

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 14th February 2017
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
HEAD OF PLANNING: Peter Baguley

APPLICATION REF: N/2016/1297

LOCATION: 69 Allen Road

DESCRIPTION: Change of use from single dwelling to 2 self-contained flats,
together with retention of external staircase
WARD: Abington Ward

APPLICANT: Mr Steve Cunningham
AGENT: Arcteck Designs

REFERRED BY: Councillor D Stone
REASON: Loss of family house and pressure on parking

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

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

The development would have no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area, or on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, whilst securing a suitable level of amenity for the future occupiers of the development. The proposal would not result in any increased detrimental impact on highway amenity. The proposal is therefore in conformity with Policies H1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policies E20, H21 and H23 of the Northampton Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal is for the change of use of an existing three bedroom dwelling to two one-bedroom flats. One of the flats would be accessed directly from the street and would have a living room, dining room and kitchen on the ground floor, with access from the kitchen to the covered bike and bin store to the rear. This flat would also have a bedroom at first floor level, accessed by an enclosed staircase. The second flat would be accessed by means of a separate door from the street leading to the rear, and then by an external metal staircase leading to the rear of the first floor. The retention of this staircase forms part of the proposal. A living room and kitchen would be provided at first floor with a bedroom on the second floor, within an existing rear dormer. The first floor flat would also have access to the covered bin and bike store and a small area of outdoor amenity space.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application site consists of a two storey house with rooms in the roofspace, within an existing dormer. The dwelling is within a street of similar properties.

4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

N/2006/0292 – Conversion of existing dwelling into two flats – Refused 05/07/2006

N/2015/1412 – Single storey rear extension - Retrospective application – Refused 17/02/2016

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 17 - seeks to secure high quality design and good standard of amenity for existing and proposed occupiers.

Paragraph 49 - housing applications considered with presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 50 - to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community.

Paragraph 56 - good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

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 – Distribution of Development – States that development will be concentrated primarily in and adjoining principal urban area of Northampton.

Policy H1 – Housing Density & Mix & Type of Dwellings – States that development should provide for a mix of house types, sizes and tenures to cater for different accommodation needs. Housing developments will be expected to make the most efficient use of land having regard to the location and setting of the site, the existing character and density of the local area, accessibility to services and facilities, proximity to public transport routes, the implications of

density for affordability and viability, the living conditions provided for future residents, the impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Policy S10 – Sustainable Development Principles – States that development will achieve the highest standards of sustainable design incorporating safety and security considerations and a strong sense of place.

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 – The design of a new building or extension should adequately reflect the character of its surroundings in terms of layout, siting, form, scale and use of appropriate materials and be designed, located and used in a manner which ensures adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.

H21 – Conversion to flats – This policy states that “Planning permission will not be granted for the conversion of a house into flats where it is considered that the introduction of or increase in the number of conversions would prejudice the character or amenity of a particular locality, irrespective of whether or not the house is suitable for conversion”.

H23 – Conversion to flats – States that “Planning permission will not be granted for the conversion to flats of a dwelling with a combined ground and first floor area (measured internally) of 100 square metres or less and with a frontage (measured internally) of less than 4.7 metres.”

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 **Environmental Health** - No comments to make.

6.2 **Local Highway Authority** - The proposed development contains a total of two bedrooms, whilst the existing property contains three. Therefore, the LHA considers the proposed development to be less intensive in terms of generating demand for on street parking.

6.3 **Councillor D Stone** – There is a shortage of family housing, this will increase pressures on the neighbourhood in terms of parking, waste and services. Called in application for consideration by the Planning Committee. Councillor Stone also requested a meeting with the Local Highway Authority to discuss parking, which has now taken place.

7. **APPRAISAL**

7.1 The issues to consider are the acceptability of the principle of the proposed development, the impact on the amenities of adjoining residents, the impact in respect of highway congestion and demand for parking, and the suitability of the proposed accommodation for the needs of future occupiers.

