

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2016/1385

**LOCATION:** Dover Court , St James Road

**DESCRIPTION:** Change of use of two existing communal rooms within a block of flats into two one bedroom self-contained dwellings

**WARD:** St James Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northampton Partnership Homes  
**AGENT:** David Smith Associates

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**REASON:** Council owned land

**DEPARTURE:** No

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#### **APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATION**

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

The proposed development represents an acceptable use of accommodation and is complementary to the surrounding land uses. It is considered that a satisfactory standard of development would be created with a neutral impact on the amenities of surrounding properties. The development is therefore in conformity with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework; Policies S10 and H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

#### **2. THE PROPOSAL**

##### **2.1** Permission is sought to change the use of two communal rooms within the existing block of flats to provide two one bedroomed self-contained flats.

#### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

##### **3.1** The application site consists of a three storey block of flats located on the north side of St James Road, immediately to the west of the River Nene, and close to the railway station and shops on St. James Road. Pedestrian access to the flats is from St James Road, with vehicular access from Byfield Road to the north. The site is served by a car park with parking for 28 cars, secure cycle parking and bin storage.

#### **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) 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 49 advises that proposals for housing should be encouraged within the context of promoting sustainable development; where a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, any relevant development management policies cannot be considered to be up to date.

Paragraph 14 requires that in instances where the development plan is silent or out of date, the overarching aim of providing sustainable development should be used to determine planning applications.

Paragraph 50 advises that in terms of providing additional housing, planning proposals should provide a variety of housing types in order to meet the wide range of differing needs for housing.

Paragraph 17 requires that planning decisions should proactively support sustainable development, mitigating impacts on amenity and facilitating mixed uses.

##### **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 S1: The Distribution of Development - states that new developments will be concentrated primarily in and adjoining the existing principal urban area of Northampton.

Policy S3: Scale and Distribution of Housing Development - requires the construction of approximately 18,870 houses within Northampton Borough over the plan period.

Policy S10: Sustainable Development Principles - requires that new developments be located where services and facilities can be accessed by walking, cycling or public transport.

Policy H1: Housing Density and Mix and Type of Dwellings - requires that a mixture of house types are provided, which should be of varying sizes, types and tenures.

#### 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 – seeks to ensure new development reflects the character of the surrounding area and provides adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.

#### 5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016)

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

### 6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

#### 6.1 **NCC Highways** – no comments received

#### 6.2 **NBC Public Protection** – recommend that the flat facing out towards St James Road is subject to a noise condition in relation to road traffic noise.

### 7. **APPRAISAL**

#### **Principle of development**

7.1 Dover Court consists of 49 flats with two communal rooms on the ground floor, originally allocated for use as a laundry room and as a general communal room. These rooms have become surplus to requirements and it is proposed to convert each room to a self-contained one bedroom flat. Each flat will consist of a hallway, kitchen, lounge, bedroom and bathroom. The flats are commensurate in size to the existing ground floor flats and will, therefore, provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation. The redevelopment of the rooms for residential use is complementary to the surrounding units and is therefore acceptable. In addition the development would contribute (albeit on a small scale) to meeting the established need for housing in the Borough.

#### **Design and Appearance**

7.2 External alterations to the building to accommodate the proposal will consist of the replacement of a single high level window with two windows in the elevation facing the river and adjacent footpath, and the replacement of a door with a window in the elevation facing the car park. The windows will match the size of windows to existing flats on these elevations, and will be UPVC to match. It is not considered the proposal will detrimentally impact on the character or appearance of the building or the surrounding area.

#### **Parking and Refuse**

7.3 Dover Court has recently been subject to improvements, which have included the resurfacing and laying out of the car park, with the provision of a secure cycle shed and an area for bin storage. There are currently 28 car parking spaces (recently increased from 21). Due to this provision, the siting of a lockable cycle shed and the site's location in a sustainable area, it is considered the addition of two flats is acceptable and will not unduly impact on neighbouring amenity or existing parking conditions.

## **Other matters**

- 7.4 The Public Protection Officer has recommended that the flat facing out towards St James Road is subject to a noise condition in relation to road traffic noise. As the existing property is all in residential use without this requirement, it is considered unreasonable to apply this condition in this instance.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Taking the above into account it is considered that the conversion of two unused rooms within the existing block of flats to self-contained units is in compliance with policy requirements and is therefore recommended for approval.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

(1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun either 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 plans: 16/22512/SK100, 16/22512/01 Rev P5, 16/22512/02 Rev P5, 16/22512/12 Rev P1, 16/22512/51 Rev P2.

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

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

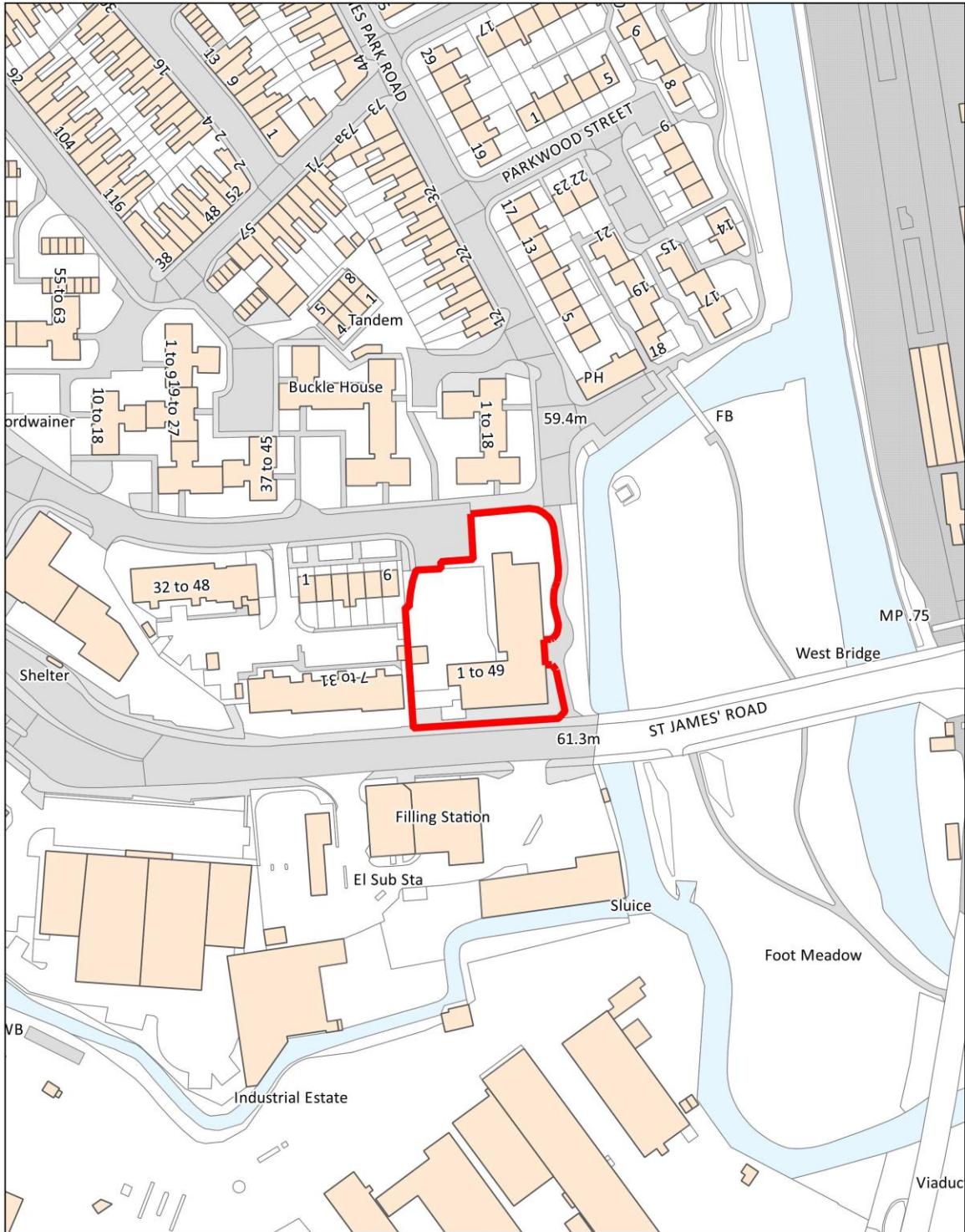
- 10.1 N/2016/1385

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The development is not CIL liable.

## **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: Dover Court, St James Road**

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**Date:** 07-11-2016

**Scale:** 1:1,500

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