

ITEM 3

Application Reference	DC/078326
Location:	St Thomas Hospital Shaw Heath Cale Green Stockport SK3 8BL
PROPOSAL:	Listed Building Consent - Redevelopment comprising demolition of buildings, repurposing of existing buildings, and erection of new buildings for a mix of uses comprising 68no. residential apartments and dwellings (Use Class C3) and 70no. bed care home (Use Class C2) with 372 sqm flexible commercial space (Use Class E); ancillary hard and soft landscaping, formation of a new vehicular access onto Hollands Mill Road and Royal George Street, vehicular and cycle parking, and associated works and infrastructure.
Type Of Application:	Listed Building Consent
Registration Date:	06.10.2020
Expiry Date:	01.12.2020
Case Officer:	Mark Jordan
Applicant:	Stockport Homes Group and Stockport Metropolitan Borough ...
Agent:	NJL Consulting

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Planning & Highways Regulations Committee.

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

Listed building consent is sought for works to the grade II listed former St Thomas' hospital complex in order to accommodate the re-development of the site.

The Listed Building Consent application now before Members forms part of the development as detailed in the planning report seeking full planning permission as part of application DC/078325, which is also on this Committee agenda.

The listed building consent works are as summarised:-

- 1) Building 1 – retention of 3 principal facades, with removal of rear elevation and internal structure, to deliver 18 apartments;

- 2) Building 2 – façade retention with small extension and internal works to provide 2 two storey mews properties;
- 3) Building 3 – Retention of all existing features and refurbishment to deliver 5 apartments;
- 4) Building 5 – Restoration of key features and internal works to provide 26 apartments;
- 5) Building 6 – Façade retention with demolition of rear elevation. Re-building works to provide 4 dwellings;
- 6) Demolition of Buildings 4, 7 and 8

In addition to the above, the application also includes the new build dwellings, the Academy of Living Well and all other associated works proposed as part of planning application DC/078325.

The drawings attached to this planning report represent the best way for Members to appreciate and consider the impact of the proposal.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site includes a rectangular shaped piece of land covering approximately 1.30 hectares.

The site currently comprises a number of vacant buildings of varying heights, all of which are associated with the former St Thomas's hospital that previously operated on the site. The hospital buildings ceased use in 2004 and have remained vacant since. A number of the buildings currently in situ are Grade II listed. In addition an electrical sub-station exists in the south-eastern corner of the site.

The north-eastern site boundary is defined by a pedestrian link forming part of Royal George Street, with the Stockport College campus buildings beyond. Flint Street forms the north-western site boundary, with a recently completed residential development immediately opposite, together with older dwellings and non-residential premises.

To the south west exists Shaw Heath, with low level flats directly opposite the site. Hollands Mill Road is included with the site and forms the south-eastern boundary, adjacent to which exists a dialysis centre and other commercial / light industrial uses.

Ground levels are predominantly flat across the site.

POLICY BACKGROUND

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

The Development Plan includes-

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review adopted 31st May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; &
- Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted 17th March 2011.

Saved policies of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review

HC1.3 – SPECIAL CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

HC1.4 – NEW USES FOR BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

CS8 SAFEGUARDING AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

SIE-3 PROTECTING, SAFEGUARDING AND ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT

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.

There are no SPGs or SPDs of relevance to this application.

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 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

DC/078325 – Full Application seeking planning permission for re-development comprising demolition of buildings, repurposing of existing buildings, and erection of new buildings for a mix of uses comprising 68no. residential apartments and dwellings (Use Class C3) and 70no. bed care home (Use Class C2) with 372 sqm flexible commercial space (Use Class E); ancillary hard and soft landscaping, formation of a new vehicular access onto Hollands Mill Road and Royal George Street, vehicular and cycle parking, and associated works and infrastructure.

Application currently un-determined and being considered on this same Committee agenda.

DC/068030 - Lawful Development Certificate. Repair work to Grade II Listed Building. Granted 24/01/18.

DC/067150 - Non Material Amendment to DC/060491. Granted 19/10/17.

DC/064072 Demolition of vacant hospital buildings – Listed building consent. Granted 02/02/2017.

DC/060491 - Demolition of vacant hospital buildings and construction of 59 dwellings. Granted 20/01/2017.

DC/042329 - The demolition of all curtilage listed buildings to make way for the erection of a new community hospital. Granted 16/12/09;

DC/042328 - Erection of a new community hospital (Class D1) with ancillary uses including a community cafe, pharmacy and community facilities with access, parking and associated works. Granted 16/12/09;

DC/040626 - Proposed Community Hospital. EIA not required 24/10/08;

DC/026536 – Change of use and redevelopment of existing buildings on St Thomas's Hospital Site for new educational facilities for Stockport College Granted 21/2/08.

