



PLANNING COMMITTEE:	27th October 2015
DIRECTORATE:	Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
DIRECTOR:	Steven Boyes
N/2015/0791:	New conservatory/ garden room to front of café at Drovers Return Café, Hunsbury Hill Country Park, Hunsbury Hill Road
WARD:	West Hunsbury
APPLICANT:	Mr Colin Ingle
AGENT:	None
REFERRED BY:	Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
REASON:	Council owned land
DEPARTURE:	No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION

1. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSAL for the following reason:

Due to its construction and associated materials used, the proposed extension would represent an incongruous form of development detracts from the appearance of the existing building detrimental to visual amenity and contrary to Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan, Policies S10 and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Permission is sought for a front single storey extension to the existing café to be used as an information/visitor room and as a shelter for dog walkers using the park. The proposed extension would be constructed in wood and perspex with a maximum height of 2.5 metres and project 3 metres off the front wall of the existing building. Associated with the development is a small extension to the existing patio.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site consists of a café situated within the grounds of Hunsbury Hill Country Park a few kilometres south of Northampton town centre. The café is located next to a car park and was a former public convenience block converted

around 2009. The park is under the ownership of Northampton Borough Council. The site is not within a designated Conservation Area but is close to a scheduled monument at Hunsbury Hill Fort.

- 3.2 The nearest residential properties are located to the west on Sentinel Road and to the south on Hunsbury Close.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Planning permission granted to convert toilet block to café in 2009.

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:

Paragraphs 56 and 57 Design - stresses the importance of good design in order to make places better for people.

Paragraph 69 Security - encourage safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder do not undermine quality of life.

Paragraph 17 Amenity - importance of ensuring high quality design and good standard of amenity.

Paragraph 118 Trees - consideration to be given to impact of development on trees and woodland.

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:

S10 Sustainable Development Principles - Development will achieve the highest standards of design and strong sense of place.

BN3 Trees - Protection of trees outside ancient woodlands will be protected.

BN5 Heritage Assets - Seeks to secure protection of heritage assets.

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:

E20 Design of new development – encourages good design in terms of materials, layout and scale.

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004.

6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **NBC Conservation** - The area is covered by the Hunsbury Hill Fort Conservation Management Plan which has been adopted by the Council and is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. Whilst there is no objection in principle, there are concerns regarding the extension's design. (Further verbal confirmation from the Conservation Officer was that the concerns relate to both the materials proposed and the form of the structure).

NBC Arboricultural Officer - There are trees on 3 sides of the café. There would be some impact on the closest tree as there may be some minor encroachment into the Root Protection Area but it is not considered that this will affect the long term health of the tree.

Northamptonshire Police Crime Prevention Advisor - No objections given that there have been no reported crime at the site in last 12 months although consideration must be given of providing doors to prevent congregation of miscreants.

Letters of support received from **11 St Benedicts Mount, 16 and 48 Greenglades, 11 Bourton Close, 36 and 46 Summerfields, 40 Gresham Drive, 7 Holbein Gardens, 3 Reedhill, 13 Hunsbury Close:**

- The café serves the community very well
- Will allow dog walkers to enjoy the café in inclement weather
- This is a further reason to allow visitors to the area
- The proposed design is simple
- There are no parking or highway safety concerns
- No risk of overlooking or amenity concerns
- There are no listed buildings nearby and is not in a conservation area
- No impact on pollution
- Will improve facilities for customers

Objection from **1 Sentinel Road** and petition with 7 addresses:

- The Park should be for locals to enjoy and not outsiders to make money
- The proposed materials are unacceptable

- Will be a fire hazard
- This is not a place for such a structure
- Method of construction will cause annoyance to residents when the wind blows against the structure

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main considerations are the impact on the appearance and character of the area, design, security, impact on existing trees and neighbour amenity.

Principle of development

- 7.2 There is no objection in principle to the proposed extension as it will support the continuation of a community facility used by local residents and visitors to the park for recreation.

Design and appearance

- 7.3 The site is not particularly prominent when viewed from the nearest public highway on Hunsbury Hill Road being screened by existing trees. The proposed design of the extension is of simple construction with pitched roof and supported by posts and screens. Notwithstanding the comments from the Conservation Officer, it is not considered that the form i.e. single storey pitched roof extension is an unacceptable addition to the existing café. However the materials to be used are of low quality with wood and perspex construction which do not complement the existing building and significantly detracts from its character and adversely impact on visual amenity of the locality. The applicant was informed that the materials and construction as proposed are unacceptable but unwilling to amend the proposal. It is considered therefore that the proposal is unacceptable and would be contrary to Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan which promotes good design and Paragraph 64 of the NPPF.

7.4 Impact on amenity of neighbours

Due to the separation distance of approximately 27 metres from the closest residential property at 25 Hunsbury Close and combined with the modest scale of the development, it is considered that the proposed extension would have minimal effect on neighbours living conditions in terms of noise and general loss of amenity.

