

PLANNING COMMITTEE:	17 th December 2015
DIRECTORATE:	Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
DIRECTOR:	Steven Boyes
APPLICATION REF:	N/2015/0791
LOCATION:	Drovers Return Cafe, Hunsbury Hill Country Park, Hunsbury Hill Road
DESCRIPTION:	Single storey extension to front of cafe
WARD:	West Hunsbury Ward
APPLICANT:	Mr Colin Ingle
AGENT:	Mr Colin Ingle
REFERRED BY:	Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
REASON:	NBC owned land
DEPARTURE:	No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 APPROVAL subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The proposed development would due to its siting, scale and design not have an undue detrimental impact on the appearance and character of the host building, area, neighbouring amenity or adjacent trees and complies with Policies E20 of the Northampton Local Plan, S10 and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall that the application was first brought before the 27th October Planning Committee meeting with a recommendation for refusal following concerns from Officers on the proposed materials. Members deferred a decision so that officers could negotiate with the applicant on an improved design. The revised plans now show that the proposed Perspex is removed and the extension will be constructed in wood.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 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 a maximum height of 2.5 metres high and project 3 metres off the front wall of the existing building. Associated with the development is a small extension to the existing patio. The proposed extension would be constructed in wood with polycarbonate roof.

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 The nearest residential properties are located to the west on Sentinel Road and to the south on Hunsbury Close.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

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

6. PLANNING POLICY

6.1 Statutory Duty

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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 **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.

6.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004.

7. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received on this revised proposal are summarised as follows:

7.1 **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 new materials proposed and the form of the structure).

7.2 **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.

7.3 **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. Recommend that additional details are provided by the applicant on the doors, materials and locking mechanisms to be used and can be secured by condition on any grant of permission.

7.4 Letters of support from **3 Reedhill, 7 Holbein Gardens and 40 Gresham Drive:**

- The amended design is in keeping with the area
- The café is of great benefit to the park and the covered area will be useful in bad weather

7.5 **Friends of West Hunsbury Parks** – fully support of the revised plans for the extension.

7.6 1 letter of objection from **1 Sentinel Road:**

- Out of keeping with area
- Would be an eyesore
- Increase in anti-social activity
- Concern that an application for a larger extension may come forward in future

8. **APPRAISAL**

8.1 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

- 8.2 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

- 8.3 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 (polycarbonate) and walls of wooden construction. 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 cafe. The proposed materials i.e. wood construction are considered to be a significant improvement to those shown on the original planning application (with Perspex). It is considered therefore that the proposal is now acceptable and would be in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan which promotes good design and Paragraph 64 of the NPPF.

8.4 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

- 8.5 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. Also other security improvements would be agreed by condition including details of the locking mechanism of doors and security to the building after hours. The applicant has confirmed that the extension will be fully closed and locked after hours and that they are happy to agree a condition on any grant of planning permission.

Impact on Trees

- 8.6 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

- 8.7 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.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 For the reasons cited above the proposal is considered acceptable and is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions below.

10. CONDITIONS

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan 1062/15 A.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to comply with the provisions of the planning application.

- (3) No development shall take place until further details of the external colour treatment of the extension hereby approved has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be implemented in accordance with those agreed details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance of development to accord with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan. This is a pre-commencement condition in order to secure acceptable external appearance before work starts.

- (4) Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall take place until further details detailing security measures to protect the site from anti-social behaviour have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and maintained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of security to comply with the NPPF. This is a pre-commencement condition to allow acceptable security measures to be put in place prior to work starting.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

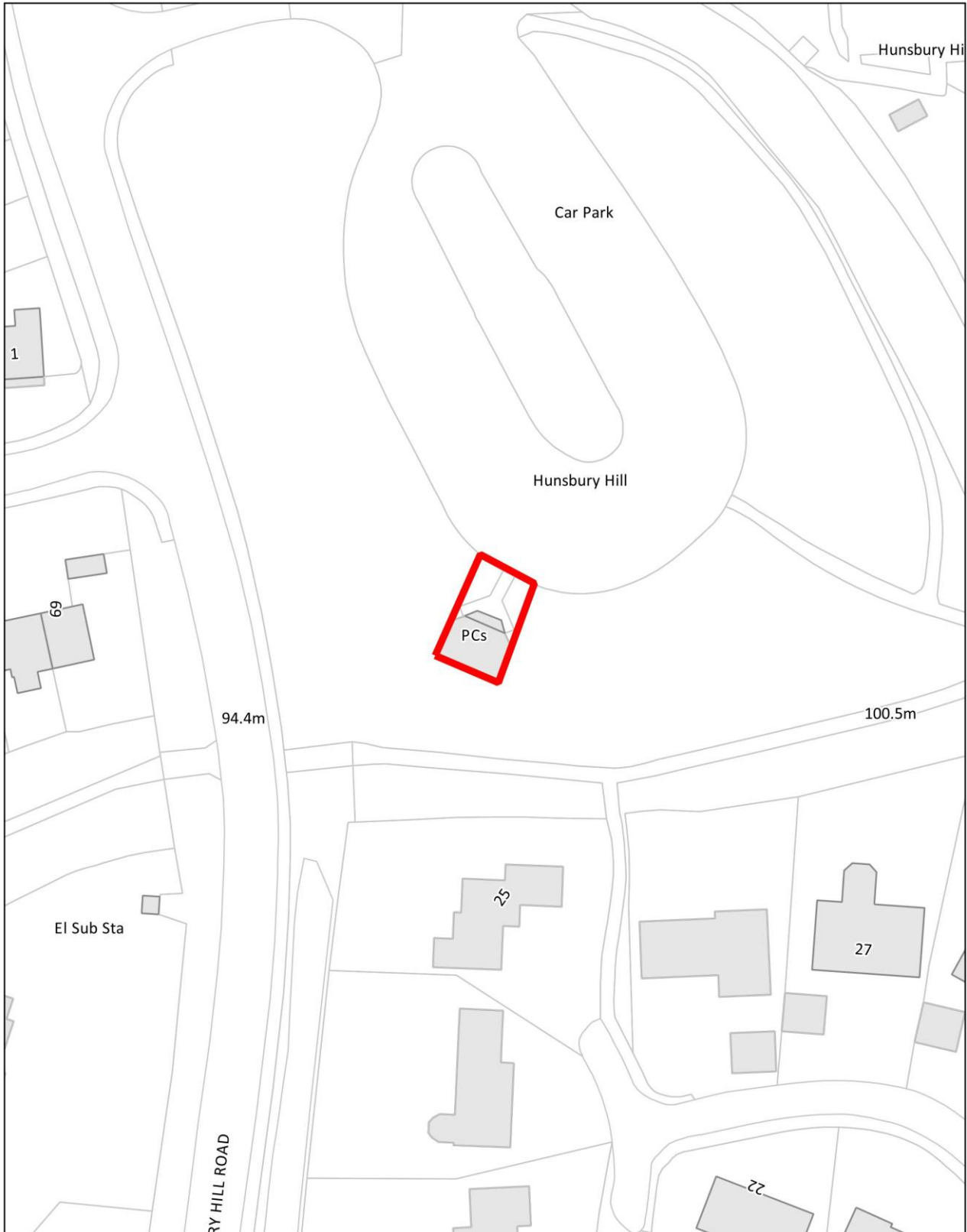
- 11.1 N/2015/0791.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None.

13. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 13.1 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.



Title: **Drovers Return café, Hunsbury Hill Country Park**

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