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The application has been advertised in the press. The public were also notified of the application by way of 206 neighbour letters and multiple site notices posted around the edges of the application site. The consultation period has now expired.

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Two representations, including one from Stockport Heritage Trust, have been received supporting the proposed development on the following summarised grounds:

- 1) Definitely approve of the site being updated as has really been an eyesore since it was closed & the site was empty for years. Only concerns are for parking for residents during & after building work has commenced as well as environmental impact of the work;
- 2) The Trust is generally supportive of the scheme to refurbish and develop the site as a whole, but it does have a few reservations and suggestions;
- 3) The Trust welcomes the proposal to retain and reuse the main facades and chimney stacks of Building 1 (Union Offices) while constructing new accommodation behind the mass brick walls with stone and terracotta dressings. The Trust understands this technical and economic response to the building since it is in such a bad condition.
- 4) The Trust is enthusiastic about the proposal to repair and reuse Buildings 2 (Boys Workshops), 3 (Grade II Listed Administration Building), 5 (Grade II Listed Workhouse), 6 (Grade II Listed Dining Hall). It regrets but understands the plans to demolish the derelict Buildings 4 (Girls Workshops), 7 (Original Infirmary) and 8 (New Infirmary).
- 5) Building 1 (Union Offices). The Trust recommends that Council conditions are placed on the planning permission, requiring the developer to safeguard the preservation of the retained facades during demolition works,
- 6) The Trust welcomes the proposed retention of all five (5) chimney stacks that contribute greatly to the building's skyline silhouette.
- 7) Concerns over use of zinc coated metal strip roofing and the design of new dormers;
- 8) Absence of specific details on the submitted drawings;
- 9) Building 6, Dining Hall. No objections are raised generally to the partial demolition, repair and rehabilitation of this Grade II Listed Building along the lines described in the plans. However, the proposal to install chrome-coated metal chimney flues is an incongruous architectural conceit unworthy of the scheme;
- 10) Buildings 4, 7 and 8. The Trust raises no objections to the total demolition of these unlisted buildings within the curtilage of the historic site, due to their advanced state of deterioration.

- 11) Blocks 1-3 are of appropriate scale, massing and materials to complement the historic environment.
- 12) The Academy of Living Well is of a different order of magnitude and specialized design warranting a more ambitious architectural format. It forms a better foil to and barrier in front of the larger buildings to NE.
- 13) The newly proposed Entrance Gateway from Shaw Heath into the site, as currently depicted in the plans, is both crude and pedestrian.

One representation has been received objecting to the proposed development on the following summarised grounds:

- 1) The proposals are a positive approach to the area and we support the principle of this development for creating new homes for Stockport people and offering care in the community.
- 2) concerns in relation relate to parking and the potential loss of existing parking and servicing to other nearby premises.
- 3) Proposed parking does not appear to comply with Council parking standards;
- 4) Inaccuracies within the submitted Transport Assessment regarding on-street parking and TRO's
- 5) Covenants exist for nearby premises using existing parking bays;
- 6) The hammerhead designed to allow turning on Royal George Street because of the road closures in the area to facilitate the Stockport Colleges was not designed to allow vehicular access onto the St Thomas hospital site.
- 7) Planning breaches have resulted in turning areas being restricted
- 8) There is poor visibility when exiting Royal George Street onto Charlesworth Street due to the existing TRO's not being policed .This is made worse by unsuitable drainage and subsidence causing considerable ponding of water on both sides of the carriageway by the junction.
- 9) Increased road usage from the facility will cause even more traffic problems onto Charlesworth Street and the exit onto the A6. The bus stop and car parking bays on Charlesworth Street close to the junction with the A6 are extremely dangerous;
- 10) TRO's (need to be maintained, drop curbs located at the end of the hammer head to allow access to our nearby premises
- 11) The mayoral development plan for the regeneration of Stockport's town centre west is an extremely positive step.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Conservation & Heritage Officer: St Thomas Hospital is a complex of Grade II listed buildings originally constructed in 1841 to house the Stockport Union Workhouse.

