



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Planning Committee

Addendum to Agenda Items Tuesday 31st May 2011

Items for Determination

ITEMS 7A

NONE

ITEMS 10A - 10G

NONE

ITEM 10H

N/2011/0305

Conversion of a single dwelling into 3no one bedroom and 1no two bedroom flats – 22 Watkin Terrace.

Summary of comments received in an additional **letter from 13 Beaconsfield Terrace**, received 31 May 2011:

- As a resident of the area I have seen a number of the large houses in Watkin Terrace be converted into flats over the years. It is understandable given the size of the houses. However I now think that the number converted in the street has reached saturation point in terms of the impact on the local amenity.
- We already see large amounts of rubbish left out from the current flats in the area as well as a continual parking problem in the street. Clearly the conversion of another single dwelling into 4 flats will potentially add a number of additional cars into the street all trying to find a parking place as well as add to the volume of rubbish being created.
- Watkin and Beaconsfield Terrace are excluded from The Mounts residents parking scheme so attract cars parking here during the day when the rest of the area is covered by the parking scheme. The situation in the street has been getting worse and worse over the years as the number of residents in the street increases as houses are converted into flats. There are numerous instances of residents double-parking in the evenings which makes it impossible for emergency vehicles to access all the properties in the street should the worst happen. In fact I have witnessed an ambulance getting stuck because of this scenario. Whilst there are some spaces alongside The Racecourse these soon get taken up and trying to park in the area in the evening is an absolute nightmare. Potentially another 4 vehicles from this development cannot be accommodated in the current parking arrangements for the street.
- Urges the committee to reject this proposed application.

Summary of comments received in an additional **letter from 32 Watkin Terrace** received on 24 May 2011. It is considered that the officer's report contains some inaccuracies and anomalies, and lists them as follows:

- re. para. 1.1 – house was previously lived in by a family and therefore the development is not 'bringing a vacant property back into use.'
- re. para. 4.1 – does not see the relevance of noting that the previous use of this property in 1963 was for two flats, when it was last used as a single dwelling. Considers that there are many such anomalies on the NBC website.
- considers the information that the house was previously used as a house in multiple

occupation to be incorrect.

- re. para.5.1 – **'planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'** - understands that material indications mean such things as infrastructure for example parking problems, noise, rubbish, anti social behaviour, all of which we have in Watkin Terrace and so it should indicate otherwise – the numerous letters that have been submitted confirm this.
- re. paras. 6.4, 7.14 and 7.15 – questions why, when the majority of people do not use bicycles, or are unable to use bicycles, NCC Highways and NBC continue to talk about cycles and cycle storage. The majority of The Mounts area is permit parking, except for Watkin Terrace where residents have no choice but to double park and get tickets. Also not highlighted in the report that Watkin Terrace is a cul-de-sac making it more difficult to turn around, with the situation worsening when street lighting is turned off in July.
- re. para. 6.6 – important omissions have been made in highlighting the views of residents, as follows:
 - There are disabled people living in the street – they need to be able to park close to the house and not streets away – this had been written clearly in the letters – they cannot ride bicycles.
 - It was raised in resident letters but omitted from your report that most of the Mounts area is permit parking except for Watkin Terrace and we can't just go and park in other streets hence we are forced to double park even though we are at risk from ticketing.
 - Women who work late have to park their cars streets away and feel unsafe and vulnerable – this was stated more than once in the letters.
 - It has also been omitted but was highlighted that No 34 Watkin Terrace has only been renovated on the outside – the inside will be done later on in the year and so we do not yet feel the impact of yet another four flats coming onto the street (also reflects to 7.15).
 - It has been highlighted in some residents letters that Watkin Terrace/Beaconsfield Terrace is a cul-de-sac and this further impacts on the infrastructure of the street and we are forced to double park making it is very difficult to manoeuvre and turn around and blocking access. Cul-de-sacs are to have street lighting turned off from July 2011 and this will be so very dangerous.
 - Residents letters highlighted that the gardens of the Watkin Terrace are very small and there is nowhere to put all this rubbish without it impacting onto neighbouring houses.
 - Residents highlighted the fact that once the flat conversions are made the individual units are very small and you get large numbers of people living in a small contained area resulting in bags and bags of rubbish being put out onto the street at any time.
- re. para 7.3 – report states that 22 Watkin Terrace has 8 bedrooms. These houses have four bedrooms, and in the selling information for this property it states that rooms 7, 8 and 9 do not have building regulations and are not habitable.
- re. para 7.8 – states that there are some houses in Beaconsfield terrace converted to flats, quotes examples as Nos. 27 and 25, and considers that this all impacts on the infrastructure of the street.
- re. para. 7.13/7.16 – considers that the back basement exterior wall must contravene the conservation rules – the basement bay window bricks and windows had been taken out by the previous owner and a lean-to has been fitted over the outside basement area. The report states that the agent said that the glazed roof would be opened up and will have open lights which will form a fire escape. This is referring to the basement and the exterior Victorian window which should be restored as it was meant to be otherwise what is the point of Watkin Terrace coming under a conservation area – the exterior basement wall and windows have been altered with bricks taken out of the bay windows and pillar of bricks supporting the structure of the exterior wall above. How is this conservation and preserving these beautiful Victorian houses?

The letter concludes by stating "hopes that the committee can appreciate that it is important to highlight some of the inaccuracies especially that 22 Watkin Terrace was in multi-storey occupation; that it has eight bedrooms; that Beaconsfield Terrace does not have converted

flats, albeit you say without planning permission, that the majority of the people in the street do not have bicycles and in fact do own cars; that the individual units are small and the gardens are small with too many people living in one unit, hence rubbish on the streets. My concern is that with so many inaccuracies over basic facts, the conclusion drawn by the Planning Officers are error based."

Officers' Response to this letter:

Re the Officer's Report

- Para 1.1 - The property appeared to be vacant at the time the application was made and the case officer conducted their site visit.
- Para 4.1 – It is acknowledged that the planning history from 1963 is of a little relevance to the determination of the current application. The information that the house was formerly used as a HIMO was obtained from the agent (Mr. Adrian Ringrose, Architect) in a letter dated 3 May 2011.
- Para 5.1 – These material considerations are covered in the report.
- Paras. 6.4, 7.14 and 7.15 - It is acknowledged that Permit Parking *may* improve the parking problems for residents along this street, and this was discussed with the author of the letter by the telephone. Residents parking schemes is a County Council function. Information received from NCC Highways is that all areas are currently being reviewed, with a view to going out to consultation on same.
- Para. 6.6 - Neighbour's comments are generally summarised in the report, and the problems being experienced by all residents (including disabled people) in regard to parking congestion were acknowledged in the second bullet point of this para. Street marking identifying disabled parking areas is a function of the County Council. No.34 Watkin Terrace received permission in 2009 from WNDC for conversion to four flats and can be implemented within three years. The fact that Watkin Terrace/Beaconsfield Terrace is not a through road is not considered to affect the availability of parking spaces for residents. Street lighting is a County Council responsibility and is not a consideration of this application. The issue of rubbish being left out on the street is mentioned in the third bullet point of the Report.
- Para. 7.3 - A Regularisation application was received by Building Control in 2006 (ref. RG/2006/0357) for an attic extension, and that this was accepted. The number of bedrooms was ascertained from the submitted plans of the existing layout.
- Para 7.8 – It is accepted that some of the houses in Beaconsfield Terrace may have been converted to flats. This para. merely seeks to establish the general character of the street.
- Para. 7.13 and 7.16 - The application under consideration does not propose any alterations to the external appearance of the property. Previous changes to the property are not material to this application.

General: In the penultimate paragraph of the letter, it is stated that the majority of people in the street do not have bicycles. However, the requirement for secure cycle parking facilities is designed to encourage the use of bicycles as an alternative to the car in this central location.

Applications For Consultation

NONE