

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 26th July 2016
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
DIRECTOR: Steven Boyes

APPLICATION REF: N/2016/0771

LOCATION: St Katherines Court, Castle Street

DESCRIPTION: External alterations to tower block including recladding and enclosure of balconies, refurbish communal areas and ground floor extensions

WARD: Castle Ward

APPLICANT: Northampton Partnership Homes
AGENT: rg+p Ltd

REFERRED BY: Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
REASON: Council 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 principle of the proposed development is acceptable and would not have any undue detrimental impact on the appearance and character of the area, amenity of neighbours, security and parking/highway safety and would be consistent with the aims and objectives of the policies of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Northampton Central Area Action Plan, Northampton Local Plan, Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan, National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG .

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The application proposes to refurbish/extend the 9 storey tower block and remodel the space around it in order to improve amenity for local residents. The distinct elements of the scheme can be summarised as follows:

- New external cladding to improve appearance and energy efficiency.
- Enclose balconies with glazing, and provide external planting boxes.
- New ground floor extension to create improved entrance and communal area, new cycle, buggy and bin stores.
- Remodel the open space and security arrangements around the tower block.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application relates to a 1950's tower block (9 storeys) comprising 39 one bedroom flats. The site is located in an area south of Castle Street between Phoenix Street and Pike Lane, in a wider residential area of varying housing types and design.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 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), Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies, Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013) and Spring Borough Neighbourhood Plan.

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:

Section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes.

Section 7 – Requiring good design.

Section 8 – Promoting healthy communities.

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:

H1 – Housing.

S10 – Sustainable development principles.

5.3 Northampton Central Area Action Plan 2013

The Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) provides specific planning policy and guidance for the town centre and adjoining areas where significant regeneration and investment is proposed in the period up to 2026 and is in conformity with the objectives of the NPPF. Relevant policies include:

Policy 1 – Promoting Design Excellence.

Policy 24 – Spring Boroughs. This policy supports the regeneration of the area in circumstances where much of the housing stock in the borough is of poor quality and there is need to improve inadequate standards of amenity for residents.

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 – New development (design).

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

5.6 **Other Material Considerations**

Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan

The Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan was made in April 2016, and now forms part of the development plan for Northampton. The Plan seeks to support proposals which improve the quality of the environment, community facilities, infrastructure, security and connectivity.

6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **NCC Ecology** - The County Ecologist has stated that providing the recommendations of the ecological report are implemented the impacts on biodiversity will be negligible. Attention is drawn to the need to protect nesting birds.
- 6.2 **Police Crime Prevention Adviser** – have previous discussions with the applicant on the proposal; security advice on access doors, windows, letter boxes, lift and access control. Development to accord with principle of Planning Out Crime.
- 6.3 The consultation period has not expired at the time when this report is prepared. Any additional representation received will be reported to the Committee via the addendum.

7. **APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 This application seeks to refurbish a 1950's tower block to improve the amenity of its residents, and of the surrounding area. The main issues to be taken into consideration are the principle of the proposals, and impacts on visual amenity and amenities of neighbours, contamination and ecology.

Principle

- 7.2 The thrust of national and local policy is to seek sustainable improvements to the local environment, and housing stock. The proposed measures to improve the living conditions, and external appearance of the building and immediate surroundings are therefore in accordance with these aims.

Impact on Amenity

- 7.3 The building is currently faced in light buff brick with buff coloured concrete window surrounds. It has open balconies with metal railings set in a linear central strip on the northern and central elevations. A key feature of the renovation works is to enclose the open balconies with sliding, partially opening glazed balustrade panelling. Planters will be provided on the external side of the glazing to balconies. Curtain walling will close off the open staircase on the eastern elevation.

