Council's Design of Residential Development SPD, which although guidance is a material consideration, overall is to achieve high quality design in residential development; the document has three broad aims: 1. promote high quality inclusive design; 2. ensure efficient use of resources; 3. endorse developments that make a positive contribution to the townscape and landscape character of the local area. 'The Design of Residential Development' SPD acknowledges that whilst development management standards for residential development should be taken into consideration as an aid to judgement they should not be overly prescriptive and significant weight should be given to the fact that the proposal relates to the re-development of a brownfield

site, partially within a District Centre where suburban requirements are not as easily capable of being met.

Generally the proposal meets the relevant separation standards set out within the Council's SPD, both within and outside of the development site, although there are a number of deficiencies

Whilst reference is made by 3rd parties to perceived shortcomings in separation between either gable elevations and or habitable facing windows forming part of the proposed buildings and surrounding dwellings, the layout of the proposal is considered to be acceptable when taking into account the changes in levels between the site and surrounding properties.

Concerns expressed by 3rd parties as to the proximity of the two residential blocks to the rear boundary of the site are also noted. In this respect shortfalls of between 1.5m and 3m would exist between habitable room windows in the rear elevation of the apartment blocks and the rear site boundary. In this respect the length of back gardens serving existing residential properties to the rear of the site along Lyme Grove is noted, as is proposed planting along the rear site boundary and that the proposed buildings are not truly 3 storey in scale, with accommodation incorporated into the roofspace. In this instance Members must decide if this separation is acceptable and will ensure satisfactory living conditions for the occupiers of both the proposed apartments and existing local residents. In consideration of this issue, the SPD does acknowledge that rigid adherence to the standards can stifle creativity and result in uniformity of development.

In terms of the provision of private amenity space, this would be provided via a combination of balconies and communal garden areas. The two apartment blocks towards the rear of the site would be served by adequate amenity space based on guidance set out within the Council's SPD. There would however be minimal outdoor amenity space provided for the apartments proposed above the retail unit, with provision largely proposed through the use of juliet balconies. It would however remain for prospective occupiers to decide whether this would meet their individual needs, moreover it is noted that this element of the development falls within the Marple District Centre where there is similar accommodation above shop units, which also do not benefit from private amenity space.

In respect of potential over-development of the site, the density of the proposed development is approximately 77 dwellings per hectare. With the site falling partly within a District Centre and the urban grain being defined by a variety of plot sizes, including both semi-detached and terraced properties, which have densities both higher and lower than that currently proposed, the application is not considered to represent over-development.

Turning to potential noise and disturbance from the commercial element of the proposed development, it must be acknowledged that the site already contains commercial uses that are un-controlled in terms of their hours of operation and that the part of the development along the frontage with Church Lane falls within the Marple District Centre, where such retail uses are encouraged. Members are advised that a noise assessment has been submitted in support of the application, which includes sound attenuation measures, to which the Council's Environmental Health Officer raises no objection. The development has

therefore been assessed for mixed residential / commercial use and is considered to be acceptable, subject to appropriate conditions.

On balance, the development represents a considered response to its context and would avoid any undue impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and for future occupiers by reason of visual intrusion, overshadowing, loss of daylight, overlooking or loss of privacy.

The NPPF is clear that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this instance the significant benefits; in particular the efficient re-use of an accessible brownfield site; the contribution to boosting general housing and affordable housing land supply, supporting economic growth, assisting the vitality and viability of the District Centre via the footfall of future residents, outweigh any minor shortfalls in development management standards

Design, Character & Appearance

Policy SIE-1 states development that is designed and landscaped to the highest contemporary standard, paying high regard to the built and/or natural environment, within which it is sited, will be given positive consideration and sets out that the provision, maintenance and enhancement (where suitable) of satisfactory levels of access, privacy and amenity for future, existing and neighbouring users and residents should be taken into account.

Policy H-1 requires that the design and build standards of new residential development should be high quality, inclusive, sustainable and contribute to the creation of successful communities. Proposals should respond to the townscape and landscape character of the local area, reinforcing or creating local identity and distinctiveness in terms of layout, scale and appearance, and should consider the need to deliver low carbon housing.

The immediate streetscene along Church St and the character of the surrounding area is varied, comprising a mixture of single, two and two and a half storey buildings. Significantly ground levels fall across the site when seen in the context of the Church St frontage, thereby allowing scope for an increased scale and mass of development.

Surrounding buildings are also characterised by a variety of roof design and fenestration, together with a wide palette of external materials and boundary treatments.

The NPPF makes it clear that planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. In this respect the scale, design and appearance of the proposed buildings are best appreciated by reference to the submitted plans accompanying this report.

In summary, the proposed development layout, scale, appearance and quality are considered to be acceptable in this location. The buildings would sit comfortably within their surroundings, representing a sympathetic and considered response to their context, in accordance with policy SIE-1.

Landscaping

It is acknowledged that a number of self-sown trees / scrub are to be removed from the site to accommodate the development. Those indicated for removal are not considered to be worthy of retention, noting that they are not protected by way of a Tree Preservation Order, Conservation Area status or planning condition. As part of the re-development of the site a landscaping scheme is proposed which includes appropriate levels of planting.

Ecological Interests

The Council's Nature Development Officer has considered the proposal in light of the ecological assessments submitted in support of the application and no objections have been raised.

In light of this the proposal is not considered to be adversely detrimental to ecological interests, subject to appropriate conditions.

Recreational Open Space

Core Strategy Policy SIE 2 relates to the provision of both formal and informal recreational play space as part of a development.

In this respect and as highlighted earlier in this report when considering the issue of affordable housing, the re-development of the site is constrained by matters of viability. As such an economic viability appraisal has been submitted in support of the application. This demonstrates that should the proposal be required to provide a financial contribution to either on or off site recreational facilities, this would render the scheme un-viable and therefore un-deliverable. The appraisal has been assessed by a suitable qualified professional who agrees with the findings.

In light of the above, the wider benefits of the proposal including the re-development of a brownfield site boosting housing supply, the provision of affordable housing and the enhancement of the retail offer within Marple District Centre are on balance considered to outweigh the absence of any contribution to recreational play facilities.

It is however recommended that a clawback mechanism is put into place via a S106 Agreement, so as to ensure a contribution towards recreational facilities, in the event that the viability of the scheme improves.

Other Matters

In respect of drainage and flood risk, the comments of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) are noted. In the event the drainage solution remains unresolved when the application is determined, conditions will be applied to the development to secure compliance (where achievable) with the aims of Policy SD-6. Such conditions will also encompass any recommendations of United Utilities.

Turning to matters relating to ground contamination, no objections have been raised by the Council's Environmental Health Officers, subject to the use of appropriate conditions.

An Energy Statement has been submitted in support of the application that is in accordance with the requirements of Policy SD-3.

Summary - 'Sustainable Development'

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through decision-taking.

The NPPF establishes three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental and indicates that these should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

In this instance there are several benefits that weigh in support of the proposal, in particular the re-development of a brownfield site, the replacement of some vacant buildings with an enhanced retail offer in a District Centre location, the provision of affordable housing and the provision of residential units during a period of housing under supply.

Conclusion/Reasons

In considering the planning merits against the NPPF as a whole the proposal represents sustainable development; Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the application be granted subject to conditional control.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant.