

Cannock Chase District Council

Planning Committee

11th January 2023

Officer Update Sheet

**CH/22/0352: Former Royal British Legion, 21 Stafford Road, Cannock
Proposal: Redevelopment of site to provide 17 room house of multiple
occupation**

Following compilation of the report for the Committee agenda, the following additional representation was received:

Further representation:

The appeal for the previous application was dismissed not only because of the height of the building, but it also refers to the closeness of the building to the pavement.

The passage below is taken from Planning Inspectorate report:

' Also, it would be adjacent to the pavement while other buildings in Park Road tend to be set of from the footway. As such the building would stand out as an overly prominent development in the street scene.'

Furthermore, a report entitled 'Cannock Chase Heritage Impact Assessment commissioned by Cannock Council in 2020 compiled by AECOM concludes that the site could be enhanced and provides the recommendations below.'

MAXIMISING ENHANCEMENT AND MITIGATING HARM

Maximising Enhancement
The current building on the site is a 19 th century construction but of low significance. The gable end of the building presents an almost blank elevation to Park Road and the entrance on Stafford Road has been removed. The single storey extension on Park Road to the south of the original back addition of the building pushes forward onto the street, increasing impact on the grade II listed Congregational Chapel. Development on the site that included the demolition of the single storey extension and landscaping of the space, opening up of the blank gable end, reinstatement of the entrance on Stafford Road and removal of the building's render back to brick would enhance the setting of the conservation area, the Congregational Chapel and the Manse.
Mitigating Harm
Development involving the demolition of all structures on the site would be acceptable if it were moved back from Park Road and Stafford Road with landscaping introduced between it and the roads. Such development should only be considered at a height of two storeys in red brick in tune with the existing context further north on the west side of Stafford Road.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The existing building on the site is of low significance but if it were partially demolished and restored it would have the potential to contribute to the significance of the conservation area and the grade II listed Congregational Chapel. New development on the site would have a low impact on these assets if it were moved back from the current building line, restricted to two storeys in height and carried out in the prevailing local material of red brick. The existing buildings on Stafford Road are well spaced apart and the site could accommodate a range of architectural styles. For the same reason, strict adherence to the existing roof line and window spacing would not be necessary.

All the buildings in Park Road stand back from the pavement, many with traditional style railings, we even have landscaping and trees and this is not coincidental, but caring planning by a local developer familiar with Park Road (and previous buildings) who cared enough to incorporate the new buildings with their surroundings. Now is an opportunity to re-instate the character and setting of the original building as recommended in the council's own Heritage Impact Assessment and the closeness of the building to the pavement is also specifically referred to by the Planning Inspector. ' Policy CP3 of the Cannock chase Local Plan aims amongst other things to ensure development is well related to its surroundings' (extract from the Planning Inspectors Report).

Not only does this site form part of the towns early agricultural roots, but the 19th Century residential building itself has contributed to the social history of our town over the years. The previous application had a condition to install a heritage board.

The condition read:

“The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a scheme for the provision of an interpretive panel outlining the historical development of this part of Cannock, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the works comprising the approved scheme have been completed. Reason In order to better reveal the historical significance of this part of Cannock Town Centre in accordance with the NPPF.”

Why has a similar condition not been placed on this application?

This is an important site in a prominent position on the edge of the Conservation area and deserves proper consideration in respect of its appearance not only of the proposed building but the character of Park Road (formerly known as Simm Lane) and its history. This was reinforced by the Planning Inspector.

Residents in Cannock care about the history of our town and its appearance for future generations now is an opportunity to reinstate the original setting of a proposed new building to enhance the character of the area.’

Officer Response

Firstly, in order to appreciate the Planning Inspector’s comments, they must be read from within the context stated in the appeal decision for CH/20/026 below:

‘However, its Park Road elevation would have a 2 storey high double gable whereas the side extension to the rear of the existing building is single storey. Due to this increase in height, the proposal would be markedly more prominent and visually imposing than the existing building when seen from Park Road. Also, it would be adjacent to the pavement while other buildings in Park Road tend to be set off the footway. As such, the building would stand out as an overly prominent development in the street scene.’

The building line point is noted, however, the inspector dismissed the scheme due to the increased height of the two storey double gable design proposed by the scheme. At the time it was considered, the planning inspector did not refuse the scheme based on the footprint, building line, or siting of the proposed replacement building which is similar to that of the existing building.

With regard to the second point raised relating to the Cannock Chase Heritage Impact Assessment, these are recommendations suggested for mitigating harm to the Town Centre Conservation area, Grade II Listed Chapel, heritage assets. However, the Planning Inspector decided that the Town Centre Conservation Area and Listed building were located sufficiently far enough away from the application site, so as to not cause harm to the designated heritage assets. The appeal was dismissed on the impact of the double gable design and height of the scheme, which was found to be unacceptable upon the character and appearance of the street scene in Stafford Road and Park Road.

Furthermore, it is considered that setting back the proposed new building from both elevations on Park Road and Stafford Road would result in such limited application site area for development potential, that the site would become unviable and would be left to deteriorate for a number of years more, which on balance, would most likely cause an increased detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the local area.

With regard to the final point made regarding a heritage board condition, this could be considered and applied, if Members and the applicant are agreeable at the Planning Committee Meeting.

As such, the information provided does not alter the officer's view and recommendation to approve, subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement to secure a contribution to mitigate recreation impacts upon Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation equivalent to 4 x No. dwellings, and the conditions as detailed within the report.

CH/21/0476 Land Off Girton Road, Cannock

Following compilation of the Committee Agenda, it is noted that the agenda makes reference to planning application reference CH/22/0476. Your Officers confirm that this is incorrect and the reference should read CH/21/0476 as per the Officer report within the Agenda.