



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Planning Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 31 May 2011
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2011/0305 Conversion of a single dwelling into 3no. one bedroom and 1no. two bedroom flats at 22 Watkin Terrace

WARD: Castle

APPLICANT: Mr. C. Burnhope
AGENT: Stimpson Walton Bond Architects

REFERRED BY: Cllr. T. Clarke
REASON: Concerns over density of area

DEPARTURE: No

Note: this application was one transferred from WNDC on 1st April 2011.

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 APPROVAL with conditions for the following reasons:

The proposed conversion to four flats will not cause substantially more harm to the amenity of the area than the permitted uses of the house, will bring a vacant property back into use and will not prejudice the established character of the area in accordance with Policies H24, H3, H6, E26 and H21 of the Northampton Local Plan and PPS3 – Housing.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Conversion of single dwelling into three one-bedroom flats at basement, ground floor and first floor levels, and one two-bedroom flat at second floor/attic level, with no external alterations to the property.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 22 Watkin Terrace is a three-storey house in a row of 25 similar properties dating from the mid 1800's within a residential area, with the Racecourse

adjacent to the north. The property has rear bay windows, a rear balcony and a rear garden on the north side overlooking the Racecourse, and to the front it faces directly onto the street, with light wells and railings. The site is within the Kingsley Conservation Area and this property is currently vacant.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Planning approval for conversion to two flats in 1963. Information from agent that property has been used as a House in Multiple Occupation for seven people (without planning approval) prior to this application.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 National Policies:

PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3 – Housing

PPS5 – Historic Environment

PPG13 – Transport

5.3 Northampton Borough Local Plan

E19 – Implementing new development

E20 – New Development

E26 – Conservation Areas

H6 – Housing Development within Primarily Residential Areas

H21 & H23 – Conversion to flats

H24 – Basement flats

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Northamptonshire County Parking Standards SPG 2003

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6. CONSULTATIONS / REPRESENTATIONS

Consultations: (both those received by NBC and WNDC)

- 6.1 **NBC Built Conservation** – no objections as there are no proposed alterations to the exterior of the property, therefore impact on the Conservation Area will be neutral.
- 6.2 **NBC Environmental Protection** – no objections to principle of proposal, but recommends that any approval is subject to a condition requiring the submission and implementation of a scheme detailing arrangements for storage of refuse and recycling.

- 6.3 **Town Centre Manager** – no comments
- 6.4 **NCC Highways** – referred to Standing Advice. Covered secure cycle parking is to be provided and secured by condition prior to first occupation of the development.
- 6.5 **Northamptonshire Police** – no objections, but recommended various security measures as Watkin Terrace suffers from rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour, criminal damage to buildings and some burglaries.

Representations: (both those received by NBC and WNDC)

- 6.6 Representations have been received from **24, 28 & 44 Watkin Terrace; 51 Beaconsfield Terrace; 32 (2 letters), 46 & 50 Watkin Terrace; 25, 33 & 57 Beaconsfield Terrace**. These letters raises objections that centred on the following:
- character of the conservation area will be further lost;
 - insufficient parking causing a big problem, unsustainable situation, have received parking tickets as had to double-park; unsafe situation for a woman not able to park near her residence;
 - problem of household waste from multi-occupancy dwellings left on street, due to insufficient space for rubbish to be stored, causing risk to health, vermin problems and will be detrimental to resident's amenity.
 - fly-tipping on street of abandoned items by tenants/landlords as tenants change in multi-occupancy dwellings;
 - noise pollution with loud music blaring at night;
 - anti-social behaviour with people in the street who don't care about the environment or community;
 - parking congestion in area/street will cause difficulty for emergency vehicles;
 - close-knit community in the street is not contributed to by occupants of rented flats on a short tenure, and increasing number of flats will upset balance;
 - over-development of the street.

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main issues to consider are the acceptability of the property for conversion to flats and its impact on the character of the area, and the potential impacts of the development on amenity and parking in the area.

Principle of conversion

- 7.2 Local Plan Policy H23 states that in order for a dwelling to be suitable for conversion to flats, it should have a combined ground and first floor area of not less than 100m² and a frontage of not less than 4.7m.
- 7.3 It is noted that the combined internal floor measurement of the ground and first floor of this property does not meet the 100m² requirement of the policy (being approx. 87m²), although the frontage exceeds the required 4.7m. With

reference to its preamble Policy H23 is intended to prevent the conversion of small terraced properties that are not readily capable of conversion and securing an adequate standard of residential environment for future occupants as flats. It is not considered that the development would conflict with the objectives of the Policy due to its size (with eight bedrooms). Moreover, there will be access for all four flats to the rear garden (which is a requirement of national planning policy), and which will also provide bin and cycle storage areas.

Amenity

- 7.5 Local Plan Policy H6(a) for housing in residential areas, states that permission will be granted except where the development would be at a scale or density which would be detrimental to the character of the surrounding area or would result in over-intensive development of the site.
- 7.6 Policy H21 of the Local Plan states that permission will not be granted for the conversion of a house to flats where it is considered that the introduction of or increase in the number of conversions would prejudice the character or amenity of a particular locality, irrespective of whether the house is suitable for conversion.
- 7.7 Local Plan Policy H24 states that permission for flats in basements will be granted only where adequate self-contained access is provided and where there is adequate natural daylight and where the outlook is not unduly obstructed.
- 7.8 In assessing this proposal against Policies H6 and H21, the character of the street has to be determined. Watkin Terrace on the north side consists of 25 terraced properties, 19 of which have previously been converted to flats, (with all except four, being converted before the 1997 Local Plan). The other side of the street (Beaconsfield Terrace) consists of traditional Victorian terraced houses, none of which have permission for conversion to flats, although one resident has stated that some of the properties in Beaconsfield Terrace have been converted to flats (three applications for such conversions over the years have been refused). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that, of the 55 properties on the street, there is a fairly equal split between single family dwellings and flats.
- 7.9 It is evident from the comments received from neighbours (paragraph 6.6 above) that they consider that the amenity of the street is being detrimentally affected by domestic waste/rubbish on the street, parking congestion, and anti-social behaviour such as loud noise/music late at night, and they consider that this proposal would exacerbate these problems, by further increasing densities and altering the character of the street.
- 7.10 Para. 3.44 of the Local Plan discusses the issue of the 'cumulative effect' of conversions of houses to flats. It must be acknowledged that a dwelling of this size could potentially house a large family (with, perhaps, 2-3 cars), or such a house could be used as a House In Multiple Occupation with up to six

people living communally (with, perhaps 4-6 cars), without planning permission under the current prevailing planning controls.

- 7.11 It is therefore considered that the proposal would not significantly alter the established character of the street beyond how it could be lawfully used, and it will be bringing back into productive use an under-utilised building in a central location, in accord with national policy (PPS3) which encourages the re-use of previously developed land.
- 7.12 To address potential issue of on-street refuse storage, a condition is recommended to secure refuse and recycling storage. This is in accordance with Policy H19, which states that planning permission will only be granted where any adverse effect of a development is allowed for or mitigated against. The policy goes on to say that the amenities made necessary by the development will either be in existence or will be provided by the developer. It is noted that the proposed plans show that bin storage is proposed in the rear garden, which is sufficiently large to acceptably accommodate such facilities.
- 7.13 In assessing the proposal against Policy H24, the plans show that the basement flat would only have windows in the front stair well, which has very limited outlook, with no conventional windows at the rear at basement level. However, it is proposed that the area under an existing ground floor glazed roof at the rear would be opened up to create a light living area. The agent has sent additional information stating that this glazed roof over the rear area of the basement will have opening lights (that also form a fire escape). On visiting the basement, the case officer found that the proposed glazed roofing would provide sufficient natural light to the rear living area and compensates for the lack of any outlook.

Parking

- 7.14 The response from the Highway Authority refers to Standing Advice, and its response to WNDC calls for secured covered cycle parking to be provided on site, to be secured by condition.
- 7.15 In two other fairly recent applications in this terrace for conversion to four flats that were approved by WNDC, (no. 34 - 09/0102/FULWNN and no. 14 - 07/0142/COUWNN), it was considered that the existing parking congestion problem in the area was mitigated sufficiently by the sustainable location of the site, and by the required provision of on-site cycle parking facilities. It is acknowledged that these two factors do help to mitigate the problems of parking congestion in the area. When the case officer visited the site during the middle of the day, it was evident that there is a high demand for the limited on-street parking available. Nonetheless, it is considered that the proposal would not exacerbate the problem significantly more than the other possible uses of the house (as noted above in paragraph 7.6). For these reasons and with reference to the advice of the Highway Authority, it is not considered that the proposal could be resisted on highway grounds.

Conservation Area

7.16 As no external changes to the property are proposed and with reference to the advice of the Council's Conservation team it is considered that the development would have a neutral impact on the Conservation Area.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 In weighing all of the above factors, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable as the proposed use as flats will not cause substantially more harm to the amenity of the area than the permitted uses of the property as a family house or a shared house. The proposal would also bring a vacant property back into use, and would not prejudice the established character of the area. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the following conditions.

9. CONDITIONS

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

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(2) Details of the provision for the storage or refuse and materials for recycling in the rear amenity area shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted. The approved provision shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation or bringing into use of the building, and thereafter maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E19 of the Northampton Local Plan.

(3) Full details of facilities for the secure and covered parking of bicycles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development hereby permitted. The approved facilities shall be fully implemented prior to the development being first brought into use and retained at all times thereafter.

Reason: To secure the provision of adequate facilities in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

Informative notes:

Northamptonshire Police recommend the following security measures which if implemented will reduce the likelihood of crime and disorder occurring:

- Basement front door and ground floor front and back doors be upgraded to certificated PAS23-1:1999 and PAS24:2007 or WCL1.
- Basement and ground floor windows should be tested and certificated to BS7950:1997 or WCL4, and should incorporate key lockable hardware unless designed as emergency egress routes. Laminated glazing in ground floor and basement windows will reduce the likelihood of access being gained to the premises via smashed glazing.
- Individual doors to flats should be upgraded to PAS24:2007 standard.

- An access control system is required on the front door with electronic door release and entry phone linked to the flats.
- The gate leading down to the basement flat and the gate leading into the back garden from the Racecourse should both be fitted with mortice locks, and the rear perimeter should be upgraded so that access to the garden from the park is as difficult as possible.
- Details of secure bicycle storage can be found at www.bikeoff.gor/design or www.securedbydesign.com
- advice on secure storage facilities for wheelie bins can be obtained from Arson Task Force, and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue also strongly recommends the installation of sprinklers, contact Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue on 01604 797150.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

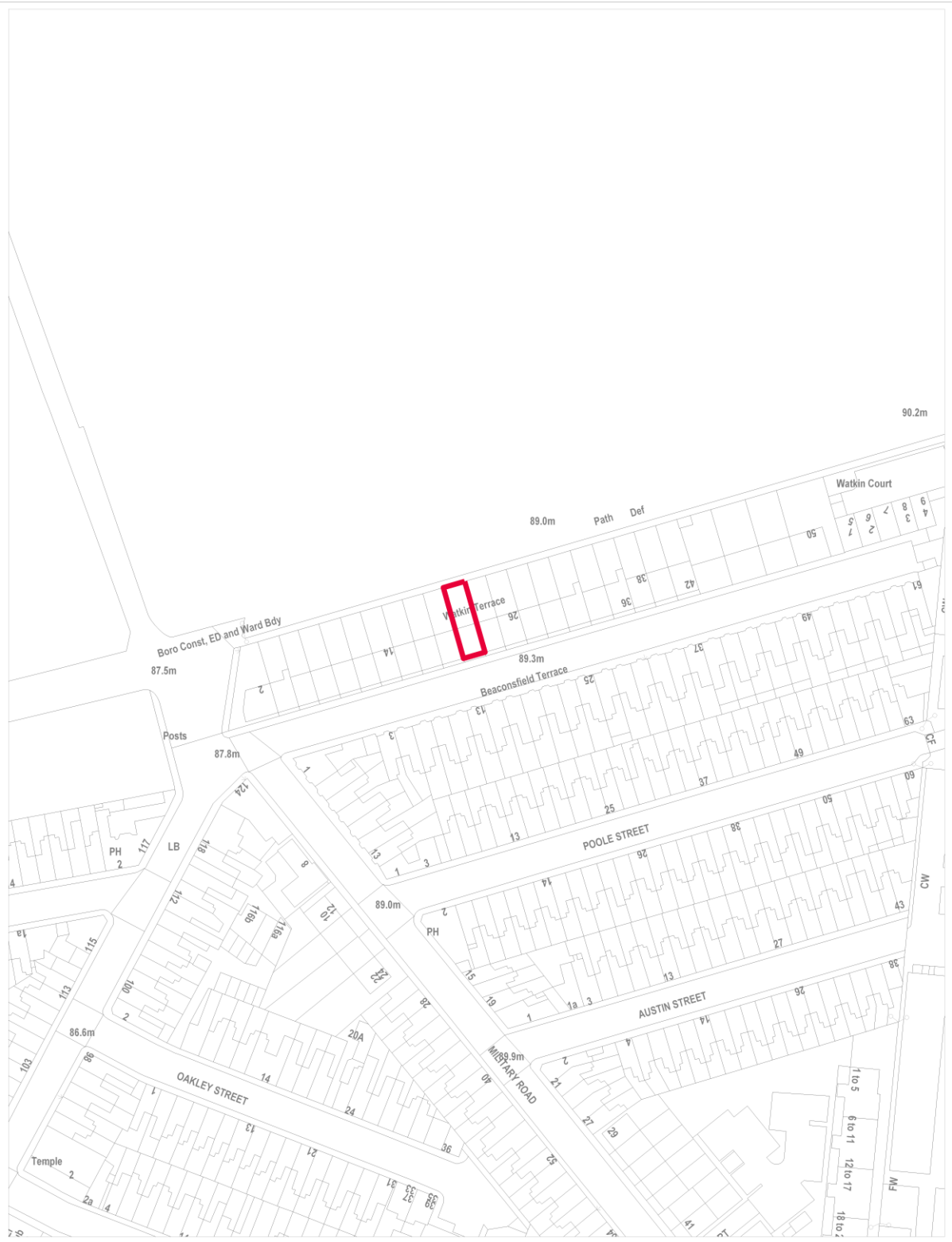
11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

Position:	Name/Signature:	Date:
Author:	Ellie Williams	9/5/2011
Development Control Manager Agreed:	Gareth Jones	16/5/2011



Name: JST
 Date: 19th May 2011
 Scale: 1:1250
 Dept: PLANNING
 Project: LOCATION PLAN

Title
22 WATKIN TERRACE

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