

## **ITEM 1**

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>DC/076785</b>
<b>Location:</b>	Stockport College Greek Street Campus Greek Street Stockport SK1 3UQ
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Development of Royal George Village comprising the demolition, refurbishment and change of use of existing buildings, together with new build to provide apartments (use class C3), co-working office space (use class B1) and flexible commercial space (use classes A1, A3, B1 and D1 and/or D2), together with new public realm and civic space, shared amenity space, landscaping, car parking, cycle parking, servicing and all other associated works.
<b>Type Of Application:</b>	Full Application
<b>Registration Date:</b>	10.06.2020
<b>Expiry Date:</b>	09.09.2020
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Mark Jordan
<b>Applicant:</b>	Investar (RGV) Ltd And Trafford College Group
<b>Agent:</b>	WSP

## **DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS**

Planning & Highways Regulations Committee – 100+ residential units.

The views of the Stockport Central Area Committee are requested, in order that these can be reported to the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee.

## **DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

The proposals involve the demolition of a number of existing buildings and structures and the construction / conversion of a total of 4 buildings, as part of the wider re-development of part of the wider Stockport College site.

One of the aims of the re-proposed development of some of the college campus buildings, is to generate a capital receipt for Stockport College. This will aid with the cross funding and deliverability of new, high quality learning facilities at the remaining college campus, on land adjacent to the current application site, which have previously been granted planning permission in 2018.

The scope of the application as submitted seeks full planning permission for the following summarised works:-

- 1) The creation of a total of 442 apartments (1 and 2 bed mix) through a variety of new build, conversion and extension;
- 2) Demolition of the building known as the Lyme Centre and its replacement with the construction of an L-shaped 16 storey residential building of 258 apartments , fronting onto the A6;
- 3) The construction of an L-shaped 6 storey residential building of 62 apartments, positioned on the corner of Greek Street and Royal George Street;
- 4) Change of use of the L-shaped building known as the Torkington Centre (8 storeys) to comprise flexible commercial uses at ground floor (i.e. retail, food and drink, offices, non-residential institution and assembly & leisure), together with a residential use for the remaining floors, comprising 122 apartments. In order to facilitate the conversion an existing two storey rooftop plant structure is to be removed and replaced with a two story extension and roof terrace, resulting in a stepped design moving from 8 storeys down to 6 storeys when moving towards the War memorial / Art Gallery;
- 5) The change of use of the existing Grade II listed Greek Street building to provide co-working offices;
- 6) High quality public realm and civic space enhancements fronting onto the A6 and Greek Street
- 7) A comprehensive landscaping scheme, together with the provision of shared amenity space and enhanced pedestrian accessibility;
- 8) The demolition of a number of other buildings and structures including a single storey link corridor to the adjacent Grade II\* War Memorial / Art Gallery; the Hexagon Building (the former College lecture theatre) and the University Centre and Sports Hall;

All of the proposed new apartments would be built in accordance with the nationally described space standards - with the 1 bed apartments ranging from 41 – 51 sq. m in floorspace and the 2 bed apartments would range in size from 59-79 sq.m.

Vehicular access to the site will be taken via existing arrangements off Royal George Street and Oliver Street. These will also continue to serve the remaining college campus. Improved pedestrian access will be provided at points from along the A6, Greek Street and Oliver Street.

A total of 51 car parking spaces are proposed across the development site (43 disabled spaces and 8 standard spaces). 42 of these spaces are designed to be provided in the form of a subterranean car park, utilising the existing college sports hall. This would be accessed via a vehicular ramp off Oliver Street, using a one way signalised access / egress entry point. 8 of the underground car parking spaces would benefit from electric charging points.

Parking for a total of 442 cycles is proposed as part of the development.

The density of the proposed development is approximately 354 dwellings per hectare.

The drawings attached to this planning report represent the best way for Members to appreciate and consider the physical impact of the proposal seeking full planning permission, in terms of its layout, scale, appearance, means of access and landscaping.

In addition to the extensive number of detailed drawings, the proposal has also been accompanied by a large number of supporting reports which are listed below:-

- Design & Access Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Arboriculture Assessment
- Archaeological Assessment
- Contaminated Land Survey
- Crime Impact Statement
- Daylight and Sunlight Impact Assessment
- Drainage Strategy
- Employment and Skills Plan
- Energy Statement
- Lighting Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Statement
- Landscape Strategy
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Phase 1 Ecological Appraisal
- Sustainability Checklist
- Tall Building Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Viability Appraisal
- Ventilation Statement
- Wind Engineering Study

Committee are advised that the current proposal forms 1 of 4 applications linked to the re-development of the site. These include another application seeking full planning permission for public realm works around the adjacent War Memorial, as well as 2 associated applications seeking listed building consent.

The proposed scheme now before Members has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussion with Council Officers and has been reviewed by an independent Places Matter Design Review Panel. Subsequently the proposal has been the subject of extensive community engagement prior to submission. Full details are set out within the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application.

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site includes an irregular shaped piece of land covering approximately 1.25 hectares.

The northern site boundary is defined by Greek Street, with the omission of the War Memorial / Art Gallery, with the A6 forming the eastern site boundary. Royal George

Street and existing surface level car parks form the eastern site boundary, whilst buildings forming Stockport College's Town Centre campus fall to the south.

The site is varied in character, but is predominantly defined by existing college buildings and areas of hardstanding. Properties facing the site on the opposite side of Greek Street and the A6 are predominantly commercial and non-residential in nature. A new residential development exists to the west of the site, on the opposite side of Royal George Street.

Ground levels predominantly fall across the site when travelling in an easterly direction from the Royal George Street, with the A6 set at a lower level.

Numerous heritage assets exist both within and adjacent to the site. Specifically the Grade II listed Greek Street building falls within the site, whilst the Grade II\* War Memorial / Art Gallery lays directly adjacent to the northern site boundary at the junction of the A6 and Greek Street.

In addition part of the site is located within the Town Hall Conservation Area, whilst the Grade II\* Town Hall and Grade I listed St Thomas Church exist further afield to the north-east and south-east respectively.

The site location plan appended to this report gives an overview of the development site(s) and their wider context within the Town Centre setting.

## **POLICY BACKGROUND**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

### **Saved policies of the SUDP Review**

TCG1 - TOWN CENTRE/M60 GATEWAY  
TCG1.1 COMMUNITY AND CIVIC SPACE  
TCG1.2 - TOWN CENTRE/M60 GATEWAY TRANSPORT HUB  
TCG1.3 - PARKING IN THE TOWN CENTRE  
TCG1.4 - SUSTAINABLE ACCESS IN THE TOWN CENTRE  
TCG3 – TOWN CENTRE MIXED USE AREAS  
TCG3.5 – CIVIC QUARTER  
HC1.3 - SPECIAL CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS  
HC1.4 – NEW USES FOR BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS  
EP1.7 - DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK  
EP1.9 – SAFEGUARDING OF AERODROMES AND AIR NAVIGATION FACILITIES  
EP1.10 – AIRCRAFT NOISE  
E1.2 - LOCATION OF NEW BUSINESS PREMISES AND OFFICES  
L1.1 – LAND FOR ACTIVE RECREATION

L1.2 – CHILDREN’S PLAY

MW1.5 – CONTROL OF WASTE FROM DEVELOPMENT

### **LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies**

CS1 - OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

SD1- CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

SD3 - DELIVERING THE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES PLANS - NEW DEVELOPMENT

SD6 - ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS 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 STOCKPORTS SERVICE CENTRES

AS-2 – IMPROVING INDOOR SPORTS, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION FACILITIES AND THEIR ACCESSIBILITY

AS-3 - MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES, HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS AND PRISON DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE EXISTING CENTRES

CS7 - ACCOMMODATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AED1 - EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND M60 GATEWAY

AED-5 - EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING PROVISION

AED-6 - EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

CS8 SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

SIE-1 QUALITY PLACES

SIE-2 – PROTECTING, SAFEGUARDING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT

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 AND DEVELOPMENT

T-3 SAFETY AND CAPACITY ON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK

CS11 - STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE

TC1 - STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE

### **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.

- Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments Supplementary Planning Document (2019)
- The Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document
- Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document
- Town Centre Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance and Explanatory Note

## National Planning Policy Framework

A Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 19th February 2019 replaced the previous NPPF (originally issued 2012 & revised 2018). The NPPF has not altered the fundamental legal requirement under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations (such as the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

The NPPF representing the governments up-to-date planning policy which should be taken into account in dealing with applications focuses on achieving a lasting housing reform, facilitating the delivery of a greater number of homes, 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. If decision takers choose not to follow the NPPF, then clear and convincing reasons for doing so are needed.

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. 57 “Where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage. The weight to be given to a viability assessment is a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case, including whether the plan and the viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in site circumstances since the plan was brought into force. All viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.”*

*Para.59 “To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”*

*Para. 62 “Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless: a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.”*

*Para. 64 “Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. Exemptions to this 10% requirement should also be made where the site or proposed development:*

*a) provides solely for Build to Rent homes;*

- b) provides specialist accommodation for a group of people with specific needs (such as purpose-built accommodation for the elderly or students);*
- c) is proposed to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes; or*
- d) is exclusively for affordable housing, an entry-level exception site or a rural exception site.”*

*Para. 85 “Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should...recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.”*

*Para. 92 “To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*
- c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*
- e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.”*

*Para. 109 “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”*

*Para.117 “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”*

*Para. 122 “Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:*

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;*
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*

*e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.”*

*Para. 123 “Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:*

*a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;*

*b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range;and*

*c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).”*

*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 192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable*

communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

*Para 193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

*Para 194. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

*Para 195. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

*Para 196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

*Para 197. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

*Para 198. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.*

*Para 199. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets. 64 Copies of*

*evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.*

*Para 200. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

*Para 201. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.*

*Para 202. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the dis-benefits of departing from those policies.*

*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**

The site and adjoining land is subject to an extensive planning history, of which the following applications are considered to be relevant:-

Reference: DC/076412; Type: SCR; Address: Land At Greek Street, Stockport, , ; Proposal: EIA Screening Opinion - demolition, conversion, extension and new build to provide upto 450 apartments, co-working offices and ancillary uses together with new public realm and civic space, landscaping, car parking and associated works.; Decision Date: 11-MAY-20; Decision: EAN

Reference: DC/076989; Type: LBC; Address: Stockport College, Greek Street, Stockport, SK3 8AB, ; Proposal: External alterations to the Greek Street Building including demolition of adjoining lean-to structures and buildings, adjoining storage unit, two-storey extension and boiler room and existing walls and fences; removal of flue and associated fixings and equipment; removal and reinstatement of windows and doors; and all other associated works (Listed Building Consent). Currently undetermined.

Reference: DC/018759; Type: OUT; Address: St. Thomas Hospital, Shaw Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 8BL; Proposal: Primary Care Resource Centre together with associated roads and car parking; Decision Date: 16-SEP-05; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/018766; Type: LBC; Address: St Thomas Hospital, Shaw Heath, Stockport, SK3 8BL; Proposal: Demolition of part of existing hospital building and building of Primary Care Resource Centre and associated access.; Decision Date: 17-JAN-06; Decision: WDN

Reference: J/61064; Type: XHS; Address: Footpath Along North-East Side Of Royal George Street Stockport; Proposal: Change of use of footpath to car parking; Decision Date: 06-OCT-94; Decision: REF

Reference: J/52945; Type: XHS; Address: Caretakers House 15 Oliver Street; Proposal: Conversion of and extension to house to form creche for Stockport College.; Decision Date: 20-MAY-91; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/001100; Type: FUL; Address: Stockport College, Off Greek Street, Stockport; Proposal: Proposed single storey boiler house; Decision Date: 18-MAY-00; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/056268; Type: ADV; Address: Art Gallery And War Memorial, Greek Street, Stockport, SK3 8AB; Proposal: Non-illuminated free-standing sign on Wellington Road South frontage and non-illuminated free-standing sign on Greek Street frontage, Decision Date: 09-OCT-14; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/056892; Type: REG3; Address: Land Forming Part Of Greek Street Outside Stockport College; Proposal: Proposed re-alignment and improvement works to a retaining wall., ; Decision Date: 22-DEC-14; Decision: GTD

Reference: J/16395; Type: XHS; Address: Stockport College Of Technology, Wellington Road South, Stockport.; Proposal: Mobile classroom unit.; Decision Date: 14-AUG-79; Decision: GTD

Reference: J/1906; Type: XHS; Address: Stockport College Of Technology.; Proposal: Garage for caretakers use.; Decision Date: 23-DEC-74; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/041642; Type: RES; Address: Stockport College Of Further And Higher Education, Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UQ; Proposal: Appearance and landscape associated with Phase 3A (Hub) of the Masterplan; Decision Date: 03-JUL-09; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/055418; Type: FUL; Address: Stockport College Of Further And Higher Education, Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UQ; Proposal: Replacement of existing single glazed crittall windows with double glazed aluminium framed windows to the Roland Hadlow Building. Cladding to Main Elevation to be replaced, and Insulated Render repairs to North and South Elevations of Main Building.; Decision Date: 26-JUN-14; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/026560; Type: OUT; Address: Stockport College, Wellington Road South, And St Thomas Site, Shaw Heath, Stockport; Proposal: Outline application for the phased re-development, including demolition of certain existing buildings, new build and landscaping & car parking to provide new educational facilities for Stockport College.; Decision Date: 21-FEB-08; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/077008; Type: FUL; Address: War Memorial Art Gallery, Stockport, SK3 8AB, ; Proposal: Landscaping works, including both hard and soft elements, together with new public realm, civic space, amenity space and all other associated works. Currently un-determined.

Reference: DC/075300; Type: FUL; Address: Stockport College Of Further And Higher Education , Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UQ; Proposal: Erection of 1no temporary fire escape stair for the period of 6 months from August 2020 to February 2021.; Decision Date: 13-JAN-20; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/024599; Type: SCP; Address: Stockport College, Wellington Road South, Stockport.; Proposal: Proposed new College Campus; Decision Date: 14-NOV-06; Decision: EAN

Reference: J/72244; Type: XHS; Address: James Ross Building Wellington Road South; Proposal: "ERECTION OF MEZZANINE FLOOR TO EXISTING BUILDING.ADDITION OF ASSOC WINDOWS,DOORS & FIRE ESCAPE STAIR TO EXISTING METAL/BRICKWORK FACADES"; Decision Date: 04-MAY-99; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/076986; Type: LBC; Address: War Memorial Art Gallery, Stockport, SK3 8AB, Proposal: The removal of a section of the linking structure which connects the War Memorial Art Gallery with the Torkington Centre, reinstatement of the facade and the addition of a clear glazing frame window (Listed Building Consent).Currently un-determined.

