

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 13 December 2011
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2011/1074: Demolition of existing Bective works and Jebez House and the erection of 406 no. student accommodation building incorporating a 288sqm retail unit, 17 no. space lower ground floor car park and servicing space. New vehicular and pedestrian access and landscaping. Alteration, restoration and extension of Enterprise House for student community use. Bective Works, Bective Road, Northampton

WARD: Sunnyside

APPLICANT: Venulum Property Investments Ltd
AGENT: Mr. S. Avery; Bell Cornwell Ltd

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: Major development

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR CONSULTATION BY WNDC:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That the Council raise **OBJECTIONS** to the proposal for the following reason:

The proposed development, by reason of its siting, design and scale would have an adverse impact upon residential and visual amenity and therefore fails to comply with the requirements of PPS1 and PPS3 and Local Plan Policies E20 and H6.

1.2 Should WNDC be minded to approve the application, it is requested that the following matters be taken into account prior to a decision being reached:

- An updated contamination assessment be secured, taking into account recent changes to best guidance and potential changes

to the use of the land subsequent to the carrying out of the assessment. This is necessary to ensure that the proposal accords with the requirements of PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control

- Any agreement requiring that the future occupiers of the development do not possess private cars is enforceable in order to ensure a satisfactory impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of surrounding properties and highway safety in line with the requirements of PPG13 – Transport.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The applicant has applied to the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation for full planning permission to provide 406 units (bedrooms) of student accommodation within a six storey building. The proposal also includes the provision of associated ancillary facilities including a retail unit, laundry, communal areas, kitchens and gymnasium. The proposal also includes the provision of 17 car parking spaces, within the lower ground floor. The proposed building would be broadly rectangular in footprint, but would include a number of internal atriums. The proposal would retain the Grade II Listed Enterprise House, which is located towards the north eastern corner of the site. It is proposed that both the Bective Works and Jebez House buildings be demolished, whilst the listed Enterprise House would be retained.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site is located within an area allocated within the Northampton Local Plan as being for residential purposes. The site is also adjacent to the Harborough Road Centre, as identified within the Northampton Local Plan, which includes a range of shops and services.
- 3.2 The application site is of 0.7ha in area and contains the building known as Bective Works. This is a predominantly brick built, single storey building with frontages onto both Bective Road and Yelvertoft Road. Part of the site has previously been redeveloped to create the parade of commercial units that front onto Harborough Road. The site also contains Jebez House, which is a single storey; split-level brick building located to the south east of the Bective works building. This fronts onto Yelvertoft Road. There is a small area of open space between this building and the residential dwellings in Yelvertoft Road.
- 3.3 To the rear of Jebez House and fronting onto Bective Road is Enterprise House, which is a Grade II Listed Building. This building was erected in 1902 and extended relatively soon after. The building is constructed from a combination of brick and stone and features a number of other architectural features.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 WN/2006/0028 – Demolition of existing Bective Works and Jebez House and the erection of 155no. residential units with associated landscaping and underground car parking – Approved
N/2011/0300 - Demolition of existing Bective Works and Jebez House and the erection of 155no. residential units with associated landscaping and underground car-park. (application for new planning permission to replace existing planning permission ref: WN/2006/0028 dated 01/11/2006 in order to extend the time limit for implementation) – Undetermined, application originally submitted to WNDC
- 4.2 The original application for 155 flats was considered by Northampton Borough Council and deemed acceptable in principle.

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:

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS3 – Housing
PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment
PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control
PPG13 – Transport
PPG24 – Planning and Noise

5.3 Northampton Borough Local Plan

E20 – New Development
E40 – Crime and Anti Social Behaviour
H6 – Residential Development

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Northamptonshire County Council Parking Supplementary Planning Guidance (2003)
Northamptonshire County Council Planning Out Crime Supplementary Planning Guidance (2003)

6. CONSULTATIONS / REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **Conservation (NBC)** – It is clear that the proposed development has been designed with the setting of the listed building in mind and the new build structure steps down considerably in close proximity to the building. It is, however, difficult to mitigate for the impact that the sheer scale and mass of the building will have on the setting of Enterprise

House. It is, however, understood that a building of this scale and massing has already been accepted on the site.

