

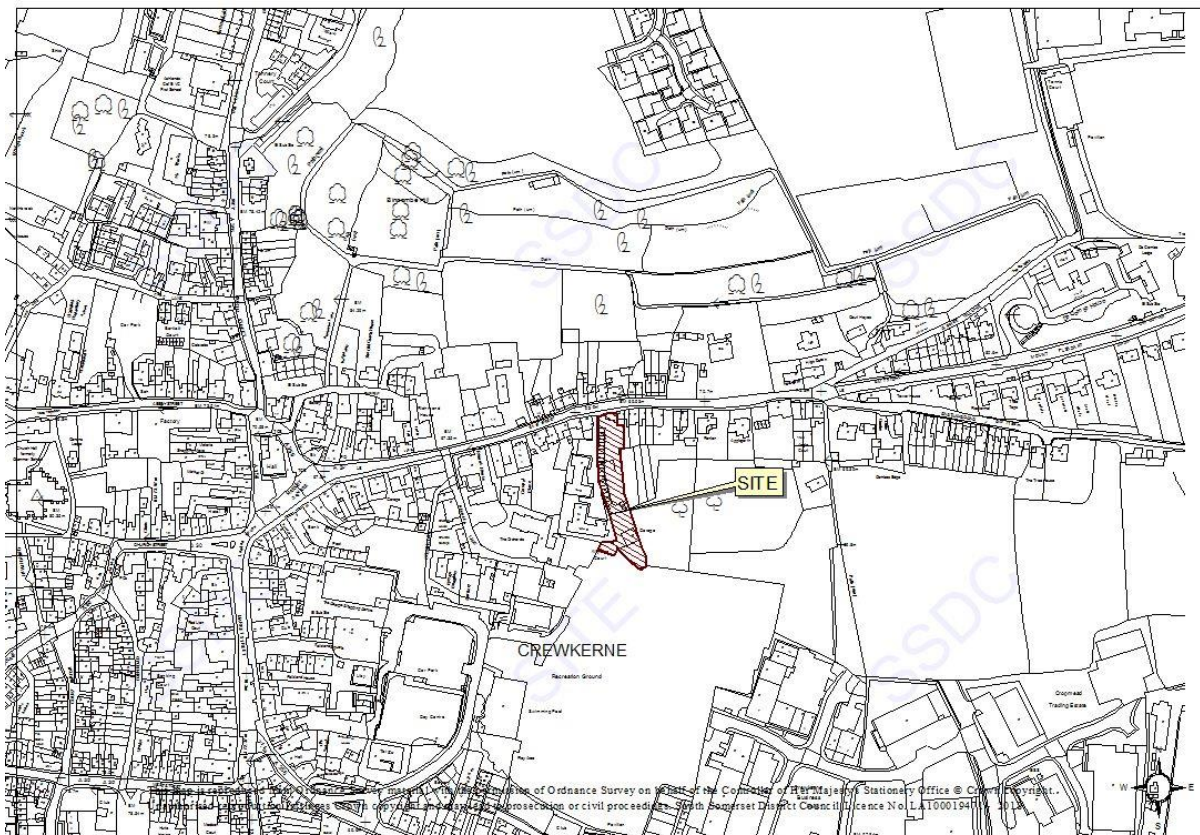
Officer Report On Planning Application: 18/00754/FUL

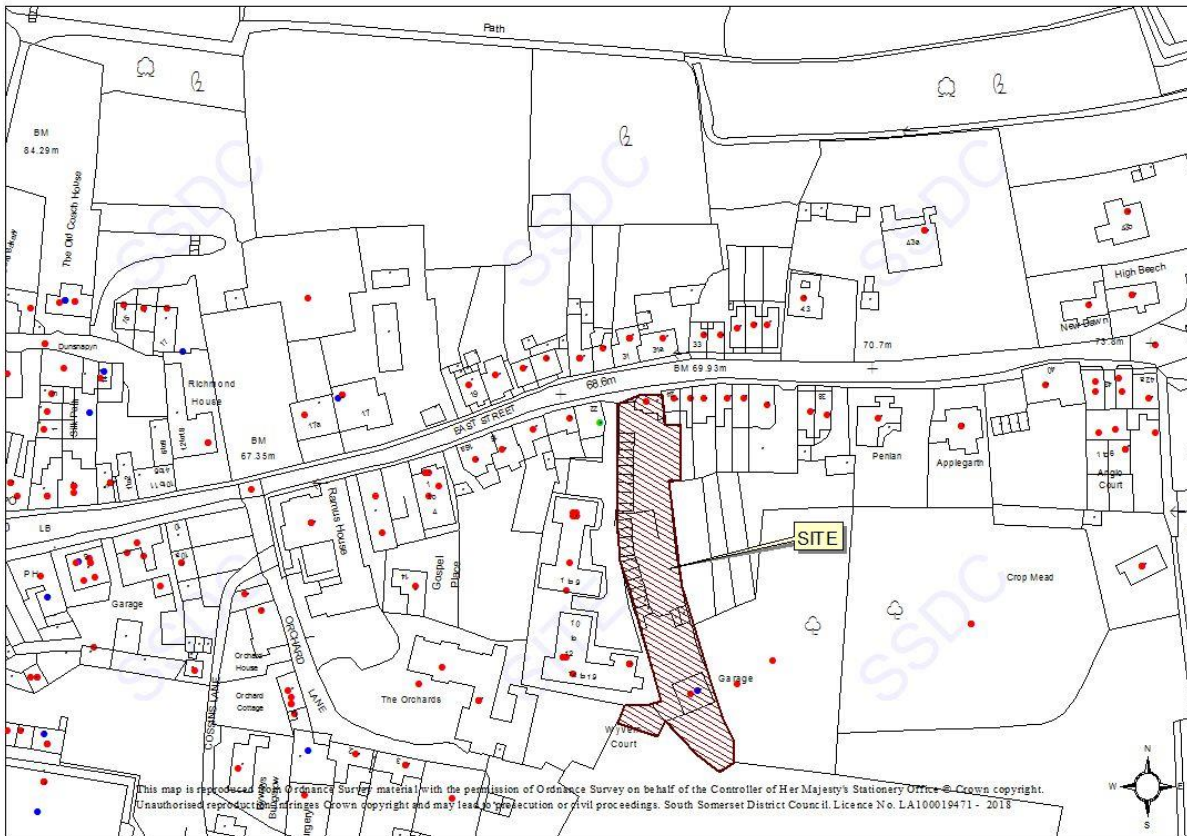
Proposal :	Demolition of existing buildings and the change of use of site to a tarmac 'pay and display' car park for 60 vehicles to include lighting columns.
Site Address:	Millers Garage 22A East Street Crewkerne
Parish:	Crewkerne
CREWKERNE TOWN Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr Marcus Barrett Cllr Mike Best Cllr Angie Singleton
Recommending Case Officer:	Andrew Gunn Tel: (01935) 462192 Email: andrew.gunn@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	12th June 2018
Applicant :	South Somerset District Council
Agent: (no agent if blank)	
Application Type :	Major Other f/space 1,000 sq.m or 1 ha+

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This application is referred to Area West Committee as the District Council is the applicant and owns the majority of the land.

SITE DESCRIPTION





The site is located on the southern side of East Street, Crewkerne, on the former Millers Garage site. The site is currently vacant with a number of redundant buildings and structures connected with its former use. These contain the existing showroom which sits on East Street, a number of garage blocks running throughout the site and a workshop towards the southern end of the site. The site adjoins a private retirement residential complex known as Wyvern Court to the west, residential dwellings either side of the access to the north, a field running along most of the eastern boundary and the Crewkerne recreation ground to the south.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks consent to demolish all of the current buildings and structures on site and the construction of a long stay car park in Crewkerne, providing 60 spaces. The supporting statement submitted with the application states that the South Somerset Car Parking Strategy identifies a shortfall of long stay parking in the town. In 2015, the District Council approved a recommendation to purchase the Millers Garage site, and subject to planning permission being granted, for a change of use to a public car park.

Access into the site will be from both East Street and South Street with access for the latter being provided via a new 2 way section of road at the northern end of the Henhayes car park. This will allow vehicles to enter the new car park if Henhayes is full rather than having to travel back through the town and via the East Street access. Pre-application discussions with the County Highway Authority were held and they indicated no objection to this arrangement. Moreover, that the South Street junction has the capacity to deal with the additional traffic. Engineering measures will be put in place (alligator teeth) to stop vehicles from exiting onto East Street with traffic calming measures to deter a potential 'rat run' scenario through the car park on to South Street.

Much of the current site surface is covered with a mix of tarmac and concrete with some grassed areas. The car park site will be surfaced with porous tarmac with drainage of surface water through existing

sewers along with the construction of new soakaways and gullies. Landscaping will be provided and the site will be illuminated with 5 metre columns fitted with 60w LED units.

HISTORY

There have been a number of applications dating back to the 1960's in connection with the former garage use. Of interest is the permission granted in 1965 for change of use of land to a car park. This permission was later renewed in 1968 and 1971.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise,

Relevant Development Plan Documents

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted 2015)
SD1 - Sustainable Development
TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development
EQ2 - General Development
EQ3 - Historic Environment
EQ4 - Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework
Core Planning Principles
Chapter 2 - Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres
Chapter 12- Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

South Somerset Car Parking Strategy

CONSULTATIONS

Crewkerne Town Council: (original comments April 2018)

Councillors were concerned that the application lacked some essential details. In particular, they would like clarification of the following design aspects:

- Councillors are very concerned about the potential for the car park to turn into a "rat run". They would like to understand exactly what measures are to be put in place to avoid this.
- The arrangements for car park signage.
- For the adjoining strip of land between the new car park and the existing Henhayes car park, is this all to be tarmac? The plan suggests that a street light is to be erected on this strip and there appears to be some shrubs on the plan.
- There are several trees on the Town Council's land, which closely border the old Millers garage site. In fact these are shown on the plan. Clearly, at least some of these trees will need to be removed in order to lay down a connecting strip of tarmac to join the two car parks. It would be useful to understand which trees are required to be removed.

The Town Council elected to defer making comments on the application, pending clarification of the above points.

Officer comment:

Following receipt of the above comments, the case officer asked for and received the following reply

from the Council's engineer:

The car park will be accessed from East Street but also from South Street. However, from East Street this will be restricted by an 'alligator teeth' arrangement to allow access only.

There will also be three traffic calming ramps along the run of the car park. We believe this will prevent the 'rat run' concerns.

The ticket on egress and a barrier would require considerable infrastructure requirements and would be out of sync with our current operating model of pay and display car parks.

The connecting strip between Henhayes and the new car park will be kerbed and tarmac surfaced.

There are a number of trees that will need to be removed to provide the link with Henhayes. These are shown on the attached plan but it is believed they will be around 14 in number. We will of course minimise this but we need to be mindful of future damage by roots of the surfacing.

Crewkerne Town Council: (additional comments received May 2018)

At the Town Council meeting last week, Councillors expressed the following concerns over the application:

- Councillors remain very concerned that insufficient consideration had been given to ensuring that the car park does not become a short cut to South Street.
- SSDC should consider utilising "no through road" signage combined with cameras, to deter use of the car park as a short cut.
- Concern over noise generated by the crocodile teeth.
- Further detail required of the lighting, in particular the light shrouding arrangements.
- Concern that the low height of the wall between the car park and Wyvern Court would not be high enough to prevent people from sitting on it.

Officer comment: Following the TC comments, the Council's engineer replied as follows:

I believe we have given consideration and that the traffic calming will deter all but the most determined. It will effect become self-policing but as we have said, it will remain under review and if it becomes a problem we will look at measures as appropriate.

The no through road signage would be impractical because if it is no through road how do they get out? How would cameras work if we could not enforce because the only route out is through South Street?

The crocodile teeth are not normally noisy in operation and we have positioned them so vehicles will traverse them straight. They will be inspected and maintained regularly so we are not envisaging significant noise.

The lights are of the sort commonly used as LED lighting and the technology directs the light more efficiently towards the car park.

Not sure from what side the concern is but the wall will be higher on the car park side due to the relative levels. Again we will review if this becomes a problem.

Landscape Officer:

The application for 60 parking spaces is at last with us. It is disappointing that potentially larger and more comprehensive schemes that better juxtapose with adjacent land have not materialised, such that this proposal is a single, rather utilitarian alignment, with little scope for landscape treatment that is fitting

for its location within the setting of the town's conservation area. The access off East Street does lay within the conservation area; hence it is essential that treatments and material use are appropriate to the historic environment. Within the site, it will be essential that bands of planting are introduced running across the grain of the car park, to ensure that view of the long north-south lines of parked cars are softened and broken-up. A new soft east boundary treatment will also be essential, to visually contain the parking area. These details should be offered pre-determination, to ensure landscape and material mitigation is appropriate to context.

You will be aware that during the past 15 years, the conservation team has looked at a number of options that provide a two-way connection from East Street to South Street, either via the Henhayes edge and the road by Waitrose to the South Street junction; or to link with Cropmead, facilitated by additional development to the east of this application site to facilitate a road link. Either option offers that essential second route through the town, to improve vehicular permeability, and to avoid the prospect of impasse within the town when there is a traffic incident in Market Street. However this scheme might be received, for the good of the town's future growth and related urban design, I would urge both officers and the local politicians to ensure that approval of this scheme does not compromise the possibility of this two-way link coming forward in the future, as a remedy for the town's traffic problems, and to avoid a continued dependency upon the current sole route through the town.

Conservation Officer:

You will be aware that the northern part of the site lies within the conservation area, the rest borders it. The site has been previously developed with a minster stone building onto East Street, and various concrete garages to the west boundary, with a steel framed shed to the south.

To the east of the site is a field, to the south playing fields, and a poor modern development to the west (in the conservation area). To the north the building facing onto the road is on the east side with two entrances, one to the site, being together on the west.

Opposite the site is a listed building, No 31, and to the west on the south side of the road is a row of listed buildings. Further to the east is the curtilage of the grade II* No 17 with its II* listed boundary walls onto the road.

Any development here must take into account our statutory duties under section 66, setting of the listed buildings, and section 72, duty to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area.

The proposal is to remove all the buildings from the site and form an access to a new public car park which runs south in the site and connects to the existing car park to the south.

The building at the front of the site is of some interest, being of minster stone it will be 20th Century and the design would appear to make it 1930s. Other buildings on the site are mid to late 20th Century and are of no special interest. None of the buildings are considered to be heritage assets in themselves, and could be removed.

The character of the conservation area is of buildings that on the back of the pavement with any openings being narrow and informal. The effect of removing the building and forming a new central access with 1m high walls set back will result in a wide opening in the otherwise built up frontage which would result in my view to a street scene which is a noticeable change and cause slight harm to the conservation area and the setting of the listed building.

It is for you and the Council to balance the public benefit against the harm, but I do feel that there is room for improvement by bringing the 1m high walls to the back of the radii to the rear of the pavement. These walls should be natural stone (Crewkerne or the Sherborne equivalent - not Ham Stone) laid to course and pointed in lime with an appropriate capping (not cement in a low D). Tall planting (trees) to the rear of the wall with naturally enclose the opening further. The height restrictor bar should be carefully

designed, and whilst the top may need to be yellow, the rest should be dark colour and perhaps a none standard design such as below.

I would also agree with the Landscape architects comments on the need to soften the entire development, and you should also consider how intrusive the lighting is at this time.

County Highways:

I have now reviewed the plans for the proposed car park to be accessed from East Street, Crewkerne (planning reference 18/00754/FUL) and had the opportunity to visit the site to understand the likely effects on the existing public highway.

I note that the proposal is to maintain one way operation into the car park from East Street, with exit provided through the existing Henhayes car park and its access. The Highway Authority has no objection to the principle of this arrangement, but maintaining this one-way operation of the northern access, to prevent vehicles entering A30 East Street to the north, will be essential as acceptable visibility is unlikely to be achievable to allow vehicles to safely egress. A suitable condition should be included on any planning consent to ensure there is no egress onto A30 East Street from the proposed car park.

The current design does not provide suitable space for vehicles to turn at the northern end of the car park, and drivers may be encouraged to continue northwards onto East Street. Suitable turning facilities should be provided to ensure vehicles can safely turn at the northern limit of the car park.

The proposals do include 'Alligator teeth' to prevent traffic exiting northwards from the car park, but the design of these should be robust enough to minimise the need for ongoing maintenance (bearing in mind the risk of abuse of the one way arrangements should any maintenance or repairs be outstanding). A condition should be imposed to ensure suitable measures are installed and maintained to prevent vehicles exiting the car park onto A30 East Street.

There is a risk of the car park being used as a 'rat-run' to avoid delays within the town centre, and the car park layout, including any traffic calming measures, should be such that this is discouraged as far as possible and to ensure speeds are kept appropriately low within the car park itself.

County Archaeologist:

No objection on archaeological grounds.

Crime prevention Design Advisor:

- I have concerns that this proposal will create a short cut for vehicles to avoid the heavy traffic experienced, backing up the A30. This could lead to conflict with pedestrians using the lower carparks and create pressure on the traffic leaving the shopping areas and the South Street junction
- Please ensure that the gap between the wall and any bollards is less than 1.2 metre. To prevent vehicle access across the footway back onto the A30 East Street
- Stone walls to have a hostile topping (Uneven topping such as Cock & Hen) to prevent being used as seating

Environmental Health Officer:

No objection raised subject to a condition to deal with contamination if found during construction.

REPRESENTATIONS

7 letters/emails have been received with 5 supporting the principle but raising some concerns/points and 2 objecting.

Comments received are as follows:

- Welcome the car park and access to the car park only from East street

- Seek reassurance that the lighting will not be intrusive to neighbouring properties
- Sought advice regarding parking permits
- A brownfield site suitable for a car park.
- Link between 2 car parks should be narrower to allow for planting.
- Provision of car park should be linked to the introduction of a one way system outgoing on North Street and entrance from East Street allowing a natural flow of incoming traffic towards the car park.
- An opportunity to provide coach parking in the town
- Car park will be asset to the town.

Those objecting raised the following points:

- Traffic heavy in East Street and vehicles will likely have to wait to gain access
- Access from East Street through Henhayes to South Street has the potential to become a 'rat run' - a ticketed barrier on exit should be installed, rather than pay /display.
- Lighting would have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Loss of privacy to adjacent occupiers
- Proposed boundary between Wyvern Court and site should be a solid wall to similar height as current garages
- Proposed number of spaces too high and will create manoeuvring issues
- Should allow 2 way access onto East Street with a roundabout to slow down traffic on East Street.
- Loss of area of amenity space to create link road.
- A back door bypass to the town centre - should be a pedestrian link only.
- Concerned about the level of noise generated by the use of alligator teeth and speed humps
- Need to prevent construction workers blocking entrances/parking spaces.

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development:

The site is located close to Crewkerne town centre on land formerly used as a car repair business. The site currently contains a number of redundant garages and workshop buildings, along with a showroom on the site frontage (East Street). Given its current brownfield status and location, it is considered that the principle of redevelopment of this site is acceptable.

Need for a long stay car park.

South Somerset's Car Parking Strategy identifies a shortfall of long stay parking in the town. In 2015, the District Council approved a recommendation to purchase the Millers Garage site, and subject to planning permission being granted, for a change of use to a public car park. No-one has questioned the need for the car park during the consultation for this application. Thus, it is considered that the need for the car park has been justified.

Highways

Based on the comments received from the Town Council and those local residents who wrote in, a key concern/issue was that the proposal would result in the provision of a 'rat run' from the entrance in East Street, through Henhayes, and onto South Street. It is acknowledged that traffic passing through the town can be very busy with queues forming along East Street and into the town centre. Thus some vehicle users may be tempted to use the car park as an alternative route to South Street. In order to deter this from occurring, the proposal includes 3 traffic calming ramps within the car park. A suggestion has been made to install a barrier system upon exit. On asking the engineer about this option, the advice given was that this would require considerable infrastructure requirement and would not be in line with the Council's current operating model of pay and display car parks.

The Highway Authority has not objected to the entry only option at East Street but have requested that measures are in place to prevent exit onto East Street. In addition, they have raised the 'rat run' concern and seek appropriate traffic calming measures to deter this activity. Moreover, they have not raised any objection or concern about the increased use of the South Street Junction. It is accepted that it won't be possible to stop every road user from using this as an alternative route. However, with the traffic calming measures in place, it is considered that this would act as an appropriate deterrent. In addition, the operation of the car park will be kept under review and the Council would look at appropriate measures should this become an issue.

The option of making the East Street entrance 2-way has been fully explored by the Council. However, without being able to secure adequate visibility upon egress, this would not be acceptable in highway safety terms. Comment has also been received about additional development/road proposals for the town that may require use of this site as a road link. However, those proposals are not currently being put forward and the merits of this proposal need to be assessed. Moreover, it is not considered that this car park scheme would compromise any adjacent scheme coming forward provided all of the necessary highway and any other requirements could be secured.

Conservation Area/ Setting of Listed Buildings.

Most of the site, apart from the southernmost section, is located within the Conservation Area. A listed building is located opposite the proposed entrance on East street with a further listed building located to the west of the site entrance but not adjacent to the application. The site is currently redundant with a number of disused buildings, none of which are particularly attractive nor preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Indeed, it is considered that the removal of these buildings would improve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Whilst the Conservation officer has no objection to the scheme, he did conclude that slight harm would be caused by the removal of the ex-showroom building and the creation of a wider opening than at present in order to provide the vehicular access. It is accepted that this is a change to the current character of this part of the Conservation Area. Constructing a 1 metre high boundary wall following the rear line of the pavement as suggested would help narrow the widening caused by the new vehicular entrance. This can be conditioned accordingly. On this basis, it is considered that the public benefit of the scheme outweighs the slight harm caused to the setting of the Conservation Area

In terms of the impact on listed buildings, due to their location in relation to the proposed development, it is not considered that either the removal of the existing buildings or the works associated with the new development would harm their setting.

Impact on residential amenity

Concern has been raised by some local residents about the adverse harm that would be caused by the proposed car park, in particular noise and intrusive lighting. Lighting columns with a height of 5 metres are proposed throughout the car park site to provide a safe environment for users of the car park. However, it is important to ensure that the lights do not cause adverse harm to neighbouring occupiers. The lights to be used will be 60Watt LED units which are often used in car parks. They will be designed to direct light more efficiently into the car park rather than spreading elsewhere beyond the site. On this basis, it is considered that no adverse harm would be caused by the proposed lighting. Specific details of the lighting design will be conditioned accordingly. It should be added however, that as the Council will manage the car park, any issues that may be raised about the lighting can be assessed and any appropriate remedial measures taken by the Council.

Concern has also been raised about potential noise created by the proposed use. Whilst it is accepted that there would be the usual noise associated with a car park use, it is not considered that this would be so adverse as to warrant refusal. It is also important to note that the site has and could still have a commercial use with the potential for greater noise generating activities and uses. Some concern has been raised about the noise that may be generated by the use of alligator teeth at the entrance from East

Street. These are not considered to be noisy in operation and will be positioned so that vehicles will traverse them from a straight angle. These will be inspected and maintained regularly. On this basis, it is not considered that the use of the alligator teeth should give rise to adverse noise.