Reference: DC/077006; Type: NMA; Address: Stockport College Of Further And Higher Education, Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UQ, ; Proposal: Non-material amendment to planning permission DC/070690 relating to Vernon Tower and Vernon Arts Building, comprising revisions to internal layouts and external alterations.; Decision Date: ; Decision:

Reference: DC/070690; Type: FUL; Address: Stockport College Of Further And Higher Education, Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UQ, ; Proposal: Redevelopment of Stockport College campus comprising demolition of redundant floorspace, erection of new floorspace and main entrance, alterations to existing buildings, new car parking and landscaping, together with associated works (AMENDED PLANS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS).; Decision Date: 16-NOV-18; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/074409; Type: NMA; Address: Stockport College Of Further And Higher Education, Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UQ, ; Proposal: Non-material amendments to DC/070690; Decision Date: 11-SEP-19; Decision: GTD

Reference: J/48283; Type: ADV; Address: Stockport College Wellington Road South; Proposal: Two high level signs; Decision Date: 04-JUN-90; Decision: GTD

Reference: J/72917; Type: XHS; Address: Robert Brown Building Stockport Collge Of Further Education Wellington Road South; Proposal: EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO WINDOWS AND DOORS.; Decision Date: 08-JUL-99; Decision: GTD

Reference: J/61063; Type: XHS; Address: Stockport College Wellington Road South Stockport; Proposal: Erection of roller shutter security screen over entrance doors; Decision Date: 06-OCT-94; Decision: GTD

Reference: DC/070197; Type: FUL; Address: The Vernon Centre, Stockport College , Wellington Road South, Stockport, SK1 3UQ, ; Proposal: Enabling works for Stockport College redevelopment to comprise partial demolition of the Vernon Centre; Decision Date: 06-SEP-18; Decision: GTD

## **NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS**

The application has been advertised in the Stockport Express. The public were also notified of the application by way of 376 neighbour letters and multiple site notices posted around the edges of the application site.

A single representation has been received from the Stockport Heritage Trust, generally supporting the proposed development on the following summarised grounds:

1) The Trust raises no objection in principle to the development as a whole. The clearing away of the former college Octagon Theatre, and other minor ancillary accommodation, frees up public views and movement through the site.

2) Gateway Building. The Trust appreciates the massing, limited height, orientation, and choice of materials of the Gateway building - all playing deference to, and reinforcing, the special interest of the listed Greek Street School building. The architects' plans are however rather deceptive when representing the colour of brickwork on the new building. SHT sees the colour as matching the School. The Trust would appreciate your Council conditioning any planning permission to achieve this result.

3) Torkington Building. The Trust understands that the overall height and mass of the existing building remains more or less unchanged in its conversion to apartment housing. SHT notes that, in deference to the Grade II\* War Memorial Art Gallery, the north façade reduces in stepped height by two storeys, and has blank brickwork rather than windows above the Memorial's roof level. But could this be taken further? If multiple steps were introduced, the deference to the importance of the War Memorial would be increased. Lost accommodation could be made up on the southwest (rear) arm of the Lyme Building further to the south.

4) Lyme Building. The Trust recognizes the canyon-like appearance of existing college buildings at this location at the southern end of the campus. The proposals extend this appearance by adding multiple storeys, dwarfing all the buildings on the other side of Wellington Road South, and those in the vicinity further south.

5) While recognizing the architects' design intent, in urban design terms, to create a focal point on the horizon as seen from the town centre side e.g., from the Town Hall, the Trust sees this having to be balanced against adverse changes in pedestrian pavement level conditions caused by wind and rain.

6) The Trust would rather see a decrease in height of the Wellington Road block and a balancing increase in the height of the return leg to the southwest. This change of massing would help the immediate streetscape and diminish the impact of the development on views of the Grade I Listed St. Thomas's Church.

## **CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

**Director of Public Health** - Stockport Sustainability Checklist – the submission of the Sustainability Checklist is welcome and the Silver Score reflects a good level of intention to ensure a sustainable development that delivers social, environmental and economic benefits to the area. The proposed sustainable transport infrastructure, native planting, affordable housing and age friendly design commitments will be vital to ensuring the delivery is, indeed, a sustainable development.

**Active Travel:** the promotion of active travel and public transport is key to maintaining physical and mental health through fostering activity, social interaction and engagement, managing healthy weight, reducing emissions from vehicles and enabling social interaction. Accessible paths through the site are welcomed as this can help to ensure pedestrians can navigate the site fully encouraging natural surveillance from pedestrian and cycling through traffic. Proposed cycle route linkages will facilitate cyclists avoiding Greek Street and parts of Shaw Heath, including for young people accessing Stockport College. A clear delineation for pedestrians and cyclists would help to facilitate uptake of both travel options by

offering clear and safe through routes for both groups. The proposed cycle parking of 442 spaces matches cycle parking levels to the number of apartments proposed. The clear commitment to this level of cycle parking in the design plans is welcomed as it is critical in enabling active travel choices and increasing physical activity. Achieving healthy weight reduces risks of other lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, coronary heart disease and stroke. Reducing risks of such diseases also reduces pressures on current and future public sector health budgets (Stockport's JSNA). The proposed car share club is welcomed in air quality terms, but is one level in a hierarchy of sustainable transport choices where prioritising sustainable transport options of walking, cycling and public transport are vital to increasing activity and considerably reducing emissions.

Core Policy CS9 TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (see Page 129)

Core Policy CS10 AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK (p130)

Development Management Policy T-1 Transport and Development (P 134)

Ageing Well: Stockport Council has adopted an Ageing Well Strategy which takes account of the World Health Organisation guidance on appropriate place making for older people. The WHO design considerations are critical to ensuring that the needs of the growing ageing population of Stockport are addressed where practicable through new development. In particular for this site appropriate volume and styles of seating should be considered to enable older and other vulnerable pedestrians to take rest stops when walking through the site and the wider area. The proposed intergenerational apartments are of interest although little detailed information on them could be found in the application and further information would be welcome and inform the decision.

Green Infrastructure (GI): the scheme is in an urbanised location and it should be noted that GI offers multifaceted health benefits ranging from addressing flood risk to tackling stress and its exacerbating effect on health through provision of views of greenery and wildlife. Appropriate delivery of green infrastructure would be welcome in public health terms and could help to manage urban temperatures and extreme rainfall events in the area, reducing stress and thereby maintaining immunity. Native planting would also contribute to managing air quality and enabling new natural capital in an area of the Borough that has a deficit, further enhancing access for and to nature on the development. Enabling people to get next to nature is important in terms of lifting the human spirit, which also assists with reducing the health impacts of stress, including on people with long term physical and/or mental health conditions. The summertime comfort and well-being of the urban population has become increasingly compromised. The urban environment stores and traps heat even in more rural locations such as this. The majority of heat-related fatalities during the summer of 2003 were in urban areas and were predominantly older more vulnerable members of society (Designing urban spaces and buildings to improve sustainability and quality of life in a warmer world).

Development Management Policy SD-6 Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change (Page 54)

Core Policy CS8 SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT (Page 102)

Affordable Housing: the minimum affordable housing delivery being proposed is welcome in public health terms. It is important to note that a lack of affordable housing can be argued to contribute to widening health inequalities, with additional pressure on the Council's public health and related budgets. Evidence is available to

show that affordable housing benefits health in a variety of ways including reducing the stress of unaffordable homes, enabling better food budgets for more nutritious food, access to better quality homes that do not impact negatively on health (including management of chronic illnesses), support for domestic violence survivors to establish a safe home and mental health benefits of a less stressful inexpensive home (The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health).

Development Management Policy H-3 Affordable Housing (Page 69)  
Core Policy CS2 Housing Provision (page 59)

**Arboricultural Officer** – The proposed development site is located within the existing education property curtilage predominantly on the existing informal grounds and hard standing areas. The plot is comprised largely of hardstanding, informal grounds and associated infrastructure.

#### Legislative and Policy Framework

##### Conservation Area Designations

The proposed development is within or affected by a conservation Area (Town Hall).

##### Legally Protected Trees

There are no legally protected trees within this site or affected by this development.

##### Invasive Species

See Nature Development comments.

##### Stockport's Core Strategy DPD

CS – 8 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

SIE-1 Development Management

SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding and enhancing the Environment 3.345/3.346/3.347

Stockport's Unitary Development Plan (Retained Policy)

NE1.1 SITES OF SPECIAL NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

NE1.2 SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

NE3.1 PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF GREEN CHAINS

#### Recommendations:

The proposed development footprint is shown or indicated at this time within the informal grounds of the existing site and it is assumed the proposed new developments will potentially impact on the trees and hedges within the site or neighbouring site as the development site is located in proximity of several trees on site and within the existing hard standing.

A full tree survey has been submitted as part of the planning application to show the condition and amenity levels of the existing neighbouring trees and where applicable which trees will have a potential impact on the proposed development, so any comments are based on this as it's a true representation of the trees on site and our professional judgements and information gathered. In addition the site layout/landscaping plan has shown consideration has been given to tree planting throughout the site to increase the amenity levels of the site with replanting of semi-mature trees or fruit trees. Specific consideration is needed on species and location throughout the site to make sure that no overcrowding occurs when the trees mature and cause future nuisance so a balance is required to the potential benefit urban tree planting throughout the site to enhance the biodiversity, the amenity and the SUDs capacity through hard landscaped tree pits.

A detailed landscaping scheme has been submitted but further consideration is required on species, density of planting and alignments to benefit the road frontage and screening for the new buildings, which clearly shows the enhancements represented on the site layout plans to include this level of tree planting to improve the local biodiversity and amenity of the area, this is especially important due to the location within the town centre as all trees are higher benefit to improve the A6 corridor lack of trees.

In principle the main works and design will have a negative impact on the trees on site, in neighbouring properties on all the boundaries, however it is acknowledged that the impact has been lessened to a minimal to allow a development and with appropriate landscaping it can be accepted. However it must be noted the loss of trees currently on this phase includes several trees along the A6 frontage which need to be reconsidered as the loss here would be massively detrimental to the tree cover along this route and so needs reconsidering, unless they intend to increase the tree cover along this route either on site or off-site.

In its current format it could be considered favourably as long as the proposal shows consideration has been given to the tree loss, which would need to be off-set the loss proposed, but it is not clear how this is going to be proposed, however it can be conditioned. In addition the reconsideration of the tree loss on the A6 frontage unless details are submitted to confirm a greater replacement program along this frontage is proposed.

It would require some consideration for the loss of the tree and how they intend to replace and enhance the local environment from the tree loss proposed and so would require the submission of full details as requested above justifying any impact on trees within proximity of the site and some consideration given to the existing trees in or around the site when designing the new improved landscaping design to include a detailed landscaping scheme that includes a greater number of new trees to improve the amenity and aesthetics of the site for users and making sure a percentage of these are native large species and fruit trees at every opportunity.

The following conditions would be relevant to any planning application relating to the site;

#### Condition Tree 1

No existing tree within the site shall be cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, wilfully damaged or wilfully destroyed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority, with the exception of those indicated otherwise on the approved plan. Any hedgerows, woody plants or shrubbery removed without such consent or dying or being severely damaged or being seriously diseased, within 5 years of the development commencing, shall be replaced within the next planting season with trees of such size and species as may be approved in writing by the local planning authority.

#### Condition Tree 2

No development shall take place until all existing trees on the site except those shown to be removed on the approved plans, have been fenced off in accordance with BS 5837:2012 "Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations". The fencing shall be retained during the period of construction and no work, excavation, tipping or stacking of materials shall take place within any such fence during the construction period.

### Condition Tree 3

No development shall take place until details of all proposed tree planting, including the intended dates of planting, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the development being brought into use.

Update - The opportunity for tree planting along Greek Street is extensive and so if these planting areas can be maximised, then this would be a reasonable compromise.

**Historic England** - The proposed development would result in the complete redevelopment of a large section of the current Stockport College campus to form a new residential development. The current built form on the site is identified to be of indifferent quality, and we would have no objection to its demolition.

It would be located close proximity to a number of highly significant civic buildings, which together form the Town Hall Conservation Area This includes the War Memorial and Art Gallery, a striking and poignant building, of imposing classical design and an interesting duality of uses.

Parts of the proposed development would result in harm to the significance of one of these heritage assets, but other elements are identified to have a neutral or beneficial effect. Cumulatively, we would identify that the proposals would preserve the significance of the assets affected, and we therefore would not offer an objection to the proposals.

### Historic England Advice

#### Significance

The application site occupies a sensitive location in close proximity to a number of highly significant heritage assets. The most immediate of these is the War Memorial and Art Gallery, located directly adjacent to the application site, which will be physically affected by another of the applications submitted as part of the wider masterplan for the Stockport College site.

#### War Memorial and Art Gallery

The War Memorial and Art Gallery is an imposing classically designed building, built in 1925 as a civic response to the losses of the First World War. It occupies a prominent location at the junction of two roads, sited on higher ground. This makes the building strikingly visually prominent, particularly in views looking south. This prominence is important because the building was built as both as a statement of civic pride and as a highly visible symbol of remembrance. It was therefore intended to be seen. Its visibility also allows the quality of its architectural detailing, and the associated craftsmanship, to be appreciated.

Its architectural detail and the overall form are also tailored to the building's function. The building's classical design is reminiscent of a Greek temple, which gives it a reverential and religious quality, and which focuses the visitor's mind on the building's function as a war memorial. This function has strong historic and emotional significance to the local community, as a physical place of remembrance. This was significant, as the bodies of the soldiers lost in the First World War were not repatriated, and this memorial therefore formed a surrogate location where they could mourn their loved ones.

The creation of war memorials was widespread across the country, and the scale of losses which they record offers important evidential value for understanding the impact of the two World Wars. This group, including the War Memorial and Art Gallery, therefore has wider social importance, forming part of the national response to the First, and later Second, World Wars.

The interest of the building also stems from the duality of its usage, as it was built to function as both an art gallery and a war memorial. This is an unusual combination, the rarity of which contributes to the building's special interest. It also means that the building is deliberately and distinctively public in nature, and this strengthens the benefit of securing and enhancing its public usage.