- 6.2 **Environmental Health (NBC)** – More work is required to assess the parts of site that were previously looked at be cease of access of issues. The report itself is 4 years old and this means it is quite dated and may not represent the most recent uses that have been on site. The site investigation did not access all areas of the site, supplementary investigations should be carried out in those parts of the site not covered by the initial investigation. The site investigation and risk assessment was undertaken in July 2007, since that time there have been a number of changes to guidance and standards concerning land contamination and the risk assessment should be undertaken in accordance with current standards

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of the Development

- 7.1 By reason of the site's residential allocation and location in proximity to a number of other residential units, it is considered that the broad principle of redeveloping the site for residential purposes is acceptable; however, there are significant concerns regarding the scale of the development and the potential impacts that it would create.
- 7.2 The proposed development would feature a significantly high number of residents that result in a development that would be of a significantly higher density than the surrounding residential properties and higher than the development for flats, that has previously been proposed on this site. As a result of this, it is considered that the proposal could give rise to a significant detrimental impact upon residential amenity. In particular, this is likely to emanate from increased noise and disturbance as a result of heightened activity occurring within the site as well as from the likely demographic profile of residents within the proposed development (i.e. predominantly young, single people) Furthermore, the increased number of journeys made to and from the development is also likely to impact upon amenity. Local Plan Policy E20 states that new developments should adequately reflect the surrounding buildings in terms of form and scale; whilst Local Plan Policy H6 states that new developments should be of an appropriate scale and density.
- 7.3 It is noted that the proposed development is located adjacent to the Harborough Road Centre; however, given the scale of this centre, there are concerns that there would be insufficient background activities to adequately mask or absorb the impacts of the proposed development in conflict with the requirements of PPS24. It is noted that an acoustic impact assessment has been submitted with the application; however, this focuses on the communal spaces contained within the development (such as the gymnasium) and not on the wider impacts of the proposed development

- 7.4 Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of properties that could be utilised for commercial purposes, it is noted that they are predominantly vacant and the site is allocated within the Northampton Local Plan as being suitable for residential developments, the erection of accommodation on this site would not conflict with the aims and objectives of PPS4.
- 7.5 It is noted that the proposed development includes the provision of retail facilities with a floor space of 288m². Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development is outside the allocated centre, the site is immediately adjacent to the Harborough Road Centre. As a result of this relationship, combined with the relatively small scale of the retail unit, it is unlikely to fulfil all of the retail needs of the future occupiers of the development; it is considered that the shop would not have an undue detrimental impact upon the viability and vitality of this or any other centre.

Design and Appearance

- 7.6 It is considered that the residential area is characterised by the provision of relatively small scale, albeit densely developed terraced properties. This is in contrast to the very high density and multi storey accommodation that would characterise the proposed development. The guidance within PPS3 – Housing is of particular relevance where it is stated that the proposed developments should be well integrated with and complement existing buildings as well as the local area, in terms of scale and density. In addition, Local Plan Policy E20 states that new developments should adequately reflect the surrounding buildings in terms of form and scale; whilst Local Plan Policy H6 states that new developments should be of an appropriate scale and density.
- 7.7 Of particular concern is that the building is of a scale that would be detrimental to visual amenity. In particular, it is considered that large proportions of the building (up to approximately 22m in height) would result in the building having an overbearing affect upon the streetscene. Furthermore, the proposed development would be of proportions that are significantly greater than those within the vicinity and would therefore result in the building being an incongruous and strident feature when viewed from the wider area.
- 7.8 It is recognised that planning permission has previously been forthcoming to erect 155 flats upon the site; comprising 67 one bedroom apartments and 88 two bedroom apartments. This was accepted by the Council in 2006 and 2009. Whilst this proposed a large building, the current scheme is of greater proportions. In particular, the proposed development is taller (by approximately 4m) and has a considerably greater bulk than the previously permitted scheme. This is most noticeable on the Yelvertoft Road elevation, where the proposed building would feature a section of approximately 60m, where the building would have a height of between 21.5m and 16.9m. This differs

very significantly from the previously consented scheme where the height on the Yelvertoft Road elevation would be between 12.3m and 9.9m. Therefore, it is considered that the presence of previously approved schemes does not set a precedent for development of the scale proposed in this instance.

- 7.9 The applicant has submitted a lighting assessment that demonstrates that due to the design of the building, there would be no undue impact on the surrounding, predominantly two storey, residential dwellings. Whilst this is not disputed, there are significant concerns that the scale of the building would lead to an overbearing impact upon the occupiers of neighbouring properties, contrary to the requirements of Local Plan Policy E20. There are also concerns that the increase in the building height beyond the previously consented scheme may also lead to an increased perception of a loss of privacy given its scale and the quantity of windows in the large elevations.

Heritage Considerations

- 7.10 As set out previously, Enterprise House is a Grade II Listed Building. Whilst an application for Listed Building Consent for the necessary works to this building is under consideration by Northampton Borough Council, the impact on the exterior and setting of this building is a material consideration in the determination of the application for planning permission.
- 7.11 In terms of the proposed development, it is noted that relatively few external alterations are proposed to the exterior of Enterprise House, which is of assistance in reducing the impacts of the proposal upon the character of the Listed Building. Furthermore, the height of the proposed building reduces to 9.72m adjacent to Enterprise House. By means of comparison Enterprise House has a height of 7m at its highest point. This height is comparable to the previously permitted scheme (which had a height at this point of approximately 9.25m) and therefore it is considered that the overall impact upon the setting of the Listed Building would be neutral and therefore in compliance with the requirements of PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment.

Highways

- 7.12 It is recognised that the proposed development is located adjacent to a relatively small centre, including supermarkets. It is therefore recognised that some facilities would be readily accessible to the future occupiers of the development on foot. However, it is also recognised that residents would need to travel greater distances, either to their academic institution or to use facilities that are not on offer within the adjoining centre. Whilst it is likely that as student accommodation, the proportion of car owners is unlikely to be as high as conventional residential units there are concerns regarding the impact of the development upon highway safety and the free flow of traffic due to the existing general reliance upon on street parking spaces.

- 7.13 It is noted that the submitted documents indicate that residents of the proposed development would be required to enter into an agreement, which states that they would not utilise a private car during their period of occupying the proposed development. Whilst this position is noted, there are concerns regarding the enforceability of this, given the current unrestricted nature of on street car parking. As a result of this, WNDC is requested that if minded to approve this application, it be satisfied that such an obligation is enforceable.

Environmental Considerations

- 7.14 Whilst a contamination assessment has been submitted with the application, this was carried out in 2007 and did not assess all areas of the site. As a result of the possibility of intervening changes in the use of the land, combined with changes to best guidance in the carrying out of such assessments, it is recommended that in order to comply with the requirements of PPS2 a revised and updates assessment is obtained.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 In conclusion, it is considered that although the principle of developing this site for residential purposes is acceptable, there are significant concerns regarding the scale of the proposed development given the density of accommodation and the impacts of the proposal upon visual and residential amenity. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal fails to comply with the requirements of PPS3 and Local Plan Policies E20 and H6.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 WN/2006/300
N/2011/0300
N/2011/1052

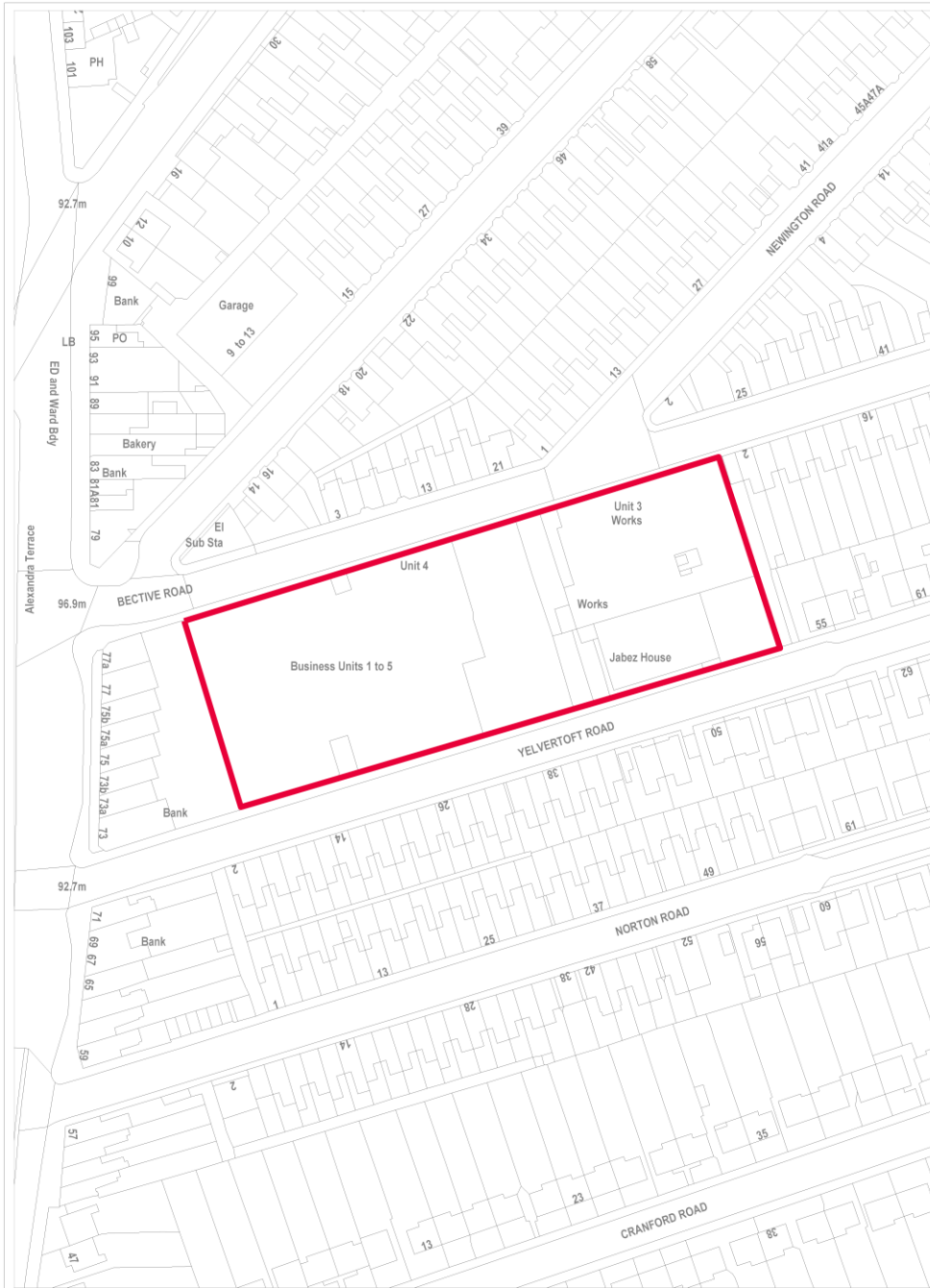
10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None.

11. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 11.1 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:	Ben Clarke	25/11/11
Development Control Manager Agreed:	Gareth Jones	1/12/11



 <p>NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<p>Name: Charis Holder Date: 1st December 2011 Scale: 1:1250 Dept: Planning Project: Site Location Plan</p>	<p>Title Unit 3 Bective Works, Bective Road</p> <p><small>Produced from the 2011 Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence number: 100019655</small></p>
---	--	---