- 7.4 With the exception of the ground floor, the entire building is to be clad in a durable, weatherproof laminate material. The proposed colour scheme consists of a palette of three different colours (Grey, Off-White and Yellow) laid in a linear theme. A contrasting brick is to be used on the ground floor extensions, with use of stone on areas of new walling.
- 7.5 The size of the building will mean that cladding will be visible for some distance. However the proposed colours are subdued and pastel in nature and therefore not considered to be obtrusive. It is considered that the proposed use of glass, cladding and planters will enhance the modernist design of the original building, and will improve the appearance of the building and the surrounding area.
- 7.6 New flat roofed extensions are proposed at the ground floor level to the front and western elevations of the building to create an improved entrance, bin and cycle/buggy storage areas. The horizontal emphasis of the extensions sits well with the defined linear features of the existing building and therefore acceptable in design terms.
- 7.7 The ground floor extensions will project a further 10m to the west. Two modestly sized bungalows (52 & 54 Doddridge Street) which also face north are located in this area. The amenities of the occupiers of these dwellings are not considered to be adversely affected as there will be a separation distance of some 11m between the extension and the front of the nearest dwelling, the extension will be offset so it will not be dominant from frontal aspects from the bungalows. As the entrance to the bin storage area will be to the front, any disturbance through noise to the occupiers of Nos 52 & 54 should be minimised and will improve the existing arrangements where the doors are sited towards Nos 52 & 54.
- 7.8 The existing grounds around the building are open and consist of areas of lawn bounded by mature hedging and interspersed with several trees. The open space is prone to fly tipping, and requires considerable maintenance. The proposal includes remodelling the open space and security arrangements around the tower block. The Crime Prevention Officer was closely involved in the pre-application stage. Measures of security include:
1. Replacing the grassed area to the front with pavements and low maintenance amenity planting.
 2. Provision of low stone wall benches incorporating lighting.
 3. A section of 2m high fence will enclose part of the perimeter of the site.
 4. Paths to be resurfaced with resin bonded gravel.
 5. New fire escape doors will be secured with 2.1m high palisade fencing.
 6. A functional residents grow garden is proposed in the south eastern area of the open space.
- 7.9 These proposals will visibly improve the immediate environment around the building. The proposals are considered to be acceptable and will have a positive effect on a building and area in need of upgrade.

Contamination

- 7.10 A large underground oil tank lies adjacent to the western elevation of the tower block in the area where the proposed extension is to be built. The fuel tank must be decommissioned before it can be built over. A desk top study accompanying the application has identified possible contaminants on site. In line with the findings of the study, planning conditions are recommended which require further investigation into potential contamination, the submission of a remediation scheme and the implementation of the agreed remediation scheme.

Ecology

7.11 A preliminary ecological appraisal has been submitted in support of the application. The study has recommended a bird box should be installed at the site and new planting and landscaping to provide for nesting and foraging opportunities. Planning conditions are therefore recommended to provide such installation including retention of existing trees on site.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The proposals accord with national and local policy, and will result in improving the character and appearance of the building and the area. It is therefore recommended that planning permission should be granted subject to the following conditions.

9. 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 approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 40611/013D, 40611/014, 40611/015D, 50147/01.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the planning application.

3. Prior to the commencement of the extension hereby permitted, an investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed),
 - adjoining land,
 - ground water and surface water,
 - ecological systems,
 - archaeological site.
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4. Prior to the commencement of the extension hereby permitted, a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings, and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures.

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

5. The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

6. Details of the materials and glazing to be used for the external surfaces of the building and surface material for the pathways and other hard surfaced areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved details shall be implemented prior to the commencement of the use of the extension hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the building and the visual amenities and character of the locality in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

7. Full details of the method of the treatment of the external boundaries of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, implemented prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the boundaries of the site are properly treated so as to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

8. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the site. The scheme shall include, where present, the location and species of any existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan. This is a pre-commencement condition as details of external appearance are fundamental to the development.

9. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and which shall be maintained for a period of five years; such maintenance to include the replacement in the current or nearest planting season whichever is the sooner or shrubs that may die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased with others of similar size and species.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy 1 of the Central Area Action Plan.

10. All trees shown to be retained in the approved plans shall be protected for the duration of the development by stout fences to be erected and maintained on alignments to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development works shall take place. Within the fenced area no development works shall take place on, over or under the ground, no vehicles shall be driven, nor plant

sited, no materials or waste shall be deposited, no bonfires shall be lit nor the ground level altered during the periods of development.

Reason: In order to ensure adequate protection of existing trees on the site in the interests of achieving a satisfactory standard of development and maintaining the amenity of the locality in accordance with Policy BN3 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure trees are protected.