Town Hall Further to the north, the Town Hall is of Edwardian construction, and has considerable historic value in the evidence it provides of the history and evolution of Stockport. It was built between 1904 and 1908, a response to Stockport being made a county borough in 1888. The building is a deliberate statement of civic pride, which is reflected not only in its siting adjacent to the main road through Stockport; but also in its size and monumental form. This makes the building a landmark, something which is reinforced by the clock tower, a prominent feature in views looking along the A6.

A high level of craftsmanship is also evident in the internal fixtures and fittings, which include decorative plasterwork, stained glass and panelling. These not only contribute to the building's architectural interest, but also allow an understanding of the purpose of the building. This is seen in the fact that the public and high status areas, such as the Council Chamber, are more lavishly decorated.

Town Hall Conservation Area. Both the Town Hall and the War Memorial and Art Gallery are located within the boundary of the Town Hall Conservation Area. This is a relatively small and discrete conservation area, centred on the civic buildings which occupy prominent positions either side of the A6.

Its special interest is intrinsically tied to the significance of the important civic buildings it contains, and the contribution which these buildings make to the character of Stockport. The character and appearance of the conservation area is also defined by the interrelationship between these buildings, as well as the understanding this allows of the statement of wealth and importance which the Borough Council was seeking to make with their construction.

Church of St. Thomas Located further away from the site, the Church of St. Thomas was constructed between 1822 and 1825, and was designed by George Basevi, a nationally significant architect. The church was erected as part of earlier phase of Commissioners' Churches, which were built in the emerging industrial centres to respond to a lack of church provision. This association is of historic interest, not least for the evidence it provides of the considerable increase in Stockport's population during the Industrial Revolution.

Externally the building is visually impressive, with the greatest interest deriving from its overall scale and from the striking nature of the large portico at its east end. The interior was remodelled in 1890 by J Medland Taylor, and is decoratively classical in style. This contributes to the significance of the building, not only due to its visual and aesthetic attractiveness, but also in allowing an understanding of the evolution and variation of church architecture- with the older exterior being a more sombre representation of classical architecture.

Both Stockport Town Hall, and the War Memorial and Art Gallery are listed grade II\*, while the Church of St. Thomas is listed grade I.

The application also has the potential to impact on a number of Grade II listed buildings, most prominently the former Secondary School for Girls on Greek Street, as well as on a number of assets identified by the Local Planning Authority as locally listed buildings. These do not fall within the remit of Historic England's involvement, and we would therefore recommend that you consult the local planning authority's own specialist advisor(s) in relation to these assets.

## Impact

The proposed scheme represents the redevelopment of a large campus site directly adjacent to a number of highly significant heritage assets. This will therefore place constraints on the development, which should seek to preserve or better reveal the significance of these assets.

However, it is important to note that the current Stockport College campus is made up of a number of buildings of indifferent design quality, which make a negative contribution to the setting in which a number of these assets are experienced. There is therefore scope for a holistic masterplan for the site to have a positive impact from a heritage perspective. It is positive to note that the proposed masterplan includes a number of elements which are considered to be beneficial to the significance of these heritage assets.

The most prominent of these elements is the proposed demolition of the Hexagon Theatre. This is an architecturally unsightly building, which occupies a prominent position on higher ground directly adjacent to Greek Street. It is located in close proximity to both the War Memorial and Art Gallery, and the former Secondary School for Girls, and intrudes on important views looking towards and between these buildings. This is to the detriment of the ability to appreciate their architectural interest. It also makes it a competing element, including when viewed from the north-west, a viewpoint in which it intrudes on the deliberate visual prominence of the principal elevation of the War Memorial and Art Gallery. Its demolition is therefore supported from a heritage perspective.

The applicant also proposes to reconfigure the landscaping around the War Memorial and Art Gallery, and to reconfigure the car parking provision across the site. Both of these elements are also identified to be beneficial, as the current overall character of this landscape is visually intrusive, and negatively influences the way in which the War Memorial and Art Gallery is experienced. . Impact on the War Memorial and Art Gallery The scheme has the closest interrelationship with the War Memorial and Art Gallery, with the proposed new Torkington Building forming the immediate backdrop for this asset. The new Lyme Building, due to its increased height and massing, is also identified as having an impact on this listed building.

The proposed new Torkington Building would be taller than the listed building in front of it, and would be a looming and distracting presence. It would also make the War Memorial and Art Gallery appear comparatively small. This is important, because part of the significance of the building derives from the fact it was intentionally built as a landmark, and to be an arresting visual presence within the wider built landscape.

However, it is also important to note that the existing Torkington Building is already a looming and distracting presence, which detracts from the significance of the War

Memorial and Art Gallery, and is of a visually jarring form and design. The proposed new building is not identified as worsening or exacerbating this relationship.

Therefore, while the current proposals would still distract from the intentional visual prominence and dominance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery, its proposed design and material palette would result in an aesthetically better building, with a less stark visual appearance. Cumulatively therefore, the new Torkington Building is identified as having a neutral impact on the significance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery.

It is noted that the new Lyme Building will also have a visual interrelationship with the War Memorial and Art Gallery, particularly in longer and wider views. This element of the scheme is proposed to be considerably larger than the building which it replaces, and will form an imposing backdrop to the listed building. This is as a result of both its height, and its relatively unbroken mass. It is therefore identified to negatively impact on the intentional sense of scale and visual prominence of the War Memorial and Art Gallery, to the detriment of its special historic and architectural interest.

However, this harm is partially mitigated by the visual and physical separation between the new Lyme Building and the War Memorial and Art Gallery. This means that it has a less immediate interrelationship than the Torkington Building, which reduces the exact extent of its impact.

The new Lyme Building is therefore identified to have a minor harmful impact on the significance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery, while the new Torkington Building is considered to have a neutral impact. The removal of the Hexagon Theatre is identified to have a positive impact on the significance of the listed building, particularly when taken in conjunction with the re-landscaping of the site. Cumulatively the application is therefore identified to have a neutral impact on the significance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery.

**Impact on Town Hall and Town Hall Conservation Area** There is also a potential for the new built form to have an impact on longer views of the Town Hall along Wellington Road South, as well as key views looking into, and out of, the Town Hall Conservation Area. This is important as the Town Hall was deliberately designed as a prominent building, and this makes an important contribution to its significance, and how it is experienced.

The Lyme Building will be a particularly prominent element in views looking north past the site, and in views looking south away from, and past, the Town Hall. This is especially due to the fact that its massing is relatively unbroken, and is orientated parallel to Wellington Road South.

However, there is a considerable degree of physical separation between the Town Hall and the new built form, not least because they are on opposite sides of the road. It is therefore considered that the Town Hall and new development will still be read independently, meaning that the Town Hall will remain a prominent building. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will not harm to its significance.

Similarly the development is not identified to diminish the ability to appreciate the prominent civic statement made by the listed buildings within the Town Hall Conservation Area, or their important interrelationship. It is therefore identified that the proposals would also not harm the character and appearance of the Town Hall Conservation Area.

Impact on the Church of St Thomas The proposed new Lyme Building would also be visible in views of the Church of St. Thomas, most particularly in the view looking west from the entrance to the churchyard on Hillgate. This is a key view of the building, as it is the viewpoint to which a visitor is directed when entering into the grounds of the church, and the view in which the original principle elevation of the building is best experienced.

The new building would be clearly visible in these views, but would be at some remove from the church, with the two buildings read separately and distinctly. Therefore, while it would alter the wider environment in which the listed building is experienced, it would not alter the ability to appreciate the craftsmanship and monumentality of the church. We would therefore identify that the proposals would also not harm the special historic and architectural interest of this heritage asset.

National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies state that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (para.184) and that when considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (para.193).

These national policies are supported in local planning policy. In this instance these are set out within the Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Core Strategy (adopted 2011), with Strategic Objective 5, and Policies CS8 and SIE-3 being of particular relevance to the assessment of this application.

Position Taken in isolation, the development would be an intruding and detrimental element within the setting of a number of the heritage assets affected. However, this would generally replicate the harm caused by the existing buildings on the site. Areas where this harm is exacerbated are considered to be counterbalanced by the other beneficial elements within the wider masterplan.

Historic England would therefore conclude that the current proposals would cumulatively have a neutral impact on the significance of the heritage assets affected. On this basis we would not offer an objection to the application.

Recommendation Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds, as we consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF, in particular paragraph numbers 184 and 189.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66(1) requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Section 72(1) requires them to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

**Lead Local Flood Authority** - I have reviewed our records which show:

- The site is located in flood zone 1
- The site low surface water risk
- The closest watercourse is located circa 450m away from the site
- The site to be highly Compatible for Infiltration SuDS
- A water table level of > 5m below ground level

- There are no recorded historical flood events relevant to the development within the vicinity

The application should be supported by a drainage strategy/plan showing the applicants intentions.

The applicant should strictly follow and demonstrate the drainage hierarchy (infiltration, watercourse, SW sewer and then combined sewer) with every stage looking to manage the surface water on site as much as possible.

An assessment of SuDS for the site would also be required.

### **United Utilities - Drainage**

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the site should be drained on a separate system with foul water draining to the public sewer and surface water draining in the most sustainable way.

Following our review of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, we can confirm the proposals are acceptable in principle to United Utilities and therefore should planning permission be granted we request the following condition is attached to any subsequent Decision Notice:

#### Condition 1 – Surface water

The drainage for the development hereby approved, shall be carried out in accordance with principles set out in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (Ref No. 0044841, Dated 3 April 2020) which was prepared by Buro Happold. Any variation to the discharge of foul shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development and to prevent an undue increase in surface water run-off and to reduce the risk of flooding.

The applicant can discuss any of the above with Developer Engineer, Matthew Dodd, by email at [wastewaterdeveloperservices@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:wastewaterdeveloperservices@uuplc.co.uk).

Please note, United Utilities are not responsible for advising on rates of discharge to the local watercourse system. This is a matter for discussion with the Lead Local Flood Authority and / or the Environment Agency (if the watercourse is classified as main river).

If the applicant intends to offer wastewater assets forward for adoption by United Utilities, the proposed detailed design will be subject to a technical appraisal by an Adoptions Engineer as we need to be sure that the proposal meets the requirements of Sewers for Adoption and United Utilities' Asset Standards. The detailed layout should be prepared with consideration of what is necessary to secure a development to an adoptable standard. This is important as drainage design can be a key determining factor of site levels and layout. The proposed design should give consideration to long term operability and give United Utilities a cost effective proposal for the life of the assets. Therefore, should this application be approved and the applicant wishes to progress a Section 104 agreement, we strongly recommend that no construction commences until the detailed drainage design, submitted as part

of the Section 104 agreement, has been assessed and accepted in writing by United Utilities. Any works carried out prior to the technical assessment being approved is done entirely at the developers own risk and could be subject to change.

### Management and Maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems

Without effective management and maintenance, sustainable drainage systems can fail or become ineffective. As a provider of wastewater services, we believe we have a duty to advise the Local Planning Authority of this potential risk to ensure the longevity of the surface water drainage system and the service it provides to people. We also wish to minimise the risk of a sustainable drainage system having a detrimental impact on the public sewer network should the two systems interact. We therefore recommend the Local Planning Authority include a condition in their Decision Notice regarding a management and maintenance regime for any sustainable drainage system that is included as part of the proposed development.

For schemes of 10 or more units and other major development, we recommend the Local Planning Authority consults with the Lead Local Flood Authority regarding the exact wording of any condition. You may find the below a useful example:

Prior to occupation of the development a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development shall be submitted to the local planning authority and agreed in writing. The sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan shall include as a minimum:

a. Arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, or, management and maintenance by a resident's management company; and b. Arrangements for inspection and ongoing maintenance of all elements of the sustainable drainage system to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

The development shall subsequently be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To ensure that management arrangements are in place for the sustainable drainage system in order to manage the risk of flooding and pollution during the lifetime of the development. Please note United Utilities cannot provide comment on the management and maintenance of an asset that is owned by a third party management and maintenance company. We would not be involved in the discharge of the management and maintenance condition in these circumstances.

### Water Supply

Although water supply in the area is compliant with current regulatory standards, we recommend the applicant provides water storage of 24 hours capacity to guarantee an adequate and constant supply.

We can readily supply water for domestic purposes, but for larger quantities for example, commercial/industrial we will need further information.

The applicant must undertake a complete soil survey, as and when land proposals have progressed to a scheme design i.e. development, and results submitted along with an application for water. This will aid in our design of future pipework and materials to eliminate the risk of contamination to the local water supply.

Modelling may be required to determine if any water main reinforcement is needed to supply the development.

If the applicant intends to obtain a water supply from United Utilities for the proposed development, we strongly recommend they engage with us at the earliest opportunity. If reinforcement of the water network is required to meet the demand, this could be a significant project and the design and construction period should be accounted for.

To discuss a potential water supply or any of the water comments detailed above, the applicant can contact the team at [DeveloperServicesWater@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:DeveloperServicesWater@uuplc.co.uk).

Please note, all internal pipework must comply with current Water Supply (water fittings) Regulations 1999.

## United Utilities' Property, Assets and Infrastructure

### Water mains

The applicant should be aware of water mains crossing, bordering and in the vicinity of the proposed development site and they must comply with our 'Standard Conditions' document. This should be taken into account in the final site layout, or a diversion may be necessary. Unless there is specific provision within the title of the property or an associated easement, any necessary disconnection or diversion required as a result of any development will be at the applicant's expense. If considering a water mains diversion, the applicant should contact United Utilities at their earliest opportunity as they may find that the cost of mains diversion is prohibitive in the context of their development scheme.

The Water Industry Act 1991 affords United Utilities specific rights in relation to the maintenance, repair, access and protection of our water infrastructure;  Sections 158 & 159, outlines the right to inspect, maintain, adjust, repair or alter our mains. This includes carrying out any works incidental to any of those purposes. Service pipes are not our property and we have no record of them.  Under Section 174 of the Act it is an offence to intentionally or negligently interfere with any resource main or water main that causes damage to or has an effect on its use or operation. It is in accordance with this statutory provision that we provide standard conditions to assist developers when working in close proximity to our water mains.

Both during and post construction, there should be no additional load bearing capacity on the main without prior agreement from United Utilities. This would include earth movement and the transport and position of construction equipment and vehicles.

### Public sewers

A public sewer crosses this site and we may not permit building over it. We will require an access strip width of six metres, three metres either side of the centre line of the sewer which is in accordance with the minimum distances specified in the current issue of Part H of the Building Regulations, for maintenance or replacement. Therefore a modification of the site layout, or a diversion of the affected public sewer may be necessary. All costs associated with sewer diversions must be borne by the applicant.

To establish if a sewer diversion is feasible, the applicant must discuss this at an early stage with our Developer Engineer at [wastewaterdeveloperservices@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:wastewaterdeveloperservices@uuplc.co.uk) as a lengthy lead in period may be required if a sewer diversion proves to be acceptable.

Deep rooted shrubs and trees should not be planted in the vicinity of the public sewer and overflow systems.

Where United Utilities' assets exist, the level of cover to the water mains and public sewers must not be compromised either during or after construction.

It is the applicant's responsibility to investigate the possibility of any United Utilities' assets potentially impacted by their proposals and to demonstrate the exact relationship between any United Utilities' assets and the proposed development.

Due to the public sewer transfer in 2011, not all sewers are currently shown on the statutory sewer records and we do not always show private pipes on our plans. If a sewer is discovered during construction; please contact a Building Control Body to discuss the matter further.

**Environmental Health (Noise)** - I do not object to the development.

I have assessed the noise report submitted with the application. The report assesses external noise levels and its impact upon the internal environments of the residential and office space.

The report assesses the window specification for each elevation, ventilation scheme and noise limits for external plant.

Internal noise levels can be met but windows would need to be of an increased specification and be kept closed. The report advises that different facades will need specific windows.

If windows cannot be opened then a ventilation system will be needed. The report advises that Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery will be used to ventilate the residential without the need to open windows.

External lighting around the site is in line with guidelines and should not cause amenity issues.

External plant is unknown at this point in time. However, the report advises that maximum noise levels have been set to keep noise 10dB below background noise levels. Therefore, noise from plant will not cause amenity issues.

**Electricity NW** - We have considered the above planning application submitted on 26th June 2020 and find it could have an impact on our infrastructure.

The development is shown to be adjacent to or affect Electricity North West's operational land or electricity distribution assets. Where the development is adjacent to operational land the applicant must ensure that the development does not encroach over either the land or any ancillary rights of access or cable easements. If planning permission is granted the applicant should verify such details by contacting Electricity North West, Land Rights & Consents, Frederick Road, Salford, Manchester M6 6QH.

The applicant should be advised that great care should be taken at all times to protect both the electrical apparatus and any personnel working in its vicinity.

The applicant should also be referred to two relevant documents produced by the Health and Safety Executive, which are available from The Stationery Office Publications Centre and The Stationery Office Bookshops, and advised to follow the guidance given.

The documents are as follows:-

HS(G)47 – Avoiding danger from underground services.

GS6 – Avoidance of danger from overhead electric lines.

The applicant should also be advised that, should there be a requirement to divert the apparatus because of the proposed works; the cost of such a diversion would usually be borne by the applicant. The applicant should be aware of our requirements for access to inspect, maintain, adjust, repair, or alter any of our distribution equipment. This includes carrying out works incidental to any of these purposes and this could require works at any time of day or night. Our Electricity Services Desk (Tel No. 0800 195 4141) will advise on any issues regarding diversions or modifications.

Electricity North West offers a fully supported mapping service, at a modest cost, for our electricity assets. This is a service which is constantly updated by our Data Management Team who can be contacted by telephone on 0800 195 4141 or access the website <http://www.enwl.co.uk/our-services/know-before-you-dig>

It is recommended that the applicant gives early consideration in project design as it is better value than traditional methods of data gathering. It is, however, the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate the exact relationship on site between any assets that may cross the site and any proposed development.

**Nature Development Officer** - The site is located off Greek Street and Wellington Road South in Stockport Town Centre. The application involves development of Royal George Village comprising the demolition, refurbishment and change of use of existing buildings, together with new build to provide 442 apartments (use class C3), co-working office space (use class B1) and flexible commercial space (use classes A1, A3, B1 and D1 and/or D2), together with new public realm and civic space, shared amenity space, landscaping, car parking, cycle parking, servicing and all other associated works.

Legislative and Policy Framework

Nature Conservation Designations

The site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise.

Legally Protected Species

Ecological survey work has been submitted as part of the application. An Ecological Appraisal report (Buro Happold Engineering, 2020) details the findings of an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey undertaken in December 2019. Surveys have been carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist and follow best practice survey guidance.

The survey identified three buildings on site which offer low potential to support roosting bats (Greek Street Building, University Centre and Lyme Centre). It should be noted that access was not possible to the whole site (e.g. western elevation of Torkington Centre and east elevation of Sports Hall). A bat emergence survey was

subsequently carried out in June 2020 in accordance with best practice guidance. No bats were recorded roosting within the buildings on site. Levels of bat activity were low with a single common pipistrelle bat recorded. The site is well-lit with minimal vegetation which reduces its suitability for use by bats. It is acknowledged that full access to all elevations of the buildings was possible, however, it is stated (WSP letter dated August 2020) that the positioning of surveyors around the site would have led to the identification of any bats exiting the inaccessible area without having entered, implying the presence of a potential roost if one were present. This activity was not noted during the survey. Therefore, the lack of access into this part of the site is not considered a constraint to the conclusions drawn in the Ecological Appraisal and Mitigation Strategy.

No potential roosting features were observed within any of the trees on site. Bats and their roosts are legally protected under UK (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)) and European legislation (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017).

Buildings and trees have the potential to support nesting birds. All breeding birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The potential for black redstart to be present on site (due to a suitable nesting habitat and a previous historic record for this species within the site) has also been identified. Black redstart are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are a Local BAP species. Whilst no bespoke surveys for black redstart have been undertaken, a detailed mitigation strategy has been provided to avoid impacts and enhance the site for nesting birds (including black redstart) and it is therefore considered that an absence of black redstart survey information has not impacted the inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures into the scheme.

#### LDF Core Strategy

Core Policy CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment

Green Infrastructure

Refer to 3.286

#### Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

Refer to 3.296

#### DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY SIE-3

##### A) Protecting the Natural Environment

Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment

Refer to 3.345, 3.346, 3.347, 3.361, 3.362, 3.363, 3.364, 3.365, 3.366, 3.367 and 3.369

#### Recommendations:

No evidence of roosting bats was identified during the surveys. Bats can regularly switch roost sites however and can sometimes roost in seemingly unlikely places. An informative should therefore be used to as part of any planning consent to state that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity and in the event that roosting bats, or any other protected species is discovered on site during works, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist contacted for advice.

If the proposed works have not commenced by June 2022 (i.e. within two years of the 2020 surveys) it is recommended that an update ecology survey is carried out in advance of works to ensure the baseline and assessment of impacts in respect of

bats and other ecological receptors remains current. This can be secured by condition as part of any planning consent granted.

In relation to breeding birds it is recommended that works are timed to avoid the bird nesting season where possible. If building demolition and vegetation clearance works need to take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive a competent ecologist must undertake a careful, detailed check of buildings/vegetation/trees for active birds' nests immediately before works commence and there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. This is detailed in section 4.2.3 of the Ecological Mitigation Strategy (Buro Hapold Engineering Ltd, June 2020) and can be secured by condition.

It is vital that lighting is sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife (e.g. foraging/commuting bats and birds) associated with light disturbance (following the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance: [http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats\\_and\\_lighting.html](http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bats_and_lighting.html) ). The Ecological Mitigation Strategy states that lighting will be directed away from areas of landscape planting (thereby minimising impacts to wildlife), however the lighting strategy refers to proposed up-lighting of trees. This is not something that I would support given the associated likely impacts on bats and birds and so I would recommend that inclusion of tree up-lighters is reviewed and that the proposed lighting strategy follows best practice BCT guidelines. The lighting and proposed bat and bird boxes should also be carefully considered together to ensure the boxes are sited in un-lit areas.

The following condition can be used in relation to wildlife and lighting: Prior to occupation, a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" for areas to be lit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Biodiversity enhancements are expected as part the development in line with local (paragraph 3.345 of the LDF) and national planning policy (NPPF). Suitable measures (many of which are outlined in the Ecological Appraisal) include: provision of integrated bat and bird boxes (including provision of black redstart habitat); creation of green roofs; planting pollen and nectar-rich species. The Ecological Mitigation Strategy outlines the provision of four integrated bat boxes, 16 swift boxes (to be sited in two groups of eight) and eight generalist bird boxes – sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 of the Ecological Mitigation Strategy – these measures should be secured via condition as part of any planning consent granted.

**Highway Engineer** - The application is the demolition, refurbishment and change of use of existing buildings, together with new build to provide apartments, office space and flexible commercial space together with new public realm and civic space,

shared amenity space, landscaping, car parking, cycle parking, servicing and all other associated works.

A total of 442 residential units are proposed along with 2323.7sq.m of office space and 539sq.m flexible commercial space, suggested with potential for a mix of uses such as retail, food and drink and office/business space. Within the site there would be a low level of parking provision, focused primarily on satisfying and complying with the Council's minimum standards for disabled and low emission/electric vehicle spaces, with a total of 43 disabled spaces and 8 general spaces. Parking would be provided primarily within an underground parking area with a small number of spaces at surface level. Three disabled spaces are proposed adjacent to the War Memorial Art Gallery, specific for that use. A servicing area for the overall development is incorporated into the layout, service vehicles will be able to access the Art Gallery building and the sole access for vehicular purposes will be on Royal George Street. Additional access routes to Greek Street and the A6 are also proposed for pedestrian and cycle purposes.

Review of the application necessitates consideration of the accessibility of the site, parking provision and consequent effects, traffic generation and consequent highway impact, access arrangements, potential impact on off-site interventions and improvement schemes, servicing and delivery arrangements, cycle parking and travel planning.

#### Site Accessibility

The location of the site within the Town Centre shows an abundance of services and amenities within close proximity. Residents and visitors will enjoy convenient access to retail opportunities, employment, leisure facilities, educational establishments, health centres and various other services and amenities. There is potential for access on foot or cycle and the convenience of a Town Centre location should contribute towards reduced car travel dependence and sustainable travel modes being chosen.

The site is located adjacent to a number of bus stops on Greek Street and the A6 Wellington Road South and there are numerous other stops within relatively close proximity of the site. These stops provide access to a high number of bus services that offer frequent travel to a number of destinations. The majority of stops are good quality with shelters, seating, accessible kerbs and timetabling. There is no reason or logic to conclude anything other than the site is accessible to bus travel, as is reasonably the case for development within a Town Centre location.

Furthermore the site is only a few minutes walking distance from Stockport Rail Station where frequent rail services are available to a vast number of destinations locally, regional and national. Again there is no reason to question the accessibility of the site in relation to potential for residents and visitors to travel by rail.

In conclusion, the location of the development within the Town Centre affords the convenience of access to services, amenities and public transport that residents can reasonably expect to enjoy and the potential for sustainable travel choices being made is realistically high. This location is considered appropriate and has potential for intensive residential development when having regard to site accessibility.

I note that the submitted layout incorporates linkage through the site for pedestrian and cycle movement and I will comment in more detail in this respect later. I am also minded that redevelopment that is focused primarily on encouraging sustainable travel choices being made should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote

such transport modes has been taken up (NPPF para 108). The immediate adjoining highway network (Royal George Street and Greek Street) is in need of improvement for cycle movement, both in terms of facilities to encourage choice and measures to make safer the movement of cyclists and reduce the risk of conflict with other highway users. There is a clear opportunity to provide dedicated cycle facilities on part of Royal George Street and along Greek Street and introduce a cycle friendly crossing on Greek Street to enable proper connectivity across the Town and linkage between the site and the Town Centre, rail station, services and amenities. The existing deficiencies in the network need addressing and I consider it is essential that this development respects the opportunity and provides meaningful interventions and measures.

The applicant has been advised on a potential improvement scheme that involves widening of the footway on the Royal George Street and Greek Street frontages of the site. Widening clearly involves land within the demise of the site and whilst I note that the submitted built footprint would not prejudice such works being undertaken, the applicant has been requested to incorporate widening works within the submitted and potentially to be approved layout. Discussion is ongoing in this respect and a revised general arrangement drawing is required. Discussion has also taken place about the applicant making a financial contribution towards improvements to the controlled crossing on Greek Street to enable proper cycle usage and convenient and safer crossing of Greek Street by cyclists. I consider this is essential to promote safe cycle usage and mitigate the likely increased usage of the area that will arise and provide safe and suitable access to the site for all modes of travel (NPPF para 108). The applicant's confirmation on delivery of a contribution is awaited, this having been discussed at pre-app stage and acknowledged in discussion with the applicant's Transport Consultant.

Subject to addressing these issues (footway widening works and crossing improvement/contribution) I have no issue with the appropriateness and accessibility of this site for the development as proposed.

#### Parking provision

The Council has adopted car parking standards which should be given due consideration and every endeavour should be made to ensure adherence within new development or where appropriate that provision is made off site. General car parking provision is based on maximum standards which allows flexibility and the determinant factors will include the accessibility of a site, the availability for parking on street and the assurance that measures and regulation is in place to deter highway parking that causes operational and safety concerns. The provision of disabled person bays, electric vehicle bays and cycle parking is minimum standard based and should be respected.

The development is focused on and orientated towards being low car travel dependant, not entirely car free but providing a realistic number of bays to satisfy the likely minimum operational needs of residents. Within the site there would be a low level of parking provision, focused primarily on satisfying and complying with the Council's minimum standards for disabled and low emission/electric vehicle spaces, with a total of 43 disabled spaces and 8 general spaces to be laid out. Parking would be provided essentially within an underground parking area with a small number of spaces at surface level. Three disabled spaces are proposed adjacent to the War Memorial Art Gallery, specific for that use.

In respect of new development and the provision of parking space for electric vehicles the Council is actively promoting EV charge facilities and has new guidance

and standards for new development. For town centre sites where a reduced level of car parking is proposed the number of electric charging points provided should be based on the number of residential units and future proofed based upon the percentage of electric vehicles that will be using the highway network five years after the development is occupied. It is reasonably anticipated that first occupation of this development could perhaps be 2022 so the percentage of electric vehicles that need catering for is 13% of the number of residential units, which in this case is 57 bays for the residential element. Some provision is also essential for the commercial element of the scheme although should parking and in particular disabled bays within the site be reasonably available for all uses then shared EV spaces would be acceptable. The submission states that 'many' of the spaces within the site will be 'EV Ready' this gives some uncertainty over numbers and the strategy for future provision. I would be accepting of a strategy for provision of EV spaces in line with the phasing of the development and this is a detail that could be agreed under conditional control. It does however give rise to a short fall in the overall number of bays within the site that would be EV compliant which can be acceptable should additional provision be committed to being made off site. In this respect there is an acknowledgement within the Transport Assessment that a commitment will be made to funding the installation of some EV charging points within public parking areas off site, such a practice is welcomed and acceptable although the detail and sum of a financial contribution needs to be finalised and confirmed. This matter needs addressing prior to any permission being granted.

In terms of general parking provision to serve the development it is proposed that 8 spaces would be available, in addition to the disabled spaces. The appropriateness and acceptability of such a low level of parking needs to be considered against the consequence of overspill parking, the availability of spaces off site to meet any additional demand, the assurance that measures and regulation is in place to deter highway parking that causes operational and safety concerns, the accessibility of the site and the realism of delivering such a form of development in a Town Centre location. Council Policy for general parking provision is based upon maximum standards which gives flexibility in interpretation and provision, as long as whatever level of provision occurs it doesn't give rise to an adverse and unacceptable effects on highway operation and safety.

The applicant, in acknowledging that the development could give rise to some overspill parking and demand to use public spaces, commissioned a review of public parking availability within close proximity of the site. It is highly likely that a development with a low provision of bespoke parking will generate a demand for some parking off site, whether this be residents or visitors. It is essential that overspill parking does not occur indiscriminately or adversely affects highway operation and safety so an evaluation of space availability off site is necessary, plus potentially a review of regulations.

When scoping the parking survey study area it was agreed that there are a number of public car parks and on street parking facilities within the Town Centre controlled zone that are reasonably close to the site and have potential to be utilised to satisfy any demand for additional resident and visitor parking. I am satisfied that the survey was carried out in line with the Council's recommended practice and undertaken across three days, including a weekend and evening reviews.

In terms of short stay parking the study area has 92 spaces and the surveys show spare capacity varying between 16 and 58 spaces, with daytimes clearly busier compared to a Sunday evening 1800-2100 period. The review of long stay parking identified 427 spaces within the area and show spare capacity varying between 114

and 266 spaces, the lowest evident occupancy of spaces being the Sunday evening period.

In summary the survey data shows 212 spaces available on weekday evenings and 236 on the Sunday evening, demonstrating that there is spare parking capacity available during the periods when the peak demand for residential development will arise. During the daytime there was more availability of long stay parking than short stay parking, although there is still a good level of provision for short stay parkers as they have the option of using either short stay or long stay parking areas.

The locality of the site is heavily controlled as a parking zone by the Council. Traffic Regulation Orders are generally well respected and there is no particular evidence that indiscriminate parking occurs or operational and safety concerns arise from kerbside parking. The zone is well managed by the Council and I do not consider there is justification for review of Traffic Orders as a consequence of this proposal when I consider the immediately surrounding streets are clearly managed to permit parking in locations where operational and safety concerns are not evident.

It is fair and reasonable to acknowledge that low level parking availability within a residential development and particularly in a Town Centre location will have a strong influence on the travel mode choice that residents would make. Limiting the availability of general parking spaces on site is a measure that should discourage a car travel dependant lifestyle and encourage residents to make more sustainable and active travel choices. I feel this is an appropriate and reasonable presumption and initiative within a location that is well served by public transport and where residents would have easy and convenient access to alternative travel modes without the need for car travel reliance.

Modal survey data for this locality shows that employment related trips on foot, cycle and by bus are considerably higher than for Stockport as a whole and as to be expected within a Town Centre location. Sustainable travel modes equate for 50% of employment related trips undertaken within this locality and there is no logic or reason to consider that the proposed development would give rise to a modal choice that differs. There is also strong evidence that trips to other services and amenities within the Town Centre location are undertaken in a sustainable manner, again demonstrating that the accessibility of a site can influence modal choice and discourage a reliance on car travel.

Furthermore I consider that residents in the development will have made a lifestyle choice that has less reliance on car travel and influenced heavily by the lack of bespoke car parking. The provision of disabled spaces and future proofing with parking for low emission/electric vehicles satisfies minimum requirements and accessibility needs for those with mobility issues and this weighs heavily in favour of the scheme. These factors should also influence the marketability of the site and the applicant is clearly confident that a development with a high dependence on sustainable travel choices whilst satisfying minimum parking expectations is appropriate in this location and would prove successful. I see no reason or justification to question this judgement and can only focus on the impacts off site, which in this case leads me to conclude that I am reasonably satisfied that there is potential off site for overspill parking and highway operational and safety issues are unlikely to arise as a consequence.

A robust travel plan is also essential for a development of this scale. This can assist reducing car dependence, promoting sustainable travel choices and the implementation of effective measures to bring about modal shift with the use of

incentives, the provision of onsite and offsite infrastructure along with a clear monitoring regime with agreed targets. In addition a critical part of this will be ensuring the development has access to and is signed up to a car club, for example Enterprise which operates in Stockport. The applicant was encouraged to engage with Enterprise and I feel it is reasonable that the Council uses conditional control to ensure Car Club membership is undertaken and adhered to. Car clubs provide an alternative to owning a car for residents and the developer should actively buy in to this to ensure that additional car travel needs are covered for residents.

The travel plan also needs to include, amongst other things:

- A Travel Plan budget and resources for the implementation and day to day management of travel plan measures;
- Appropriate management structures;
- Detailed time frames for the delivery;
- Handover arrangements for the travel plan or its components, when the developer's responsibility ceases; and
- Targets and monitoring arrangements.

Ideally the travel plan should include tailored measures to overcome specific barriers or take advantage of opportunities presented by the site in order to encourage future residents to use sustainable modes of travel for appropriate journeys. In order to encourage sustainable journeys to mitigate the traffic impact of the development, incentives should be offered through the Travel Plan to encourage residents to use public transport, adopt active travel modes and have available access to a car club. These incentive could include measures such as concessionary bus fares, discounted cycles, journey planning and car club subsidies etc. Travel Planning is a matter capable of conditional control.

The parking layout within the site shows access from Oliver Street to surface level and basement parking under the Torkington building. Surface level parking, which is 9 disabled bays raises no concerns in terms of space access and manoeuvrability. The basement car park will house 42 spaces, disabled provision at 34 and general bays 8. Access to the basement is down a single width ramp and the avoidance of conflict will be managed by introducing a traffic signal arrangement that will show whether the ramp is clear to drivers approaching from either surface level or within the basement. The Torkington building can be accessed from within the basement, other buildings will presumably require pedestrians in the basement to negotiate a route up and down the ramp. This is not ideal although capable of safe management by the site end access control system, so a matter of detail capable of conditional control.

My only other comment is that provision should be made somewhere at surface level for a couple of bays for motorcycle/scooter parking, this should be incorporated into the site layout.

#### Traffic generation and highway impact

The scope of the traffic impact assessment was agreed with the Council and survey work was undertaken pre pandemic and is therefore representative of typical highway operating conditions necessary for a robust assessment. Traffic impact is assessed for the opening year and the future year 2031 and considers the Greek Street corridor and its junctions with the A6 and Shaw Heath.

Trip rates for residential and employment uses were agreed and it was clear that the residential rates selected were for development with higher levels of parking available and are therefore in effect slightly higher than would likely be realised by this site which has a reduced level of parking. This ensures a robust assessment and

is representative of the likelihood that the additional traffic generated will be some residents and visitors travelling along the Greek Street corridor seeking off-site parking and that their consequent vehicle movements would then be factored into the junction assessment exercise.

The assessment results show that traffic generated by the development will have a minimal impact on the Greek Street / Royal George Street junction. Increases in delay are negligible in both the opening and future year scenarios and there is sufficient spare capacity within the junction to safely accommodate development traffic.

The results show that the trips generated by the development are expected to have a minimal impact on the operation of the Greek Street Shaw Heath roundabout junction in both the opening and future years. The largest impact in terms of delay would be on Mercian Way which is less than a minute (33 seconds during the PM peak hour), a delay that is not considered to be significant in the context of peak hour commuter traffic.

At the Greek Street A6 signal controlled junction the results show that that traffic generated by the development will have a minimal impact on the operation of the junction with increases in delay and queues that are negligible in both the opening and future year scenarios.

The modelling work has also been reviewed by TfGM UTC Unit and it is accepting of the results and does not express any opposition.

In summary, the development which is focusing towards a less car travel dominated environment and lifestyle is not predicted to give rise to a level of vehicle movement that would cause highway operational concern or risk to safety. There is no reason to require mitigation on capacity grounds and I conclude that opposition on traffic grounds cannot be reasoned or justified.

#### Access arrangements

The only vehicular access to the site is from Oliver Street, an unadopted access road off Royal George Street and this link also provides access to the staff car park and servicing areas for the College. I have no concerns with the status or design of this link to facilitate the proposed development. The barrier system at the entry would be removed and footway widening is to be provided alongside the carriageway to ensure better connectivity for pedestrian traffic. There would however be merit in this link becoming adopted highway as it would be easier to manage in terms of parking overspill, free operation and general public movement along the link. I have queried whether it is the intention of the applicant to provide this link as adoptable space and if not questioned how the space would be managed.

Additional access routes are currently proposed for pedestrians with connectivity from the site direct to the A6 and to Greek Street. In order to maximise the benefits of the site's location in relation to active travel, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment is designed to be as safe, convenient and attractive as possible, so as not to discourage people from accessing the site on foot or by cycle. To help encourage the uptake of active travel modes by future residents these identified routes should be designed to enable cycle movement and this requires revision to widths and likely restraint measures to prevent cyclists riding straight out onto the highway. I acknowledge there is a level difference between the courtyard realm ground level within the site and the A6 and note that steps are shown on the link between the Torkington and New Lyme buildings. This needs

review as would be inappropriate not to have a usable cycle linkage from the site to the A6 corridor and potentially discourage cycle movement between the site and other services and amenities south of the site. The identified linkage to Greek Street should be capable of widening to 5m for dedicated pedestrian and cycling space and this would align with the improvement scheme proposed for the Greek Street corridor.

Within the site I have no concerns with the identified space for pedestrian and cycle movement. Surfacing material choices will be critical in identifying areas, directional arrangements and ensuring free and safe movement for all users across the space. I add that I am satisfied that the proposed access arrangements will not adversely impact on the access and operational interests of the adjacent College site, which can continue to take access from Oliver Street without unnecessary concern.

#### Servicing and delivery arrangements

The submitted layout identifies a vehicle delivery space at the head of Oliver Street and manoeuvring space that encompasses the use of the realm space. I am not supportive of a layout that requires vehicles to manoeuvre within the courtyard realm space which is effectively a space that will be likely to be very active in terms of movements by persons on foot and cycle. Interaction with commercial vehicle movement on anything more than an infrequent basis which would be the case is a cause of unacceptable risk of conflict. The likely intensity of servicing associated vehicle movements could be relatively high, not just with refuse and recycling and deliveries for the commercial interests but also the likely home delivery services that will frequent the site. Whilst I acknowledge that some operators may have banks people that can assist in safe reversing manoeuvres this will not be the case for commercial delivery traffic and home deliveries and I do not consider that the site management will be able to reasonably exercise control over timings for home deliveries. The proposed layout needs revision to show dedicated carriageway space for vehicle manoeuvring with the realm reconfigured to avoid risk of conflict within the courtyard realm space.

I am accepting of a delivery vehicle standing area being identified on Oliver Street, this would however need regulation to avoid parking breaches. Vehicles could utilise this space once safely manoeuvred within the site.

The Art Gallery building has a servicing arrangement that requires a delivery vehicle to negotiate a passage across the public realm. Whilst I feel that such movements will be infrequent and that the management of this is achievable I need assurance that the realistic servicing needs of this use have been incorporated into the proposal. The submission allows for a 10m rigid vehicle to access and manoeuvre, at this stage I need assurance that such a vehicle size is appropriate as I am concerned that should something slightly larger visit the site there could be operational and safety issues that arise.

It is suggested that the servicing for the all of the residential and commercial aspects of the development will take place from within the courtyard/realm space. This I am accepting of presuming an suitable standing and turning space can be laid out, although I consider a management plan will be required to deal with timings of deliveries particularly for the commercial elements, avoiding conflicting arrivals, product distribution across the site and general measures to further ensure the servicing operation does not adversely impact on the safe operation of the realm space. This would be a matter for conditional control.

Notwithstanding the above I am doubtful whether the identified refuse and recycling storage areas will have sufficient capacity for the likely number of receptacles necessary to serve the site.

The Waste Management Teams requirement for the Torkington building for residents use is that 20 1100L Euro Bins will be required for paper, card and cartons, 20 EB's for glass, cans and plastic bottles, 3 EB's for food waste and 15 EB's for residual waste. The floor drawings show only 28 receptacles, 58 are required.

For the New Lyme building 42 1100L Euro Bins will be required for paper, card and cartons, 42 EB's for glass, cans and plastic bottles, 6 EB's for food waste and 33 EB's for residual waste. The floor drawings show only 66 receptacles whereas 123 are required.

For the Gateway 10 1100L Euro Bins will be required for paper, card and cartons, 10 EB's for glass, cans and plastic bottles, 2 EB's for food waste and 8 EB's for residual waste. The floor drawings show only 16 receptacles whereas 30 are required.

Any under provision of receptacles is a clear concern for the clean and safe operation and management of the site is it could lead to the additional receptacles that residents will require being stood in the car parking area, on the road space and within the realm space. This would clearly be unsightly but also give rise to safety and operational concerns. I am unsure whether the applicant has engaged with the Council's Waste Management Team but I would strongly urge this matter is addressed and permission should not be issued until there is sufficient comfort that residents needs will be met and the Council can fulfil its statutory duty under the 1990 Environmental Protection Act to collect household waste.

In addition to residents waste needs there does not appear to be any identified waste and recycling facilities for the commercial elements of the site. This also needs addressing.

#### Cycle parking

It is suggested that parking for 442 cycles for residential purposes will be provided across the site. This would satisfy Council Policy although the detail of areas and actual facilities will need agreement and can be a matter for conditional control.

The Torkington building houses 122 apartments and would have at basement level 122 cycle storage points. These would be accessed from the car park or from a building entrance on the A6. The New Lyme building would have cycle parking at basement and ground floor level, a total of 258 storage points to serve the apartments with access from the A6 frontage and the courtyard realm space.

The Gateway building has 62 apartments and it appears that this would be served by cycle points external to the building. It is not abundantly clear on the submitted drawings that there is capacity for 62 cycle to be parked and any such facilities will be to properly secured, enclosed and covered over to ensure suitability for long stay usage. This matter needs clarity prior to any decision being made as I anticipate rather large and potentially high free standing structures will be required to house 62 cycles.

There is a need for a mix of long and short stay cycle parking to serve the commercial interests proposed within the development and the Art Gallery. Provision should be made for 6 long stay cycle points that are suitably secured, enclosed and

covered over and four short stay points (that being Sheffield stands or similar) suitably located within the courtyard realm space.

## Conclusion

I am satisfied that due and proper consideration has been given to the proposal and am supportive of this form of development within this location. There is no reason or justification to express concerns on the grounds of traffic generation, highway impact and overall parking provision however there are number of matters that need further consideration, clarity and action before any decision should be made.

### Summary of matters outstanding:

- Clarity of likely future status of Oliver Street and future management;
- Clarity on servicing demands for Art Centre building;
- Revision to service vehicle standing and manoeuvring space;
- Cycle linkage to A6 between New Lyme and Torkington buildings;
- Layout drawing to incorporate pedestrian/cycle improvement to Greek Street and Royal George Street and footway widening to be delivered;
- Electric vehicle charge facility delivery strategy, need actual provision to reflect completion of various phases and not simply EV ready;
- Formal agreement of \$106 financial contribution, £110,000 for off-site EV charge facility provision and £60,000 towards controlled crossing upgrade on Greek Street/sustainable access measures;
- Clarity on cycle parking provision for the Gateway building;
- Additional cycle parking for commercial interests and Art Gallery building, a mix of long and short stay facilities;
- Provision of area for motorcycle parking, two bays minimum and
- Waste Management concerns, inadequate provision of receptacles to meet minimum site operational needs for residential and commercial interests.

Update - discussions actively remain on-going between the applicant and Council Officers in this respect. A further update is to be provided to Members in due course.

**Conservation & Heritage Officer** – This application has been the subject of pre-application discussion, including a Places Matter design review and consultation with Historic England, and it is evident that through this process the design has evolved in order to achieve better integration between the proposed new development and existing heritage assets within and adjacent to the site. The shortcomings of the existing urban grain around the former Stockport College site have been recognised and consideration given to introducing landscape enhancements to spaces between and around buildings, together with opportunities to introduce greater pedestrian permeability and public access through and across the wider site. It is acknowledged that these will provide a range of public benefits, assisting the wider site to better integrate with the wider townscape.

The submitted Heritage Assessment contains a comprehensive summary of the designated and non-designated heritage assets within and around the site, together with consideration of the potential impact upon their significance and setting. The principal impact of the proposals will be upon the Grade II\* listed War Memorial Art Gallery, the Grade II listed former Greek Street School and the Town Hall Conservation Area. The existing site consists of a dense concentration of post war buildings related to its former education use and collectively this has a harmful impact upon the significance and setting of these designated heritage assets. The

Torkington building is of indifferent architectural quality and features an assortment of plant equipment mounted at roof level and forms an immediate and incongruous backdrop to the War Memorial Art Gallery, particularly in views along Wellington Road South, Greek Street and Edward Street. The proposals to re-clad the external elevations of the Torkington building, introducing greater verticality, applying more sympathetic materials and replacing the high level plant with 2 additional storeys to provide better integration with the design of the rest of building is welcomed, and these represent an overall enhancement to the setting of the War Memorial. The removal of the concrete clad Hexagon lecture theatre, associated landscaping and formation of an area of public realm to the Greek Street frontage provide further enhancements. The new Lyme Tower is of 16 storeys and given its height it will become the most prominent element of the site, particularly in long distance views. Given the degree of separation from the various heritage assets, including the War Memorial Art Gallery and Town Hall (both listed Grade II\*), and taking into consideration its revised alignment, now directly facing Wellington Road South, it is considered that this building will have a neutral impact upon their setting and significance. The proposed Gateway building, sited at the junction of Greek Street and Royal George Street, is of 6 storeys and immediately adjacent to the former Greek Street School. Its height is comparable to the school building and whilst it is acknowledged that its revised siting, set back from the school frontage will maintain important views along Greek Street it is inevitable that visually it will compete for attention - great care will therefore be required with the selection of external materials and architectural detailing to ensure that it provides a suitable counterpart to the former school whilst also 'holding' the north west corner of the site.

A range of minor alterations to the War Memorial Art Gallery and Greek Street School are proposed as part of the overall scheme : these are dealt with through separate applications but raise no major concerns. Future conversion of the Greek Street School for commercial co-working space raises no concerns in principle although any detailed proposals will need to be the subject of a future listed building consent application. It is acknowledged that a business use is likely to be more suitable for sensitive adaption of the internal layout and Edwardian architectural character, resulting in a less harmful impact upon its special interest than residential conversion.

Taking consideration of the national and local planning policy tests contained within the NPPF and Stockport Core Strategy/UDP it is considered that, taken overall, the proposals would have a neutral or minor beneficial impact upon the significance of the various heritage assets identified within the application. In order to minimise any potential harm it is recommended that conditions are applied in relation to the selection of external materials and details of hard and soft landscaping proposals.

**TfGM** - The following comments are offered as advice on transport issues for you to balance against other factors in determining the application and are made in the context of TfGM's role in the planning process, as set out in the footnote below.

## Background

The application seeks approval for the development of Royal George Village comprising the demolition, refurbishment and change of use of existing buildings, together with new build to provide 442 apartments (use class C3), co-working office space (use class B1) and flexible commercial space (use classes A1, A3, B1 and D1 and/or D2), together with new public realm and civic space, shared amenity space, landscaping, car parking, cycle parking, servicing and all other associated works.

## Highways Overview

Colleagues from within TfGM Highways have reviewed the Transport Assessment (TA) submitted in support of the proposed residential development.

### I. Parking Survey

The TA states that a survey of the cars parked in the vicinity of the proposal was carried out. TfGM would suggest that the Local Authority check that statements in the TA regarding the parking are applicable to the site.

TfGM would point out that the predicted number of trips is higher than what will be accommodated at the development parking. This could result in vehicles parking elsewhere.

### II. Traffic Data Collection

TfGM were unable to validate the base traffic flows and the identified peak hours as the raw survey traffic data is not included in the TA submission. We would suggest this is submitted to TfGM so that the relevant findings can be fully validated.

### III. Trip Generation

The trip generation assessment contained within the TA is accepted by TfGM.

### IV. Trip Distribution

The TA refers to a traffic distribution diagram shown contained in the TA Appendix section. This diagram is not included. We would suggest that said diagram is submitted for checking.

### V. Traffic Impact Assessments

The study area for evaluating the traffic impact doesn't cover all the junctions that will experience an increase in two-way traffic flow of 30 vph or more. We would suggest that a revised development flow diagram is produced and submitted to TfGM UTC showing which other junctions experience an extra two-way traffic flow of 30 vph or more due to the development. This would allow UTC to suggest if other junctions should also be assessed.

TfGM UTC are not in receipt of the model Linsig files. We would suggest these are forwarded to TfGM UTC so that the modelled junctions can be validated as part of the review.

### VI. Traffic Regulation Orders

TfGM suggest that it may be beneficial for a review of parking restrictions to be undertaken on the surrounding streets, to ensure that indiscriminate parking associated with the development does not occur.

## Site Accessibility

### I. Public Transport

The site is located adjacent to six bus stops, placed on Greek Street and A6 Wellington Road South. Stockport bus station is 600m to the north of the site.

There are several bus services stopping at the bus stops listed above and linking the development to various areas in Stockport and elsewhere.

The site is located a ten minute walk from Stockport Rail Station.

## II. Active Travel

In order to maximise the benefits of the site's location in relation to active travel, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment is designed to be as safe, convenient and attractive as possible, so as not to discourage people from accessing the site on foot / by bicycle.

This should be applied both throughout the site layout, and also between the site and existing active travel networks and can be achieved through measures such as the appropriate use of surfacing materials, landscaping, lighting, signage and road crossings.

To establish travel patterns at the beginning of occupation and encourage modal shift to sustainable modes of travel, it is important to ensure the facilities are in place to support sustainability. Therefore, improvements to the pedestrian environment are required to help encourage the uptake of active travel modes by future residents, as follows:

### Recommendations:

- Any redundant vehicle access points which served the former site should be reinstated as continuous footway to adoptable standards.
- Footway resurfacing and renewal undertaken as appropriate.
- Tactile paving and dropped kerbs should be installed across both sides of the site access point.

## III. Cycle Parking

It is also important to ensure that adequate infrastructure and facilities are provided to encourage residents to travel by sustainable modes. The TS refers to the provision cycle spaces located within the buildings and public realm areas. It is not clear from the TA how many cycle space will be provided. TfGM would suggest that as many spaces as possible are provided at the site. Cycle parking should be easily accessible from within the development and secure.

## IV. Travel Plan

To encourage sustainable travel choices, it is important that the development is accompanied by a robust Residential Travel Plan with effective measures for bringing about modal shift, i.e. the use of incentives, provision of onsite and offsite infrastructure, along with a clear monitoring regime with agreed targets.

A Travel Plan should include:

- A Travel Plan budget and resources for the implementation and day to day management of travel plan measures;
- Appropriate management structures;
- Detailed time frames for the delivery;
- Handover arrangements for the travel plan or its components, when the developer's responsibility ceases; and
- Targets and monitoring arrangements.

Ideally a Full Travel Plan should include tailored measures to overcome specific barriers or take advantage of opportunities presented by the site in order to encourage future residents to use sustainable modes of travel for appropriate journeys.

In order to encourage sustainable journeys to mitigate the traffic impact of the development, incentives should be offered through the Travel Plan to encourage residents to use public transport and adopt active travel modes. These could include measures such as concessionary bus fares, discounted cycles, journey planning etc.

Should Stockport Council be minded to approve this application it is suggested that the further development, implementation and monitoring of a full Travel Plan be attached as a condition of any planning consent.

**Environmental Health (Contaminated Land)** - I have read the Sub Surface Phase 1 report on the portal, the report recommends a Phase 2 site investigation is undertaken for soil and gas which I agree with, as such could I please request the following conditions; CTM1, CTM2, CTM3, LFG1 & LFG3.

**Environmental Health (Air Quality)** - I have looked at the submitted air quality assessment and am happy with its conclusions.

The mitigation measures outlined in the report shall be instigated and a dust management plan submitted.

**Waste Management Team** – The Council document 'SMBC Recycling Planning' should be read to ensure that the site plan/usage meets with our waste storage and access requirements.

Please also ensure that sufficient storage room is allocated for the number of waste bin(s) (capacity) required.

If opting for steel bin containers, there needs to be sufficient access, width of entrance, turning circle enough for a heavy goods sized vehicle, in order that residents have the use of the Council's waste collection services.

**The Coal Authority** – No observations.

**Design for Security** – Having looked at the Crime Impact Statement that has been submitted, we would ask the question as to whether or not the author of the report is a Suitably Qualified Security Consultant (SQSC) to have been able appraise the scheme in question through the principals of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). If the author of the report does not meet the above requirements then we would highly recommend that a report is sought from a Suitably Qualified Security Consultant (SQSC) and the report should identify, predict, evaluate and mitigate the site-specific crime and disorder effects of a development and should be produced by a professional individual/organisation independent of the design process. The CIS can then be submitted as part of the planning application,

indicating that the proposed development has been designed to avoid/reduce the adverse effects of crime and disorder and enabling the planning process to run more smoothly.

**GM Fire Officer** - The proposal should meet the requirements for Fire Service access.

The Fire Service requires vehicular access for a fire appliance to within 45m of all points within the dwellings.

The access road should be a minimum width of 4.5m and capable of carrying 12.5 tonnes. Additionally if the access road is more than 20m long a turning circle, hammerhead, or other turning point for fire appliances will be required. The maximum length of any cul-de-sac network should be 250 m.

There should be a suitable fire hydrant within 165m of the furthest dwelling.

The Fire Service strongly supports the installation of domestic sprinkler systems as a positive measure to protect persons. At a small cost occupants' can be given the reassurance of a high level of protection. All developers should positively consider the viability of installing domestic sprinkler systems. The access requirements for a dwelling fitted with an approved sprinkler system can deviate from the required standard detailed above, further consultation will be required.

**Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service** - The application is supported by an archaeological desk based assessment prepared by Salford Archaeology in January 2020 which provides an excellent understanding of the site's historic development and below-ground archaeological potential. It concludes that there is little archaeological interest and potential due to the extensive disturbance from 20th century development together with the low level of archaeological significance. GMAAS concur with these findings and recommend that no further archaeological mitigation is required for this scheme other than for works to the listed Greek Street Building which is the subject of a separate consultation response.

**Manchester Airport** – There are no aerodrome safeguarding objections to this proposal.

**Cadent Gas** - An assessment has been carried out with respect to Cadent Gas Limited, National Grid Electricity Transmission plc's and National Grid Gas Transmission plc's apparatus. Please note it does not cover the items listed in the section "Your Responsibilities and Obligations", including gas service pipes and related apparatus.

Are My Works Affected?

Searches based on your enquiry have identified that there is apparatus in the vicinity of your enquiry which may be affected by the activities specified.

Can you please inform Plant Protection, as soon as possible, the decision your authority is likely to make regarding this application. If the application is refused for any other reason than the presence of apparatus, we will not take any further action.

Due to the presence of Cadent and/or National Grid apparatus in proximity to the specified area, the contractor should contact Plant Protection before any works are carried out to ensure the apparatus is not affected by any of the proposed works.

The "Assessment" Section below outlines the detailed requirements that must be followed when planning or undertaking your scheduled activities at this location. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information you have submitted is accurate and that all relevant documents including links are provided to all persons (either direct labour or contractors) working for you near Cadent and/or National Grid's apparatus, e.g. as contained within the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.