One point was raised about the boundary treatment along the western side of the development, adjacent to Wyvern Court. Much of this is currently formed by the rear walls of the garages which are to be demolished. However, it is proposed to retain the rear walls of the garages as a boundary wall with replacement walling where there may be structural deficiencies. This would assist with providing a visual screen and reduce noise levels to the adjacent residents.

Landscape

In visual terms, the current site when viewed especially from the recreation ground is particularly unattractive with its range of redundant garages and workshops. The removal of those would provide an enhancement to the local landscape. However, the view of the site is currently screened by a row of Beech trees along the southern boundary. A number of these will need to be felled to provide the link road between the new and existing car parks. In this case, there is no other available option. Therefore, as per the Landscape Officer's advice, it is important that appropriate bands of planting are introduced within the car park, to ensure that the view of parked cars are softened and broken-up, plus a soft east boundary treatment. Planting has been shown within the car park and along the eastern boundary. A fully detailed landscape plan will be conditioned accordingly.

Concern has been raised at the loss of a section of the recreation ground. It is accepted that a small area of the current recreation ground will be lost in the far northwest corner to provide the link road. In this case, the link road can only be formed across a section of the recreation ground. It is considered that there is no other option and the greater public benefit to the town of the car park outweighs the harm caused by the loss of a small area of the recreation ground.

SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATION

Not applicable to this application.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant permission.

01. The proposed development would make a significant contribution to meeting the identified long stay car parking needs in Crewkerne, would not adversely harm the amenity of adjacent occupiers, would provide a safe means of vehicular and pedestrian access and the public benefit attributed to the provision of the car park would outweigh the slight harm caused to the setting of the Conservation Area. The proposal is in accord with Policies SD1, TA5, EQ2, EQ3 and EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan, the Core Planning Principles and Chapters 2 and 12 of the NPPF and the South Somerset Car Parking Strategy.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing Numbers: AW/009-21, AW/009-23 and AW/009-24.

Reason: For the purpose of clarity and in the interests of proper planning.

03. The car park hereby approved shall not be first brought into use until details of the boundary treatment along the whole length of the western boundary and the walling to be erected on the rear side of the new pedestrian paths at the site entrance from East Street, has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once agreed and constructed the walls shall be permanently retained and maintained.

Reason: To protect the amenity of adjacent occupiers and the setting of the Conservation Area in accord with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. The lighting columns to be installed within the car park shall be located as shown on the approved plan. The bulkhead lighting system to be installed shall be as per the submitted details i.e. the Appollo LED 60 watt light. Once installed, there shall be no change to these agreed details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of adjacent occupiers to accord with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

05. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include planting along the eastern boundary, indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development, as well as details of any changes proposed in existing ground levels; all planting, seeding, turfing or earth moulding comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the area to accord with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

06. No construction work or construction deliveries shall take place outside the hours of 08.00-18.00 Monday to Friday, 08.00 - 14.00 hours on Saturdays with none on Sundays or Bank/Public holidays.

Reason: To protect residential amenity to accord with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

07. Before the development hereby permitted is commenced, surface water drainage details to serve the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and such approved drainage details shall be completed and become fully operational before the development hereby permitted is first brought into use. Following its installation such approved scheme shall be permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development is satisfactorily drained to accord with the NPPF.

08. In the event that any signs of pollution such as poor plant growth, odour, staining of the soil, unusual colouration or soil conditions, or remains from the past industrial use, are found in the soil at any time when carrying out the approved development it must be reported in writing within 14 days to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The LPA will then consider if the findings have any impact upon the development and development must be halted on that part of the site. If the LPA considers it necessary then an assessment of the site must be undertaken in accordance with BS10175. Where remediation is deemed necessary by the LPA a remediation scheme must be

submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA and then implemented in accordance with the submitted details.

Reason: To protect the health of future occupiers of the site from any possible effects of contaminated land, in accordance with the NPPF.

09. The car park use hereby approved shall not be first brought into use until the details of and the construction of a suitable turning area has been provided to ensure vehicles can safely turn at the northern end of the car park.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety to accord with Policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.