Security and Crime Prevention

- 7.5 As there has been no reported crimes at the café within the last 12 months, Northants Police raise no objections provided that consideration is given by the applicant to install a door into the extension to prevent congregation of miscreants after the café has closed. The applicant has confirmed that the extension will be fully closed and locked after hours. This is considered acceptable in terms of security.

Impact on Trees

- 7.6 The site is surrounded by mature planting on 3 sides. No trees would be affected by the proposal. The Council's Tree Officer has no major concerns in terms of impact on long term health of trees.

Conservation

- 7.7 Although the site is not in a Conservation Area consideration should be given to the Hunsbury Hill Fort Conservation Management Plan as the site is approximately 290m to a scheduled monument. However, it is not considered that the proposal would adversely affect the setting of this heritage asset. The Conservation Officer however considers the proposed design of the development is unacceptable.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 For the reasons cited above the proposal is considered unacceptable and is therefore recommended for refusal as it is contrary to local and national planning policy.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

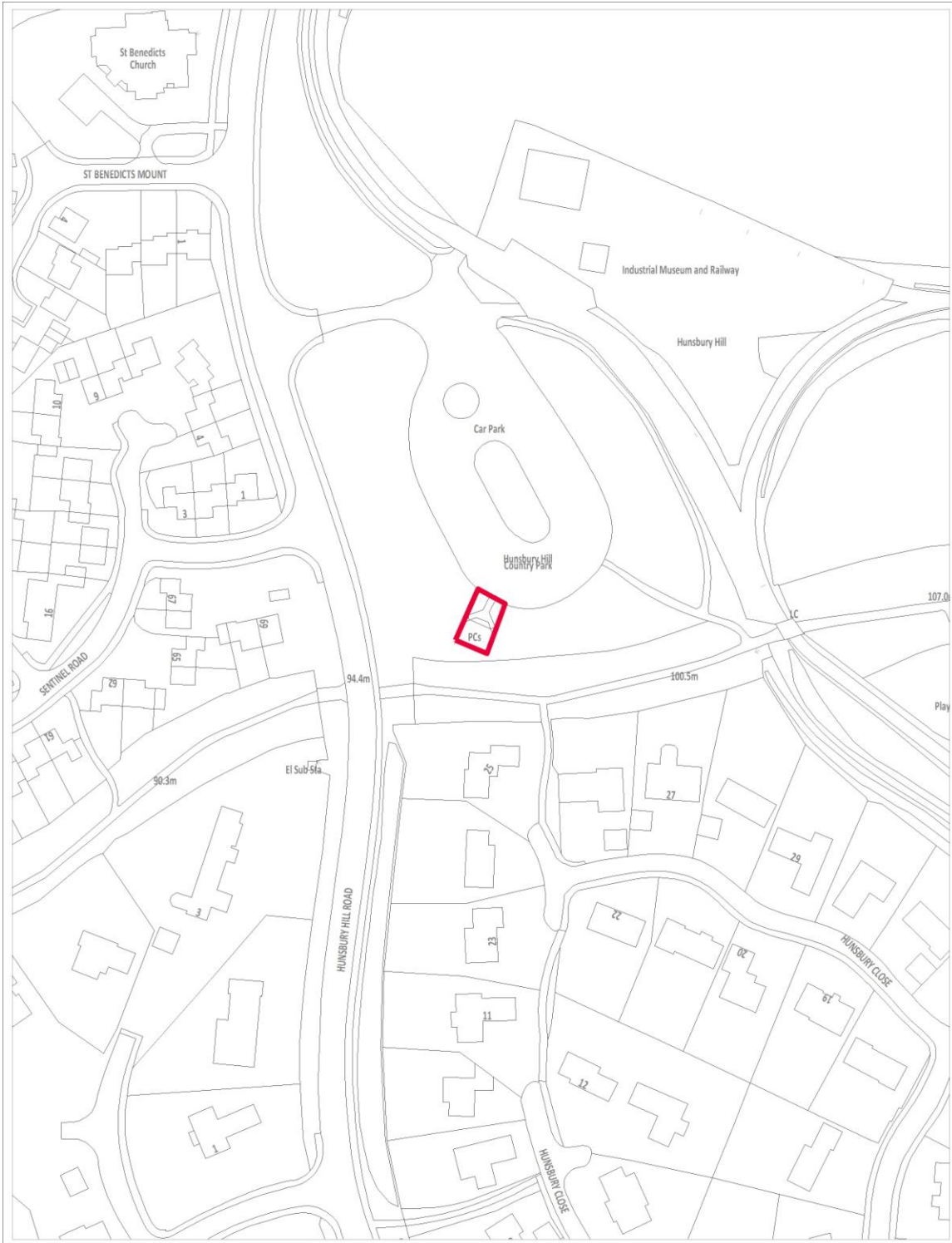
9. N/2015/0791

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: **14th October 2015**
 Scale: **1:1250**
 Dept: **Planning**
 Project: **Planning Committee**

Title
Drovers Return Cafe, Hunsbury Hill Country Park

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