This assessment solely relates to Cadent Gas Limited, National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) and National Grid Gas Transmission plc (NGGT) and apparatus. This assessment does not include:

Cadent and/or National Grid's legal interest (easements or wayleaves) in the land which restricts activity in proximity to Cadent and/or National Grid's assets in private land. You must obtain details of any such restrictions from the landowner in the first instance and if in doubt contact Plant Protection.

Gas service pipes and related apparatus

Recently installed apparatus

Apparatus owned by other organisations, e.g. other gas distribution operators, local electricity companies, other utilities, etc.

It is your responsibility to take into account whether the items listed above may be present and if they could be affected by your proposed activities. Further "Essential Guidance" in respect of these items can be found on either the National Grid or Cadent website.

This communication does not constitute any formal agreement or consent for any proposed development work; either generally or with regard to Cadent and/or National Grid's easements or wayleaves nor any planning or building regulations applications.

Cadent Gas Limited, NGGT and NGET or their agents, servants or contractors do not accept any liability for any losses arising under or in connection with this information. This limit on liability applies to all and any claims in contract, tort (including negligence), misrepresentation (excluding fraudulent misrepresentation), breach of statutory duty or otherwise. This limit on liability does not exclude or restrict liability where prohibited by the law nor does it supersede the express terms of any related agreements.

**Head of Estates** – no response received.

**Building Control** – no response received.

**Greenspace** - no response received.

**Strategic Housing** – no response received.

**Landscape Architect** – no response received.

**Planning Policy** – discussions actively remain on-going in this respect. A further update is to be provided to Members in due course.

**Town Centre West Team** – no response received.

**Civil Aviation Authority** – no response received.

**Disability Stockport** – no response received.

**Environment Agency** – no response received.

## **ANALYSIS**

This application seeks the comprehensive regeneration of part of the site of the existing Stockport College campus and proposes the delivery of a high quality mixed use residential, commercial and office based development.

As detailed in the description of development the application comprises a number of component parts.

In the consideration of this application a number of matters should be considered in assessing the merits of the proposal, addressing the impacts of the proposed development, as well as looking at the overall planning balance of the proposal with regards to harm and public benefits.

The following matters require consideration as part of the assessment of this application:-

### **Principle of Development**

The site occupies a key position in terms of being a prominent gateway site to the wider town centre. The sites value in respect of prominence and development potential has been long acknowledged by the Council, with the potential for significant development opportunity.

The proposal would enable the regeneration of a highly accessible and prominent site, which does not currently fulfil its potential, in delivering a high quality mixed use development with 442 apartments, public realm enhancements and other commercial / office uses which will be complementary to the town centre.

The site is located within the boundary of Greater Manchester's Mayoral Development Corporation which is part of the next stage in the Council's ambitious regeneration plans for the town, which will see the creation of in the region of 3000 new homes over a 15 year period in the heart of the town.

From a general overview the proposed development aligns with the long term regenerative aspirations of the Council and would reflect the general economic and housing delivery thrust of the National Planning Policy Framework. This advises that planning authorities should amongst other things be supportive of development which leads to economic growth in the interests of stimulating employment and the economy, as part of delivering sustainable development.

The principle of high-density housing development on a previously developed site in a highly accessible and sustainable Town Centre location is welcomed, particularly in the context of the current significant undersupply of housing in the Borough (most recently assessed as equating to 2.8 year supply set against a minimum requirement of 5 years). Given the highly sustainable location of the site, immediately adjacent to high frequency bus routes along the A6 and Greek Street, together with the close proximity to Stockport Railway Station, it is precisely the type of location where the delivery of a higher density form of development should be encouraged, subject of course to other considerations such as visual impact and level of amenity afforded to existing and future residents.

The 'tilted balance' in favour of housing development created by Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged in this case. This positive position is supported by UDP Policy TCG3.5 which advocates the provision of high quality, mixed residential, leisure and commercial / office uses, in the 'Civic Quarter', providing residential amenity is safeguarded.

Similarly, Core Strategy Policies CS2 and CS4 seek to promote and focus the provision of housing in the town centre and on brownfield sites whilst the Council's Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (August 2019) emphasises the importance of maximising the potential of Town Centre Living to ensure housing needs are met in the Borough that will in turn help reduce development pressure on the Greater Manchester Green Belt. Furthermore, NPPF Paragraph 85 requires local planning authorities to recognise that residential development often plays an important role in regenerating and ensuring the vitality of town centres.

Core Strategy Policy CS4 echoes the above by highlighting the supporting role new housing development in the Town Centre will play in creating a critical mass of activity to support the local economy and improve the vibrancy and overall vitality of viability of the Town Centre. This will also in turn help to regenerate, conserve and enhance heritage assets.

The density of the proposed development is approximately 354 dwellings per hectare.

It is also considered that the current uses on the site represent a more inefficient use of previously developed land in such a sustainable and accessible location at a time of significant housing undersupply, contrary to paragraphs 122 and 123 of the NPPF and the strategic objectives of the development plan.

Whilst the proposal seeks maximum flexibility in the breakdown of the commercial uses which will be ancillary to the appropriate residential and co-working office uses, it must be acknowledged that this is in compliance with adopted planning policy and the NPPF. Suitable conditions can be applied limiting the type and maximum size of any individual unit, in order to safeguard the vitality and viability of the core retail area of the Town Centre and to ensure

There are no matters or considerations relating to this application which would detrimentally impact on the vitality or viability of the town centre, and as such, the scheme is compliant with local and national planning policy in this regard

It is acknowledged that the proposed development will result in the loss / conversion of a number of buildings and structures associated with the existing college campus,

the heritage implications of which are considered later in this report. Notwithstanding this, the impact of the removal of buildings linked to higher education provision needs to be considered. In this respect it is important to note that many of the buildings are either redundant and in a state of disrepair, or are only partially occupied and in temporary use by the college.

The re-development of Stockport College's main Town Centre campus, granted planning permission in 2018, has rendered the current site of the Greek St campus surplus to the College's future requirements. Whilst the approved re-development works at the adjacent Town Centre campus site have commenced and are on-going, a number of the buildings to be lost as part of the current proposal now before Committee are being used on a temporary basis to re-house the College's functions as part of a decanting strategy. As such the principle of the loss of the college use of these buildings has already been accepted as part of the 2018 permission granted for the consolidation of the College campus. As the main campus works reach completion in 2021 these buildings will be vacated and become available for redevelopment on a phased basis.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed uses of the site are entirely appropriate under current local planning policy and national planning guidance and could deliver significant regenerative benefits for the town as a whole

### Affordable Housing

Core Strategy policy H-3 indicates that the proportion of affordable housing sought in new housing developments varies across the borough to take account of property prices and economic viability. The percentage requirement across the borough ranges from an upper end of 40 % to a lower end of between 5-15% affordable provision. In this case, as the site is located within the town centre the policy advises that provision should be made within a range of 5-15%. This reflects limited viability that currently exists for residential development within the town centre.

In this instance the current proposal, includes the provision of 22 apartments resulting in a policy compliant, affordable housing offer of 5% on site.

An appropriate legal agreement / unilateral undertaking will be entered into by the applicant and other interested parties, so as to ensure the deliverability of the affordable housing offer and its tenure.

### Highway Matters

The initial detailed responses of the Councils Highway Engineer and TfGM are included with the Consultees section of this report and should be cross-referenced as part of the analysis of this application.

The Highway Engineer is in principle supportive of the comprehensive regeneration of the site, which is in a highly accessible location, with the proposed end uses considered to be acceptable in this location.

A variety of technical documents and drawings have been submitted in support of the application, these include both a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan.

Further discussions have subsequently taken place between the applicant and the Council's Highway Engineer and remain on-going, particularly in connection with matters relating to commuted sum contributions and the impact of the financial

viability of the overall scheme. As a result some additional technical details and revised plans have recently been received. These are currently under review by Officers. An updated consultee response is expected from the Council's Highway Engineer, details of which will be provided as an update to Members when considering the application.

### *Sustainable transport*

The site's sustainable location, within comfortable walking distance of public transport infrastructure, jobs, services, leisure activities justifies the proposed level of car provision within the development. The scheme's contribution to improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity through the site to the surrounding network is a benefit that weighs in favour of the proposal. This is considered a necessary requirement to promote sustainable transport modes particularly in view of future residents' reliance on walking and cycling. Sustainable transport choices would be further promoted by way of a residents travel plan and other recommended conditions.

### *Highway safety*

The Council's Highway Engineer has assessed the proposed access / egress arrangements and raises no highway safety concerns, subject to the imposition of recommended conditions.

### *Traffic generation*

A Transport Assessment has been submitted in support of the application that finds that, based on an analysis of the TRICS database, the development would not have a material impact on the local highway network. Both the Council's Highway Engineer and TfGM agree with that conclusion. No conflict with local or national planning policies therefore arises.

### *Parking provision & servicing*

Within the site there would be parking provision, focused primarily on satisfying and complying with the Council's minimum standards for disabled and low emission/electric vehicle spaces. In this respect a total of 43 disabled spaces and 8 general spaces would be provided as part of the development. Parking would be provided primarily within an underground parking area with a small number of spaces at surface level. Three disabled spaces are proposed adjacent to the War Memorial Art Gallery, specific for that use. 8 car parking spaces would have electric vehicle charging points. The proposed level of car parking provision is considered to be justified in this location, having regard to the advice of TfGM and the Council's Highway Engineer following careful review of submitted parking surveys.

442 cycle parking spaces would be provided for residents and visitors. Subject to the receipt of an updated consultee response from the Council's Highway Engineer and the imposition of recommended conditions, no conflict with local or national planning policies would arise.

In order to ensure servicing is managed in the operational phase, appropriate conditions are considered necessary in this regard.

## Heritage & Archaeology

The site is located within the town centre and includes or is in close proximity to a number of statutorily listed heritage assets, including:-

- 1) the Grade II listed Greek Street building;
- 2) the Grade II\* War Memorial / Art Gallery;
  
- 3) the Town Hall Conservation Area;
- 4) the Grade II\* Town Hall;
- 5) the Grade I listed St Thomas Church (further afield to the south-east).

In considering this application the extensive comments of Historic England and the Council's Conservation Officer are included earlier in this planning report and should be referred to in the context of assessing the proposal as a whole.

The proposed scheme represents the redevelopment of a large campus site directly adjacent to a number of highly significant heritage assets. This will therefore place constraints on the development, which should seek to preserve or better reveal the significance of these assets. Cumulatively, it is considered that the proposals would preserve the significance of the assets affected.

It is important to note that the current Stockport College campus is made up of a number of buildings of indifferent design quality, which make a negative contribution to the setting in which a number of heritage assets are experienced. There is therefore scope for a holistic masterplan for the site to have a positive impact from a heritage perspective. In light of the above the proposed masterplan which forms part of the current application includes a number of elements which are considered to be beneficial to the significance of these heritage assets.

The most prominent of these elements is the proposed demolition of the Hexagon Theatre. This is an architecturally unsightly building, which occupies a prominent position on higher ground directly adjacent to Greek Street. It is located in close proximity to both the War Memorial and Art Gallery, and the former Secondary School for Girls, and intrudes on important views looking towards and between these buildings. This is to the detriment of the ability to appreciate their architectural interest. It also makes it a competing element, including when viewed from the north-west, a viewpoint in which it intrudes on the deliberate visual prominence of the principal elevation of the War Memorial and Art Gallery. Its demolition is therefore supported from a heritage perspective.

The applicant also proposes to reconfigure the landscaping around the War Memorial and Art Gallery (detailed as part of application DC/077008 also on this agenda), and to reconfigure the car parking provision across the site. Both of these elements are also identified to be beneficial, as the current overall character of this landscape is felt to be visually intrusive, and negatively influences the way in which the War Memorial and Art Gallery is experienced.

In terms of the impact of the proposal on the adjacent War Memorial and Art Gallery, the closest interrelationship the current proposal has is via the proposed Torkington Building forming the immediate backdrop for this asset. The new Lyme Building, due to its increased height and massing, is also identified as having an impact on this listed building.

The proposed Torkington Building would be taller than the listed building in front of it, and would be a significant presence. It would also make the War Memorial and Art Gallery appear comparatively small. This is important, because part of the significance of the building derives from the fact it was intentionally built as a landmark, and to be an arresting visual presence within the wider built landscape.

However, it is also important to note that the existing Torkington Building is already a looming and distracting presence, which detracts from the significance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery, and is of a visually jarring form and design. The proposed new building is not identified as worsening or exacerbating this relationship.

Therefore, while the current proposals would still distract from the intentional visual prominence and dominance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery, its proposed design and material palette would result in an aesthetically better building, with a less stark visual appearance than that which currently exists on the site. Cumulatively therefore, the Torkington Building is identified as having a neutral impact on the significance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery.

It is noted that the new Lyme Building will also have a visual interrelationship with the War Memorial and Art Gallery, particularly in longer and wider views. This element of the scheme is proposed to be considerably larger than the building which it replaces, and will form an imposing backdrop to the listed building. This is as a result of both its height, and its relatively unbroken mass. It is therefore identified to negatively impact on the intentional sense of scale and visual prominence of the War Memorial and Art Gallery, to the detriment of its special historic and architectural interest.

However, this harm is considered to be partially mitigated by the visual and physical separation between the new Lyme Building and the War Memorial and Art Gallery. This means that it has a less immediate interrelationship than the Torkington Building, which reduces the exact extent of its impact.

The new Lyme Building is therefore identified to have a minor harmful impact on the significance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery, while the Torkington Building is considered to have a neutral impact. The removal of the Hexagon Theatre is identified to have a positive impact on the significance of the listed building, particularly when taken in conjunction with the re-landscaping of the site. Cumulatively the application is therefore identified to have a neutral impact on the significance of the War Memorial and Art Gallery.

In respect of the potential impact of the proposal on the listed Town Hall and Town Hall Conservation Area, there is potential for the new built form to have an impact on longer views of the Town Hall along Wellington Road South, as well as key views looking into, and out of, the Town Hall Conservation Area. This is important as the Town Hall was deliberately designed as a prominent building, and this makes an important contribution to its significance, and how it is experienced.

The Lyme Building will be a particularly prominent element in views looking north past the site, and in views looking south away from, and past, the Town Hall. This is especially due to the fact that its massing is relatively unbroken, and is orientated parallel to Wellington Road South.