11. Full details of the provision of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved details shall be implemented prior to the commencement of the use of the extension hereby permitted and the agreed details retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife conservation in accordance with Policy BN2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

12. Details of the type and location of a bird box at the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved details shall be implemented prior to the commencement of the extensions hereby approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife conservation in accordance with Policy BN2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

Informative:

The applicants attention is drawn to the possibility that the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal may need to be updated in the event development does not commence within 12 months of the date of this decision.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

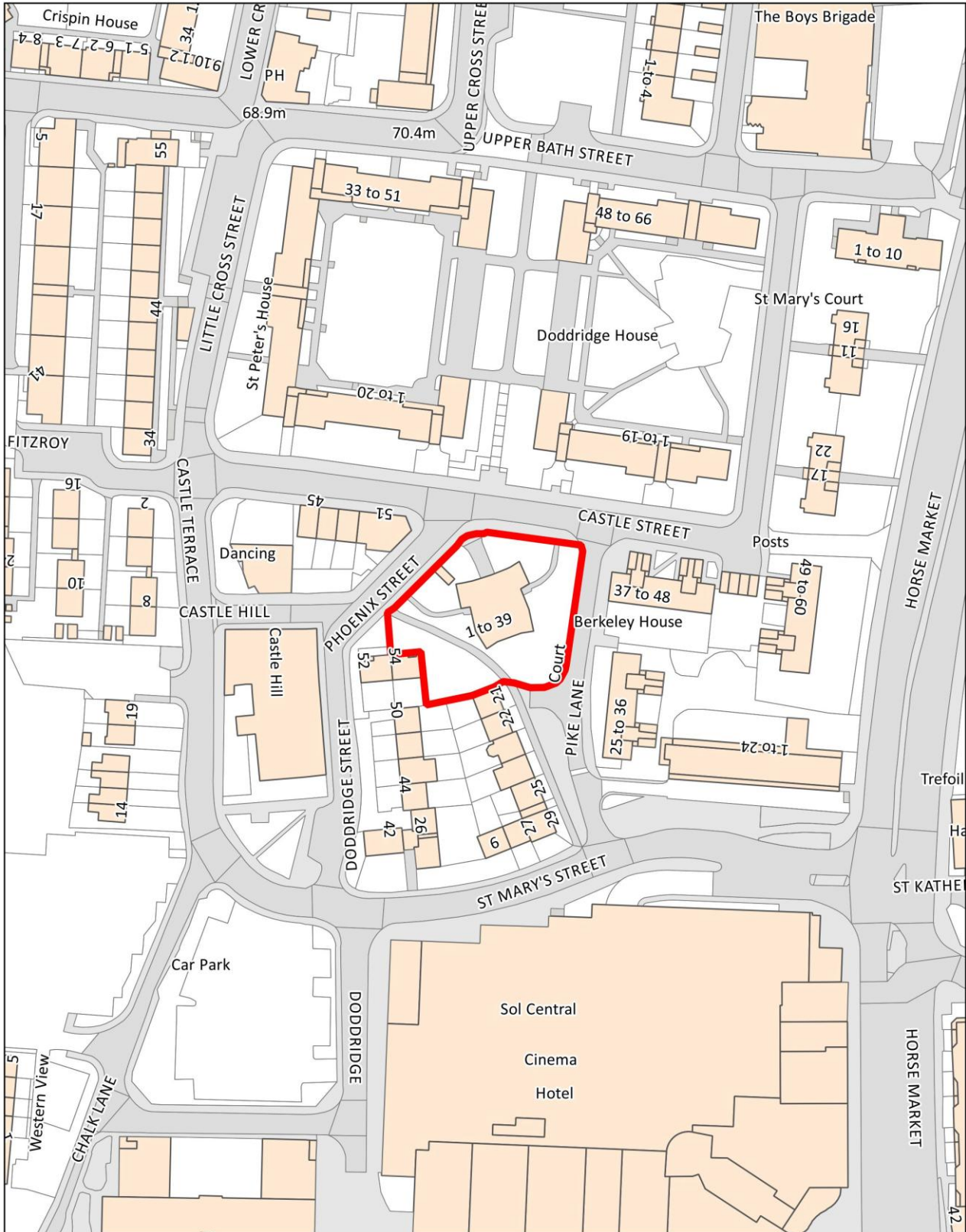
10.1 Application File N/2016/0565.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 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: **St Katherines Court**

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Date: 14-07-2016

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