The surviving buildings represent a good example of a workhouse built following the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. The principal ranges are relatively intact and their architecture and plan form expresses the draconian intentions of the Act, with late 19th and early 20th alterations made as the function of the site evolved. The principal elevations contribute positively to the street scene. The former Stockport Union Workhouse was constructed in 1841 to designs by local architect Henry Bowman, to provide separate accommodation and yards for 540 men, women, boys and girls, with workrooms, school rooms and dormitories. The complex comprises the 2-storey administration range, the central 4-storey accommodation range, 2-storey former kitchen and service range linked to rear 2-storey former infirmary range, perimeter 2-storey ranges or boundary walls, and 2-storey early 20th century Union Offices.

The current proposals have been subject to extensive pre-application discussion. It is acknowledged that the condition of two former hospital structures towards the rear (eastern) end of the site (indicated on the submitted plans as Buildings 7 and 8) has deteriorated to such an extent that repair and refurbishment is not a technically feasible proposition. Two further structures involve demolition works. For Building 1, which features external walls of robust Edwardian construction and provide a distinctive frontage to the site at the junction of Shaw Heath and Flint Street, it has been agreed that façade retention is the most appropriate solution, with the introduction of new internal floors enabling the building to provide residential accommodation over 3 levels, including a new roof but retaining the existing tall brick chimneys. The severe deterioration of the structure behind the façade is the result of a combination of neglect, vandalism and weather ingress and this has made it unsafe to enter. Building 4 is also visible from the site frontage but is of modest design and does not form part of the original workhouse complex. Its condition is poor, its architectural quality is very modest and its form means that it is not readily suitable for residential conversion. An important remaining element of the site is the network of boundary walls, originally provided to strictly control access into and out from the site via Shaw Heath. A significant proportion of these walls has survived, including railings to the Shaw Heath frontage, but it is acknowledged that the nature of the proposed use will inevitably require a degree of amendment to provide enhanced permeability for future occupiers and the public, as well as allowing for appropriate servicing arrangements for the site as a whole.

The cumulative impact of the harm to the heritage asset resulting from the demolition and alterations summarised above must be balanced against the benefits of finding a new viable use that will provide for the future preservation of the remaining historic buildings. This has required careful consideration of their potential for sympathetic conversion to a new use, taking opportunities to enhance and restore their architectural interest wherever possible and ensuring that new build elements respect the historic layout of the site, taking into account massing, form and materials. Subject to the points set out below, it is considered that this has been

achieved and will result in establishing a sustainable future for this important historic site, one that has been at severe risk of loss and decay for an extended period.

Whilst the current proposals consist of a combination of two different uses (residential for the historic buildings and a new care facility at the rear of the site accessed from Royal George Street), the design of the proposals provides for visual continuity, cohesion and a degree of social integration. Overall pedestrian permeability will be improved in and around the site and this will enable better public access to enjoy the architectural and historic interest of the retained buildings. The wider public and regeneration benefits of the scheme are acknowledged and provide sufficient justification for a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the site for the purposes of satisfying local and national planning policies, notably paras 193-196 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Outstanding matters relating to external materials, rooflight details, façade & chimney retention methodology; window/door design ; stonework restoration; external plant equipment, internal decorative plasterwork/joinery specification, exhibition space arrangements, phasing/contractual arrangements, clock restoration, chimney/flue, boundary walls / railings, hard and soft landscaping, cycle and refuse storage are capable of being dealt with via appropriate planning conditions.

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS): Previous archaeological work on the site has included building recording supported by a watching brief. I am satisfied that the proposed development does not threaten the known or suspected built or below ground archaeological heritage interest. On this basis there is no reason to seek to impose any archaeological requirements upon the applicant.

Historic England: On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant. It is not necessary for us to be consulted on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals.

The Victorian Society: No response received, therefore no objection.

Ancient Monuments Society: No response received, therefore no objection.

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: No response received, therefore no objection.

The Georgian Group: No response received, therefore no objection.

The Twentieth Century Society: No response received, therefore no objection.

ANALYSIS

The proposed development seeks Listed Building Consent for works in association with the development of planning application DC/078325. The proposed works would only be implemented if planning permission is granted for

the overall re-development scheme, and as such, the two applications are intrinsically linked. The proposed works are detailed earlier in this report.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting “special regard” will be given to the “desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.

The implication of the choice wording “special regard” is that these factors should be given additional weight in decision making and not simply the same weight as any other material consideration.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that 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. It then continues to say at paragraph 194 that any harm to or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 195 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that substantial harm or loss is outweighed by substantial public benefits 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.

Paragraph 196 states that where a proposal leads 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 securing its optimum viable use.

The application property is Grade II Listed, with list description and history reading as follows:

Description

Formerly the work house. 1841, by Bowman. 2 storeys in brick, now rendered, with rusticated quoins. Welsh slate roof. String cornice. Ends project, each with one hung sash window with glazing bars over double door of four panels beneath rectangular fanlight of 4 panels in doorway with plain pilasters with flat hood on consoles. The centre has 1-3-1 windows, hung sashes with glazing bars, the outer ones narrow. Chamfered stone band between storeys. 2 windows to ground floor without glazing bars flank modern door beneath rectangular fanlight with narrow flanking lights beneath shallow pediment on long consoles. 3 steps. Plinth.

Rear wing in courtyard of 4 and 3 storeys in red brick with Welsh slate roof. End pavilions of 3 windows with links of 3 storeys and 6 windows (some blocked) then block of 4 storeys and 3 windows, 1 window and 3 storeys, to canted centre block of 1-3-1 windows, with clock and campanile above with paired pilasters and lead cupola.

STOCKPORT LIST REVIEW 2005-07 PROPOSED AMENDED DESCRIPTION

Summary of Importance/Criteria Decision

The 1841 former Stockport Union Workhouse is a good example of a workhouse built following the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which was closely modelled on plans produced by Sampson Kempthorne in 1835.

The principal ranges are relatively intact and their architecture and plan form expresses the draconian intentions of the Act, with late 19th and early 20th alterations made as the function of the site evolved. The principal elevations contribute to the street scene.

Historic Asset Description

The former Stockport Union Workhouse was constructed in 1841 to designs by Henry Bowman, to provide separate accommodation and yards for 540 men, women, boys and girls, with workrooms, school rooms and dormitories. The complex comprises the 2-storey administration range, the central 4-storey accommodation range, 2-storey former kitchen and service range linked to rear 2-storey former infirmary range, perimeter 2-storey ranges or boundary walls, and 2-storey early 20th century Union Offices.

Administration range.

The 2-storey range is rendered brick with a Welsh slate roof, built in a symmetrical classical style, articulated by the end bays breaking forward. The central pedimented entrance has side lights and 20th century door, flanking plate glass sash windows, the pedimented end bays have doorways with flat canopies on brackets, the right hand doorway is blocked. Plain band to first floor, 12-pane sashes, central tri-partite sash. Boxed eaves. To the rear is a 2-storey late 19th century wing with sashes, shown on the 1890s OS map, and glazed late 20th century lean-to addition. Single-storey early 20th century additions to the south east.

The interior of the former ground floor waiting room retains part of a pilastered screen wall. The rear late 19th century staircase leads to the first floor former boardroom, now partly sub-divided, but retaining plaster cornices, 4-panelled doors and architraves.

Central accommodation range.

The 4-storey range is constructed of red brick, in Flemish bond, with hipped Welsh slate roofs. The plan consist of five pavilions linked with two short 3-storey ranges, the central block has canted corners and a cupola. The south side for women and girls and the north side for men and boys. The plain elevations have

mostly 4-pane sashes, with some small-pane sashes surviving to the rear and some blind openings, all with gauged brick lintels. The central west doorway has a bracketed cornice and transom light, other doorways are plain. Clockfaces on the upper floor of the west-facing central range and on the east-facing canted corners are visible from the rear yards. The pedimented square open cupola is domed, with a weathervane.

The plain interiors are little altered and the plan-form of ground floor day rooms, narrow staircases to upper landings and inter-connecting dormitories is largely intact. Walls are plastered, upper floors have exposed king-post roof trusses, stair-cases have stone treads, iron stick balusters and stone slab landings, with fittings including a ceramic landing sink, original boarded pine doors, some with graining, pivot-hung transom ventilators over doors, one blocked plain fireplace in a dormitory, a late 19th century marble fireplace with tiled surround in staff accommodation on second floor. Clock mechanism survives for all three upper floor clocks.

Former kitchen and service range.

1841 brick axial range linking central accommodation range to rear former infirmary range has been remodelled with in-filled roof valley and the addition of later 19th century single and 2-storey ranges with hipped roofs, used for female sick ward and men's dining room in c.1905.

Former infirmary range.

Brick 2-storey range, on east side of 1841 complex, is shown as "old hospital" on 1905 plan. Elevations have boarded doors with transom lights and 9-pane hopper windows or 4-pane sashes. The interior retains little altered plan-form of single west corridor with small rooms on east side, upper floor reached by four staircases and landings, two intact with stone staircases with iron stick balusters. 20th century additions to north and to centre of east elevation.

Perimeter ranges and boundary walls.