However, there is a considerable degree of physical separation between the Town Hall and the new built form, not least because they are on opposite sides of the road. It is therefore considered that the Town Hall and new development will still be read

independently, meaning that the Town Hall will remain a prominent building. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will not harm to its significance.

Similarly the development is not identified to diminish the ability to appreciate the prominent civic statement made by the listed buildings within the Town Hall Conservation Area, or their important interrelationship. It is therefore identified that the proposals would also not harm the character and appearance of the Town Hall Conservation Area.

Although further afield the proposed new Lyme Building would also be visible in views of the Church of St. Thomas, most particularly in the view looking west from the entrance to the churchyard on Hillgate. This is a key view of the building, as it is the viewpoint to which a visitor is directed when entering into the grounds of the church, and the view in which the original principle elevation of the building is best experienced.

The new building would be clearly visible in these views, but would be at some distance removed from the church, with the two buildings read separately and distinctly. Therefore, while it would alter the wider environment in which it is experienced, it would not alter the ability to appreciate this listed building. The proposals would not therefore harm the special historic and architectural interest of this heritage asset.

National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies state that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (para.184) and that when considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (para.193).

These national policies are supported in local planning policy, with Core Strategy Policies CS8 and SIE-3 and Saved UDP Policies HC1.3 and HC1.4. being of particular relevance to the assessment of this application.

In summary, whilst there is no denying that some form of harm to designated heritage assets would occur, this needs to be carefully balanced against the wider, significant benefits of the scheme.

To conclude, in the absence of any objections from either Historic England or the Council's Conservation Officer, the current proposal is considered to cumulatively have either a neutral or minor beneficial impact on the significance of the identified heritage assets and would therefore comply with both national and local planning policy.

In respect of archaeological matters, a desk-based assessment has been submitted as part of the application and it is agreed by both GMAAS and the Council's Heritage Conservation Officer that the document represents a good basis for understanding the historical interest and archaeological potential of the site. It is acknowledged that there is little archaeological interest and potential due to the extensive disturbance from 20th century development on the site, together with the low level of archaeological significance. In light of the above and in the absence of any objections from GMAAS, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of archaeological matters.

### Design, Scale & Appearance

An assessment of the scale and design of the proposed development has been set out earlier in this planning report under various headings, including the heritage section, given that these material considerations are intrinsically linked. Notwithstanding this, further consideration is required

There can be no doubt that the development proposed would present significant change to the townscape of Stockport. The residential new Lyme tower would comprise one of Stockport's tallest building and would present a prominent structure which would be readily visible from a number of long term views.

The information submitted to accompany the application, including a Tall Buildings assessment, indicates that the scheme seeks to maximise development opportunity whilst minimising the obvious scale of the project, balancing this with existing town centre scale with an appropriate response to heritage context. The development does present defining structures which highlight the evolving function of the town centre. These continue the vertical emphasis and simplistic contemporary design of those schemes which have already been granted consent at Edward Street, Stockport Interchange, the Sorting Office and the site of the former Greenhale House. It should also be noted that the maximum overall height of the proposed development (16 storeys) is similar in scale to the existing Mottram, Ratcliffe and Millbrook Tower buildings set beyond the A6 to the east.

In addition to the above it should be acknowledged that the layout of the development and the proposed approach to massing has been carefully considered, particularly in respect of the impact on designated heritage assets. In this respect massing rises in height from the north to the south of the site, i.e. away from listed buildings and the Town Hall Conservation Area. In addition the modest 6 storey scale of the Gateway building at the junction of Royal George Street and Greek Street, performs an important role in making the transition across the site from a more domestic scale into a larger urban form. It also comprises active frontages aligned with those of the adjacent Greek Street listed building.

Members will also be advised that the application is accompanied by supporting documents which explain the evolution of the scheme and the decisions made during design development, informed by both pre-application discussion with Officers and an assessment by an independent Places Matter Design Review, in accordance with best practice and the advice contained within paragraph 129 of the NPPF. In summary the overall quality of the proposed design of the development is considered to be good and is therefore supported in planning policy terms.

With regard to the proposed palette of external materials of construction this includes the use of red and buff coloured brickwork for the Gateway and new Lyme building respectively, as well as curtain walling and spandrel panels.

The existing Torkington building, which is to be refurbished and converted, will include elevational changes such as new glazing and openings, utilising a mix of materials including brick slip cladding and curtain walling.

To conclude, the proposed scale, design and appearance of the proposed development are felt to represent a considered response to its wider context.

### Residential Amenity

Core strategy policies H-1, SIE-1 and the NPPF require developments to provide a good standard of residential amenity for existing and future residents.

The nearest existing residents to the proposed development are occupants of the former Hygarth House building to the east on the opposite side of the A6 and occupants of the recently completed Homes England development to the west beyond Royal George Street.

Given the position, orientation and distance between the proposed buildings and these sensitive receptors no adverse impacts on residential amenity in terms of an unduly detrimental loss of privacy, sense of enclosure, overshadowing and noise disturbance would arise. Rather, it is considered that the proposed redevelopment will improve existing residents' outlook and provide them with enhanced connections to the wider Town Centre.

A noise assessment has been submitted in support of the application, which proposes appropriate mitigation measures in relation to the design of the building and the operation of the commercial / office uses and associated plant equipment. The Council's Environmental health Officer is supportive of the proposal in this respect subject to appropriate conditions.

The construction phase of the development does have the potential to generate adverse environmental effects if not properly controlled and therefore a condition is recommended requiring a construction management plan to be submitted, approved and implemented in full before development commences in accordance with the advice received from consultees.

Future residents of the proposed development would benefit from satisfactory standards of amenity for the reasons outlined above. The proposed apartments comply with the governments nationally described space standards and benefit from some form of amenity space either through external balconies or communal outdoor amenity space / public realm, which is proposed within the external layout of the development.

Overall, it is considered that an adequate standard of amenity would be provided for both existing and future residents.

### Micro-climate

Given the capacity for tall buildings to create adverse micro-climatic effects, the applicant has submitted a Wind Engineering Study. This demonstrates that overall, the effect of the proposed development on the local wind microclimate, subject to the inclusion of recommended mitigation measures is considered not significant. Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions requiring the installation of the proposed mitigation measures, no significant adverse effects or conflicts with policy would arise

### Landscaping

With regard to the civic space / public realm enhancements, the layout has been derived from a design approach seeking to provide safe, attractive, multi-functional and enjoyable areas of high quality public realm, which also offer opportunities to improve pedestrian access and connectivity within and through the site to the wider surroundings.

The landscape masterplan submitted in support of the application demonstrates how the concept design is based on the creation of a new urban village, with inspiration

taken from the historic use of the site in the late 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as 'working gardens'.

In summary four main areas of soft and hard landscaping, communal amenity space and areas of high quality public realm are to be interspersed throughout the site, covering approximately 6129 sq.m. These are set out in more detail within the plans appended to this planning report.

In support of the application an Arboricultural Assessment has been submitted detailing the extent and condition of trees indicated for removal as part of the development. In addition a landscaping strategy accompanies the submission, detailing new tree planting as part of the proposed scheme. The comments of the Council's Arboricultural Officers are set earlier in this planning report. In summary these do not raise any fundamental objections to the loss of trees as part of the proposed development, having regard to the extensive re-plants being proposed and the wider landscaping scheme, subject to appropriate conditions.

In addition to the above Members attention should also be drawn to the consideration of the landscaping improvements, public realm / civic space enhancements and disabled access improvements, proposed by the applicant as part of the linked application (ref. DC/077008) for the War Memorial / Art Gallery, for which the planning report is also on this agenda. Members will be advised that should the works proposed around the War Memorial / Art Gallery (under application DC/077008) be recommended for approval, the deliverability of these in connection with the current proposal for the wider re-development of the college campus site now before Committee, will be controlled via an appropriate legal agreement / unilateral undertaking.

### Flood Risk & Drainage

In respect of drainage and flood risk, the comments of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and United Utilities are noted.

The application site is identified on the Environment Agency's Flood Map as falling within Flood Zone 1, which means there is a low probability of flooding. The NPPF, Core Strategy Policies SIE-3 and Saved UDP Review Policy EP1.7 deal with flood risk and seek to ensure that developments are not at risk of flooding and will not increase the risk of flooding.

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy have been submitted in support of the application. The proposed drainage solution is capable of being controlled by appropriate planning conditions to secure compliance (where achievable) with the aims of Policy SD-6. Such conditions will also encompass the recommendations of United Utilities.

On this basis there are currently no reasons to resist the proposal from a flood risk and drainage perspective.

### Contaminated Land

In respect of ground contamination, Policy SIE-3 seeks to protect development from matters relating to contaminated land. Technical Contaminated Land Reports have been submitted in support of the application to assess the risk of potential contamination at the site and impact on the proposed development.

After due consideration the Council's Environmental Health (Contaminated Land) officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to appropriate conditions. On this basis the proposal is considered to comply with Policy SIE-3.

### 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.

As there is no space on the application site to accommodate formal recreation or children's play facilities, Core Strategy SIE-2 and the 2019 Open Space Provision and Commuted Payments SPD requires the payment of commuted sums to fund and maintain off-site provision. The proposed development generates a total commuted sum requirement of £1,290,784.50 after a 50% discount on children's play is applied (in accordance with the Town Centre Housing Supplementary Planning Document that recognises the lower child yield generated by new homes in the Town Centre, particularly from new apartments).

In this case the applicant has sought to demonstrate that financial viability prohibits the payment of any commuted sums and has submitted a viability assessment to support their position. In response, the Council has commissioned a suitably qualified expert to critically review the viability assessment.

After careful analysis, it has been identified that further information is required regarding a number of assumptions that have been made in support of the viability argument, in order to be able to conclude that the scheme is unable to provide any S106 contributions in any scenario. In this respect discussions remain on-going with the applicant to resolve these outstanding matters, with an updated response expected imminently. Subject to the receipt and assessment of additional information in respect of the submitted developer appraisal, a further updated response will be provided to Members.

Notwithstanding the above, existing public greenspace within reasonable walking distance of the site includes Mottram Street Playground, Hollywood Park, Heaton Norris Park and St Thomas' Recreation Ground.

### Air & Noise Pollution

In respect of air quality, the comments of the Council's Environmental Health Officer are noted as is the setting of the site within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). In this respect the applicant has submitted a detailed air quality assessment, which identifies potential impacts and mitigation measures as part of both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. In light of the above and in the absence of any objections from the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the proposal is considered to be policy compliant, subject to appropriate conditions.

In terms of noise impacts, the main considerations are in providing an acceptable level of attenuation particularly for noise sensitive users from the commercial elements and surrounding road network. Having regard to the noise assessment submitted in support of the application and in the absence of any objections from the Council's Environmental Health Officer (Noise), the current application is considered to be acceptable, subject to appropriate conditions.

### Sustainability & Energy

Delivering sustainable development is the primary aim of NPPF. Sustainability and energy efficiency is also key theme of the adopted Core Strategy which seeks to ensure that new development is designed in way to reduce Co2 emissions and minimise climate change.

The application has been supported by an Energy Statement and Sustainability Checklist which consider the opportunities for the development to deliver the desired energy savings and Co2 reduction across the proposed development.

The comments of the Council's Director of Public Health are contained within the Consultees section of this report. The response is acknowledged and it is noted that they welcome the general approach towards the sustainable principles of the development.

In this respect the development has been designed to exceed Part L of the Building Regulations by 13% in accordance with Core Strategy Policy SD-3. As part of the sustainability measures associated with the development, a green roof is also proposed.

In light of the above the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of relevant energy and climate change Core Strategy Policies.

### Ecological Interests

The application has been accompanied by an Ecological Assessment. Noting that no objections have been raised to the proposal by the Council's Nature Development Officer, subject to the use of appropriate planning conditions, the development is considered to safeguard ecological interests and complies with relevant plan policies and the NPPF.

### Other Matters

The applicant has submitted a Crime Impact Statement, which is supportive of the proposals. It is noted that no fundamental objections have been received from Greater Manchester Police's Design for Security team. The proposed development is therefore considered to strike the right balance between security, design quality and accessibility as highlighted by Core Strategy Policy SIE-1.

In terms of waste management, further detailed discussions have continued between the applicant and Council Officers, resulting in waste storage and collection proposals which are considered to be fit for purpose.

The positive comments of the Council's public health officer are noted, particularly in respect of affordable housing provision, active travel promotion, ageing well, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements. Overall, the proposed development is considered to have a positive impact on public health and therefore is supported by local and national planning policy.

### Summary and Planning Balance

In conclusion, the scheme as proposed would deliver substantial regenerative benefits to a prominent site within the town centre. The re-development of the site would be the next step in delivering a high quality mixed use development in the town centre.

Whilst areas of concern have been identified within this planning report, particularly in respect of the absence of provision of formal and childrens recreational space

contributions and other highway related commuted sums, it is Officers clear belief that the many benefits of the proposed development far outweigh the non-payment of these financial contributions for viability reasons.

The scheme now before Members has been subject to extensive discussions, which ultimately has resulted in a submission which demonstrates a clear and convincing justification for the development in accordance with the NPPF. The scheme is considered to present significant regeneration benefits which have been discussed at length within this report of the scheme. These include, but are not limited to:-

- 1) The delivery of a high quality residential development, including affordable dwellings, which would deliver a significant number of residential units during a period of housing under supply;
- 2) An enhanced commercial / office offer in a Town Centre location;
- 3) The provision of areas of public realm / civic space designed to a high quality;
- 4) The ability to release a capital receipt to the college, in order to assist with the cross funding and deliverability of new, high quality learning facilities at the remaining college campus on land adjacent to the current application site, which have previously been granted planning permission in 2018.

The proposal will offer further scope for attracting inward investment and job creation into this part of Stockport. The site is also in a highly accessible location with good transport links and the proposal has potential to deliver an energy efficient development.

After careful consideration, and having regard to all material considerations and comments it is the opinion of Officers that any harm caused by the proposal, is on balance outweighed by the clear and substantial regenerative benefits of the re-development of this site. Furthermore, the proposed development pre-dominantly reflects the key principles of the NPPF in helping to deliver sustainable development, together with the need to deliver a sufficient supply of homes, building a strong and competitive economy and promoting healthy and safe communities.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant, subject to completion of a S106 Agreement / Unilateral Undertaking