



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

N/2011/1147: **Erection of six storey office building (Use Class B1) with three disabled parking spaces, service bay, cycle parking and associated landscaping
Former United Social Club Site, Green Street, Northampton**

WARD: Castle

APPLICANT: Mr. C. Garden; West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: Major development affecting a key site within the town

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR CONSULTATION BY WNDC:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That the Council raise **NO OBJECTIONS** for the following reason:

The proposed development would have a positive impact upon promoting the viability and vitality of Northampton, including the Enterprise Zone; would introduce a landmark building onto this key site and have a neutral impact upon neighbour amenity and the historic environment. The development is therefore compliant with the requirements of PPS1, PPS4, PPS5 and Local Plan Policies E20 and E40.

1.2 If WNDC is minded to approve the application, it is requested that conditions requiring surveys of noise and light levels in order to ensure that the scheme is compliant with the requirements of PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control and PPG24 – Planning and Noise. WNDC are also requested to investigate the possibilities of securing

further embellishments to the front elevation of the building in order to better reflect the requirements of Local Plan Policy E20 and PPS1.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The applicant seeks planning permission from the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation to erect a six storey office building comprising 3737m² of office space. The building would also feature a café and function space upon the ground floor. The purpose of the development would be to promote and facilitate growth in new and existing businesses within Northampton, work in conjunction with companies located within the Enterprise Zone and provide greater linkages between business and academia in the form of Northampton University.
- 2.2 It is noteworthy that the proposal would be used as an 'Innovation Centre', which would offer greater opportunities for collaboration between businesses of a complimentary nature operating within the building; provide advice to small scale and innovative businesses in terms of matters such as strategy and planning; provide greater access to technology, including greater collaboration between academic research and business; assistance in manufacturer and market identification and providing partnership and mentoring facilities.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site is located on the periphery of the town centre, and previously contained the United Social Club, which was demolished in 2010. The site is located to the south of Black Lion Hill and opposite the Railway Station on which a new station building received prior approval from the Borough Council in May 2011 (reference: N/2010/1065). The site is reasonably level and a three storey building containing residential flats are located in close proximity to the rear boundary.
- 3.2 The site is adjacent to Black Lion Hill and St James Road, which serves as one of the main routes into the town centre as well as conveying a significant amount of traffic around the inner ring road. As a result of this, the site has a significant position within the streetscape. By nature of the area's topography, the site is located In addition; the site is located at a lower level than the adjoining highway. The site is located within the recently announced Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None relevant

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
PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment
PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control
PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk
PPG13 – Transport
PPG24 – Planning and Noise

5.3 **Northampton Borough Local Plan**

E20 – New Development
E40 – Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

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 **Public Protection (Environmental Health) (NBC)** – By reason of the proximity of the site to surrounding residential properties, conditions covering an investigation into the likely noise and external light levels and the means for their control are recommended. Consideration should also be given to restricting the operating hours of the premises.

7. **APPRAISAL**

Principle of the Development

- 7.1 The site is allocated in the Northampton Local Plan as being a location for future residential development. It should be recognised that this allocation has been removed within the emerging Central Area Action Plan. The emerging West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy directs office type developments to be located primarily in and adjoining the principal urban area of Northampton. The site has also been allocated as part of the Waterside Regeneration Area, to which this proposal would make a positive contribution.
- 7.2 Therefore it is considered that relatively little weight should be given to the Local Plan allocation. Irrespective of the allocation, it is considered that the provision of office accommodation within this location would represent an appropriate use of the land given the potential for linkages

to be formed to businesses within the town centre as well as the wider benefits in contributing to the overall success of the Enterprise Zone and therefore the scheme is compliant with the requirements of PPS4.

- 7.3 The nature of the proposal would also deliver significant benefits for the future economic viability of Northampton, through the creation of new employment opportunities. Furthermore, the proposal would not only assist in attracting students to Northampton, but also to encourage them to remain in Northampton following the completion of their studies to work and promote business activity.
- 7.4 The proposed development would be sustainably located given the proximity of the site to the railway station as well as the frequency and number of buses that operate along Black Lion Hill/St James Road. Furthermore, public car parks are in reasonably close proximity to the application site. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed use is suitably located.
- 7.5 Although car parking within the development is limited to three disabled car parking spaces, it is considered that this provision is acceptable given the accessibility of the site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the requirements of PPG13 – Transport.

Design and Appearance

- 7.6 The site is in a prominent location within the town centre and it should also be noted that the emerging Central Area Action Plan identifies it as being an important gateway location. The proposed development is of a distinctive nature that reflects the importance of this location. The building would be orientated towards Black Lion Hill, which would assist in promoting a more active frontage to the streetscene. Nonetheless, it is considered that the front elevation of the building could be embellished to improve this important frontage. The development is also planned to achieve BREEAM category 'excellent', which would ensure that the development is of a sustainable nature and in accordance with the requirements of PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development.
- 7.7 The application states that the proposed building would be constructed from a variety of materials, including ironstone, coated aluminium cladding and terracotta cladding. Whilst this palette of materials is generally considered acceptable, there are concerns that due to the level of traffic that utilises the adjoining road and railway line, that these materials could become discoloured over time. Therefore, WNDC is recommended to ensure that this would not be the case so that the overall success of the development is not compromised. Therefore the proposed development is in accordance with Local Plan Policy E20.
- 7.8 It is noted that the proposed building features a recessed entrance at the ground floor level, when accessed from Black Lion Hill. There are concerns that this could become a venue for anti-social behaviour to

take place due to this recessed element. However, this factor should be balanced against the visibility of this elevation of the building due to the level of vehicular and pedestrian traffic that passes the site. By reason of this, it is considered that this element of the proposal would experience a reasonable level of natural surveillance and therefore there is no breach of Local Plan Policy E40 and the Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning Out Crime. In addition, the three disabled car parking spaces would be sufficiently overlooked, including significant views from the café area.

- 7.9 The site is within 30m of the Grade II Listed Postern Gate and Walls, located on the northern side of Black Lion Hill, which were re-erected within this location in 1879. Due to the separation distance between the proposed building and these structures of historical importance, it is considered that there would be no undue impact upon the character and setting of this structure as required by PPS5. An archaeological assessment has been submitted with the application, which identifies that it is unlikely that prehistoric or Roman remains would be found on the site due to previous excavations revealing that such deposits are rare and of generally low importance. Furthermore, Saxon and Medieval remains are likely to be limited. Nonetheless, a programme of archaeological investigations has been identified in order to ensure that any historical remains are appropriately dealt with.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

- 7.10 Although the building is of a large scale, it is considered that due to the orientation of the site, the bulk of the shadows cast from the development would fall over the railway line and Black Lion Hill/St Peters Way areas. As a result of this it is considered that the proposal would not lead to a significant loss of light to the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. In terms of considerations relating to the outlook and privacy, it is considered that due to the separation distances between the proposed development and the flats to the rear of the site (9.86m to the nearest elevation of these flats, which is predominantly unglazed and 41.48m to the larger, glazed elevation), there would be no undue impact upon residential amenity.
- 7.11 In order to ensure a satisfactory impact upon the occupiers of the nearby residential properties, it is recommended that if WNDG are minded to approve this application, it be subject to a condition that would require a survey of the likely sources of noise and the means for their control. This is necessary in order to ensure that the proposed development complies with the requirements of PPS24. By reason of the positioning of the application site and the level of activity associated with Black Lion Hill, St James Road and St Peters Way, it is considered that a condition restricting operating hours would be unnecessary. A survey of the effects of any external lighting would also assist in ensuring that the scheme complies with the requirements of PPS23.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The proposed development is appropriately located and would support the economic viability and vitality of the wider Northampton area. Furthermore, the proposed building would provide a landmark building at this key gateway site. Although of a large scale, the building would have a neutral impact upon the occupiers of neighbouring properties, subject to appropriate conditions and therefore it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable. The proposed development would also assist in meeting the aims and objectives of the emerging West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/2011/1147.

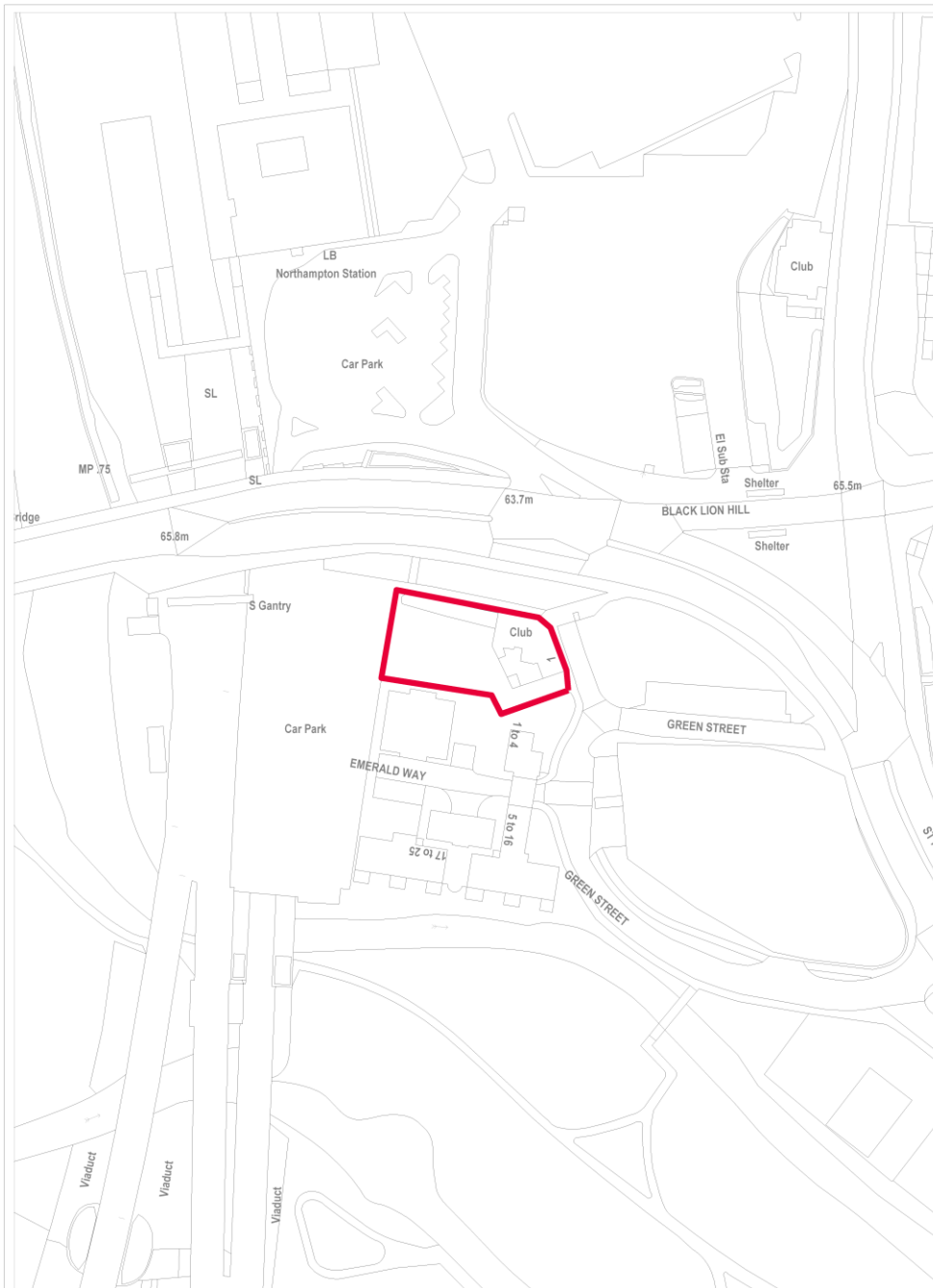
10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS


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	23/11/11
Development Control Manager Agreed:	Gareth Jones	1/12/11



 <p>NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	Name: Charis Holder Date: 1st December 2011 Scale: 1:1250 Dept: Planning Project: Site Location Plan	Title Former United Social Club, 1 Green Street
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