1841 single-storey perimeter ranges built in Flemish bond brick, partly survive on the north and south sides, with 20th century remodelling. The south-east external wall of the demolished wash house shown on the 1851 OS map survives as a boundary wall, and retains a blocked semi-elliptical cart entrance into the former women's yard. The 2-storey range to the north-west side of the former boys' yard has a relatively intact envelope with 4-pane sashes, some modified openings. The south east range to the girls' yard was remodelled early 20th century. The site of the demolished north-west range to the former men's yard, containing smithy and stables is now a car park.

Front boundary wall

The 1841 forecourt wall is constructed of red brick laid in Flemish bond, with weathered stone copings and spear-head iron railings. There are two chamfered square gate piers, with convex tops, one at the main entrance and another at the south west corner.

Early 20th century Union Offices.

The 2-storey classical-style building is first shown on the 1910 OS map and

occupies the north side of the front forecourt. It is built of bright red brick with a glazed brick plinth and stone details. The hipped roof is Welsh slate, with brick stacks. The symmetrical frontage is articulated by the slight projection of the central 5 bays which has a balustraded parapet, ground floor has channelled rustication in brick, first floor has brick pilasters, stone string courses and cornice. The central bay projects again; stone doorway below semi-circular headed canopy, double oak panelled doors and fanlight, first floor has tall round-arched window below stone pediment, UNION OFFICES in incised lettering. Ground floors windows are plate glass sashes, first floor windows are PVCu replacements. The returns are similar. The roof ridge is topped with a copper cupola vent.

The current proposals have been subject to extensive pre-application discussion. It is acknowledged that the condition of two former hospital structures towards the rear (eastern) end of the site (indicated on the submitted plans as Buildings 7 and 8) has deteriorated to such an extent that repair and refurbishment is not a technically feasible proposition. Two further structures involve demolition works. For Building 1, which features external walls of robust Edwardian construction and provide a distinctive frontage to the site at the junction of Shaw Heath and Flint Street, it has been agreed that façade retention is the most appropriate solution, with the introduction of new internal floors enabling the building to provide residential accommodation over 3 levels, including a new roof but retaining the existing tall brick chimneys. The severe deterioration of the structure behind the façade is the result of a combination of neglect, vandalism and weather ingress and this has made it unsafe to enter. Building 4 is also visible from the site frontage but is of modest design and does not form part of the original workhouse complex. Its condition is poor, its architectural quality is very modest and its form means that it is not readily suitable for residential conversion. An important remaining element of the site is the network of boundary walls, originally provided to strictly control access into and out from the site via Shaw Heath. A significant proportion of these walls has survived, including railings to the Shaw Heath frontage, but it is acknowledged that the nature of the proposed use will inevitably require a degree of amendment to provide enhanced permeability for future occupiers and the public, as well as allowing for appropriate servicing arrangements for the site as a whole.

The cumulative impact of the harm to the heritage asset resulting from the demolition and alterations summarised above must be balanced against the benefits of finding a new viable use that will provide for the future preservation of the remaining historic buildings. This has required careful consideration of their potential for sympathetic conversion to a new use, taking opportunities to enhance and restore their architectural interest wherever possible and ensuring that new build elements respect the historic layout of the site, taking into account massing, form and materials. It is considered that this has been achieved and will result in establishing a sustainable future for this important historic site, one that has been at severe risk of loss and decay for an extended period.

Matters relating to external materials, rooflight details, façade & chimney retention methodology; window/door design ; stonework restoration; external plant equipment, internal decorative plasterwork/joinery specification, exhibition

space arrangements, phasing/contractual arrangements, clock restoration, chimney/flue, boundary walls / railings, hard and soft landscaping, cycle and refuse storage are all capable of being dealt with via appropriate planning conditions.

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.

The wider public and regeneration benefits of the scheme are acknowledged and provide sufficient justification for a comprehensive approach to the re-development of the site for the purposes of satisfying local and national planning policies, notably paras 193-196 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

In respect of archaeological matters both GMAAS and the Council's Heritage Conservation Officer support the proposal, noting an understanding exists of the historical interest and archaeological potential of the site. In light of the above and in the absence of any objections from GMAAS, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of archaeological matters.

Having regard to the comments of the Council's Conservation Officer it is considered that the proposed development, subject to conditional control, would see any harm that would occur being outweighed by the public benefit the scheme would bring.

To conclude, in the absence of any objections from Historic England, the Council's Conservation Officer or other consultees, the current proposal is considered to be acceptable and would comply with both national and local planning policy.

There are no matters of weight which would justify refusal of the application.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant.