



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 29th September 2015
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
DIRECTOR: Steven Boyes

N/2015/0421: Single storey extension to café. Park Café, Abington Park, Wellingborough Road

WARD: Abington

APPLICANT: Mr A Ansell
AGENT: Architectural Solutions

REFERRED BY: Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
REASON: Council owned land and applicant is an elected Member

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 REFUSAL for the following reasons:

The extension proposed would result in a building of an excessive scale which would appear as a visually prominent feature to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Abington Park Conservation Area. If permitted this would be contrary to Policies S10 and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies E20 and E26 of the Northampton Local Plan and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1** The application seeks planning permission to erect a single storey extension to the existing cafe building. This will form a continuation of the existing building providing a kitchen area, office and food store. This would provide the café with a larger kitchen/preparation area and a larger servery and an outdoor furniture store. An extension to the area of hard surfacing in front of the café is also indicated on the plans.
- 2.2** The application is substantially a resubmission of a previously approved scheme but on a larger scale with the outdoor furniture store being an additional element.
- 2.3** To facilitate the development a Lime tree would need to be removed.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The café stands alone within Abington Park and is sited almost within a group of trees. To the front of the café is a grassed area. The park is within Abington Park Conservation Area.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 January 2015 planning permission granted for single storey extension to café. N/2014/1207.

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 Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

5.2 National Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Paragraph 70 outlines that the provision of facilities should be viewed positively to enhance the sustainability of communities.

Paragraph 73 states that “access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities”.

Paragraph 131 encourages local planning authorities to consider sustaining and enhancing heritage assets, the contribution heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality and new development making a positive contribution to local character.

Paragraph 134 outlines that harm to a heritage asset should be weighed against public benefit.

5.3 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy S10 Sustainable Development Principles sets out that development will achieve high standards of design and will protect, conserve and enhance the built and natural environment.

Policy BN5 The Historic Environment and Landscape outlines that heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced.

5.4 **Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policies are material to this application:

Policy E20 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for development where design reflects the character of its surroundings.

Policy E26 indicates that planning permission will be granted in conservation areas where the character and appearance of those areas would be preserved or enhanced.

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Abington Park Conservation Area Assessment 2005.

5.6 **Other Material Planning Considerations**

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development within a conservation area to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **NBC Arboricultural Officer** has commented that there are no arboricultural reasons for refusal subject to conditions.
- 6.2 **NBC Conservation** confirmed that the application is not supported from a conservation perspective due to the encroachment of the enlarged café into the open park, the visual impact of this and its consequent adverse impact upon the conservation area and the Grade I listed Abington Park Museum.
- 6.3 **Northamptonshire Police** have no objections.
- 6.4 **4 Hexham Court** – object to the application as originally submitted; the application is unattractive and out of keeping with the conservation area; mishmash of materials on one face of the building. The application site affects the setting of a Grade I listed building and English Heritage should be consulted.
- 6.5 A further consultation has been carried out on the basis of revised plans and information. This has included consultation with Historic England. At the time of writing the report this consultation period has not expired and any further comments received will be included in the Addendum Report.

7. APPRAISAL

Previous Planning Permission

- 7.1 The previous planning permission N/2014/1207 was granted by the Planning Committee in January 2015 as it was considered that, on balance, the public benefit from improving the facilities available to users of Abington Park outweighed the harm to the Conservation Area from the loss of the tree and that the visual impact of the extension was acceptable. The previous permission remains extant and would not be affected by the outcome of the current application.

Design/Appearance

- 7.2 The previously approved extension had dimensions of 7.7 x 8.1 metres and represented an increase of approximately 42% to the building. The extension now proposed has dimensions of 11.58 x 8.085 metres which would increase the footprint of the building by approximately 63%.
- 7.3 It is considered that the larger extension now proposed, whilst appropriately designed in terms of how it continues the existing roof form, would result in a building of an excessive scale and which would consequently appear as an unduly visually intrusive feature within the Conservation Area to the detriment of the appearance of this. The extension would be brick built, however the frontage is proposed to be clad in timber boarding. The representation received refers to this as a, "mishmash", however it is considered that the use of cladding would help to visually 'break-up' the building. However this would not overcome the concerns regarding the scale of the proposal.
- 7.4 The impact of the extension upon the Grade I listed Abington Park Museum has been raised by the representation received and the Council's Conservation team. Historic England have therefore been consulted regarding this and the application has been advertised on this basis. Historic England's comments will be reported in an addendum report. If in the view of Historic England the application does affect the setting of the Museum, the Committee will need to have special regard to the desirability of preserving that setting as well as the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Committee will therefore need to decide whether the proposal would adversely affect the setting of the listed building, which may lead to an additional reason for refusal.

Trees

- 7.5 The extension proposed would result in the loss of a Lime tree protected by virtue of being within a conservation area. The principle of the loss of the Lime tree was accepted when determining the previous application.
- 7.6 The current proposal would result in the building and patio encroaching into the root protection areas of two other trees. However it is not considered that, with appropriate controls, these trees would be adversely impacted upon.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 It is considered that the additional visual impact of the extension now proposed would outweigh the public benefits which would arise from the enlarged extension to the café and would not comply with the desirability of preserving or enhancing

the character or appearance of a conservation area set out in the 1990 Act. Consequently the application is recommended for refusal.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/2015/0421.

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.



Name: Site Location Plan
 Date: 13th July 2015
 Scale: 1:1250
 Dept: Planning
 Project: Planning Committee

Title
Park Cafe Abington Park, Wellingborough Road

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