Principle of Development

- 7.2 In considering the principle of development, regard must be given to the relevant development plan policies. Policy H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy states that development should provide for a mix of house types, sizes and tenures to cater for different needs and to make the most efficient use of land. It is considered that the current proposal would comply with the aims of this policy in providing smaller units of self-contained accommodation, for which there is a need.
- 7.3 Also relevant are the saved policies of the Local Plan. Policy H21 is concerned with the character of the area and states that planning permission will not be granted where this character would be prejudiced by the number of conversions. Within the street as a whole there are few properties in use as flats, therefore retaining a prevailing character of single dwellings, only a few of these being houses in multiple occupation. It is considered, therefore, that the proposal would not adversely affect the character of the area.
- 7.4 Policy H23 of the Local Plan sets criteria for the floorspace and frontage length requirements of a property, below which permission would not be granted for a change of use to flats. In this case the property exceeds these criteria and therefore complies with this Policy.

Suitability of accommodation

- 7.5 In terms of the suitability of the accommodation for future occupiers, each of the flats would have a separate access from the street and also access to the proposed cycle and bin storage area to the rear. The internal layout of the flats is considered to be appropriate to this type of accommodation.

Impact on adjoining occupiers

- 7.6 The proposal would introduce an additional unit of accommodation into the building, but this would not necessarily increase the number of occupants, given that the existing property has three bedrooms as well as a first floor kitchen, which could be converted to a fourth bedroom. It is considered, therefore, that the level of use as proposed would not have any greater impact than the current lawful use.
- 7.7 The proposal includes the retention of the existing staircase, which leads to the first floor of the property, which has been previously installed without permission. In considering the impact of this, the use of the staircase would be infrequent as this is only to be used for access, and that this would not lead to a significant impact on the neighbouring occupants in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy.

Parking / highway issues

- 7.8 The application premises are located in a street of terraced houses, with no off street parking available, in common with the majority of other properties in the area.
- 7.9 The existing dwelling has three bedrooms whereas the proposal is for two flats each with one bedroom. Comments from the Local Highway Authority indicate that in their view this would result in a less intensive use of the property, in respect of demand for car parking.
- 7.10 It can also be noted that the site is in a relatively sustainable location, very close to a small local centre at the end of Allen Road, as well as within a reasonable walking distance of Wellingborough Road local centre, with regular bus services to the town centre.
- 7.11 It would not be necessary for future occupiers to have cars, although on the basis of comments from the LHA, it is not considered that if residents did have cars, this would lead to a significant

issue in respect of increased demand for parking. Cycle storage is proposed to be provided to the rear and a condition requiring that this is provided is proposed.

Planning History – Previous Refusals

- 7.12 A previous application for conversion to two flats was refused in 2006. The reasons for this refusal related to the layout of the property, the lack of cycle storage for the first floor flat, the potential for noise transmission to neighbouring properties and the lack of amenity space for the first floor flat.
- 7.13 In respect of the first of these reasons, the layout has been amended such that both the ground and first floor flats would have access to the rear of the property, including the proposed cycle and refuse storage as well as an area of outdoor amenity space.
- 7.14 In respect of the previous reason for refusal regarding impact on neighbouring properties, it can be noted that no objection in this respect has been received from Environmental Health, and that this is a matter which would be dealt with under the Building Regulations. It can be noted that this reason for refusal was based on Policy H19 of the Local Plan, which is not a saved policy.
- 7.15 Accordingly it is considered that the previous reasons for refusal have now been overcome by the current proposals.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed conversion of the property to two self-contained flats is not considered to result in any detrimental impact on the character of the area or on the amenities of adjoining residential occupiers. In respect of demand for parking, it is noted that the proposal would not necessarily result in any increase in demand and that the site is within a sustainable location. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

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 permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1256-16/01, 1256-16/02 Rev A.

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

(3) Facilities for the storage of refuse and materials for recycling shall be provided in accordance with the details as shown on the approved plans prior to the occupation or bringing into use of the flats hereby approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

(4) Facilities for the secure and covered parking of bicycles shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans prior to the occupation of the flats hereby approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: To secure the provision of adequate facilities in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

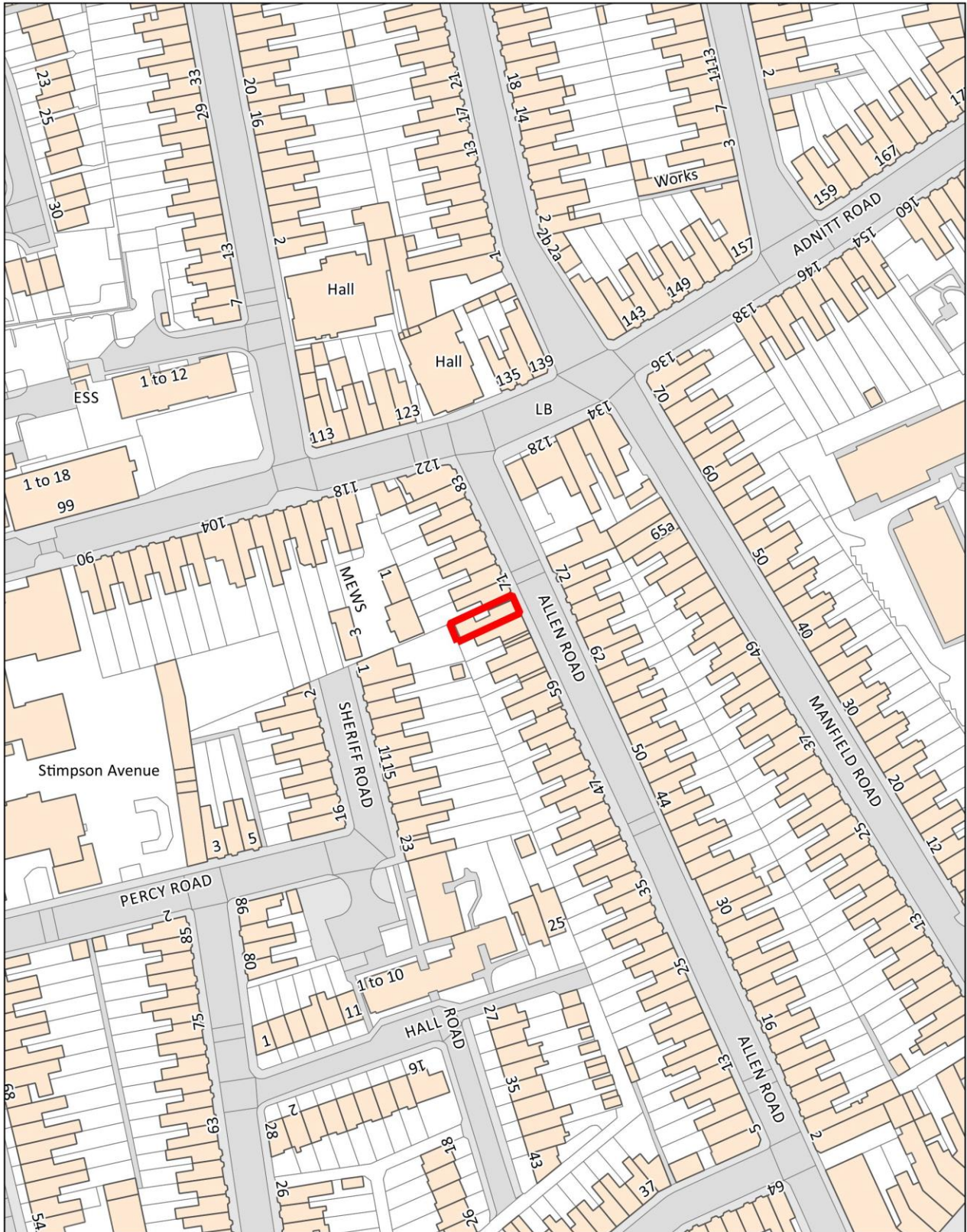
10.1 Application file N/2016/1297.

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: **69 Allen Road**

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Date: 30-01-2017

Scale: 1:1,250

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