NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Planning Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE:	**10th April 2018**
DIRECTORATE:	**Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning**
HEAD OF PLANNING:	**Peter Baguley**
APPLICATION REF:	**N/2018/0081**
LOCATION:	**Beaumont House , Cliftonville**
DESCRIPTION:	**Extension to existing building to form fourth floor to create 13 additional residential apartments and external alterations to the building**
WARD:	**Rushmills Ward**
APPLICANT:	**Mr Colin Clayson**
AGENT:	**Mr Richard Colson**
REFERRED BY:	**Councillor P Flavell**
REASON:	**Development in line with Planning Policies**
DEPARTURE:	**No**

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 **REFUSAL** for the following reason:

By reason of the siting, scale and massing of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposal would further emphasise the incongruous character of the building resulting in a significant adverse impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent listed building to the east contrary to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework; Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy; and Policy 1 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The applicant seeks full planning permission to erect an additional storey on top of the existing building. The additional storey would take the form of a mansard roof style structure and would contain 13 additional dwellings. The development would comprise six two-bedroom apartments and seven one-bedroom units.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application site consists of a disused office block, located on the periphery of the town centre. As a result, the surrounding land uses are a combination of residential and commercial uses. Car parking within the area is generally met through the provision of on-street spaces,

although some properties have their own parking provision. Whilst the property was originally constructed as an office block, a prior notification application was approved in 2014 to convert the building to 47 flats.

3.2 The site is adjacent to the Billing Road Conservation Area. A notable feature of Billing Road is that buildings are generally of a relatively consistent scale and position within the streetscene. The existing Beaumont House does not reflect the design and appearance of other buildings on Billing Road, its height means that it is relatively prominent as compared with the more historic buildings.

3.3 The application site is also adjacent to the Grade II Listed Beaumont Villa, which is an Italianate style building dating from 1860. Whilst the style of this building is very different from the modern Beaumont House and is located on a lower level and with a more a restricted height, Beaument House has formed the background to Beaumont Villa and part of the existing setting for this listed building. In addition, there are other listed buildings in close proximity to the east including Sunnyside and Springfield.

3.4 Due to Billing Road being heavily used, the application site is of a significant level of prominence and is also a key site in defining the character of the wider area. The topography of the area also contributes to the prominence of the site. In particular, the side streets running north-south from Billing Road have clear views of the site, which serve to draw attention to it.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 N/2016/0351 – Extension to existing building to create fourth floor and 10 apartments – Refused and subsequent appeal dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on the grounds that the proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Beaumont Villa and the setting of the Billing Road Conservation Area.

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 the Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013).

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving a listed building or its setting and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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:

17 – Principles of the planning system
49 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development for housing applications
131 – Conservation of heritage assets

132 – Assessment of the significance of heritage assets
133 – Weighing harm to heritage assets against the benefits

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:

BN5 – Historic Environment and Landscape
S10 – Sustainable Development Principles

5.4 **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 policy includes:

1 – Promoting Design Excellence

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016)

6. CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

Comments received are summarised as follows:

6.1 **Anglian Water** – Request a condition regarding drainage, in the event of planning permission being approved.

6.2 **Conservation (NBC)** – Object. The proposed extension would significantly increase the height and overall bulk and prominence of the building in the streetscene. Notwithstanding the mansard roof, the extra bulk and the resultant increased visual dominance would harm the setting of the adjacent grade II listed Beaumont Villa and would be intrusive in views along Billing Road, failing to preserve or enhance the setting, character and appearance of Billing Road Conservation Area. The development would thereby be contrary to the provisions of Sections 66 and 72 of the Listed Buildings Act and paragraph 132 of the NPPF, which attaches great weight to the conservation of heritage assets and their settings. Although the extension would provide some additional units of accommodation on a brownfield site, it would not outweigh the permanent harm to the setting, character and appearance of the identified heritage assets.

6.3 **Development Management (NCC)** – Make recommendations regarding fire hydrants and broadband provision.

6.4 **Environmental Health (NBC)** – Recommend conditions regarding noise investigation and mitigation in the event of an approval of planning permission.

6.5 **Highway Authority (NCC)** – The proposed parking provision is acceptable, but make recommendations regarding the minimum width of access and the position of any boundary gates.

6.6 **Northamptonshire Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – No objections, but make recommendations regarding access control systems.

6.7 **Councillor P. Flavell** – Requesting that the application be determined by the Planning Committee on the grounds that the development would comply with the requirements of planning policies.

6.8 Six letters of support. Comments can be summarised as:

- The proposed development is of an acceptable design and would improve the appearance of the building
- The proposal would have a neutral impact on neighbouring properties
- The development would facilitate the reuse of the building

6.9 Two further letters from nearby owners questioning the possibility of light restriction due to the proposal.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 It is noted that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply, to which this development would make a contribution (albeit small) to addressing. However, under the requirements of the NPPF, where such a supply cannot be demonstrated, applications should be judged on the basis of whether they represent sustainable development.

7.2 In this particular instance, it is considered that the existing building already has a significant impact upon the surrounding historic environment by reason of its design that is notably divergent from the character of the site's environs. This can be exemplified by the building being of bulky proportions that do not feature any of the architectural features that are notable on the surrounding buildings.

7.3 In addition, the design of the application site (when differing land levels are taken into account) means that the height of Beaumont House is comparable to that of the adjacent Grade II Listed Beaumont Villa from a certain view points and forms the backdrop of this listed building.

7.4 The proposed development would result in the creation of an additional storey that would increase the height of the building and would exacerbate the incongruous nature of the building's design, which would serve to direct an undue amount of attention towards the building and away from the features within the street that are of more historical and architectural interest. In addition, the design of the existing building's utilitarian appearance, which is in contrast to the mansard roof design that has been proposed, would serve to add to the prominence of the proposed development and would result in a 'top heavy' form of design. Furthermore, neither design approaches are particularly common within the vicinity of the site, which would serve to highlight the incongruous form of development. Whilst it is appreciated that the development represents an extension of an existing building, the proposal would exacerbate an existing negative situation, which should not serve as a reason for permitting development that fails to comply with national and local planning policies.

7.5 In addition, the increased height of the building would mean that it would not be of a similar height to the adjacent Grade II Listed Beaumont Villa. The resultant development would therefore impinge upon the setting of this heritage asset by the creation of a bulky addition that is in marked contrast to the distinctiveness of the architecture of Beaumont Villa that would result in a visual dominance of Beaumont House and would harm the setting of the Listed Building.

7.6 Whilst it is appreciated that the previous proposal, which was the subject of an unsuccessful appeal, was of a different design, there are some parallels between this and the current scheme as they are of similar character. In considering the appeal for the previous scheme, the Inspector concluded that:

"The proposed development would therefore exacerbate the bulky and utilitarian appearance of the appeal building. In doing so, it would draw attention to a building of highly modern appearance in stark contrast with Beaumont Villa and the traditional buildings on the opposite side of Billing Road. In my view this contrast and diversion of attention would harm the significance of the group of high quality historic buildings".

7.7 The appeal was decided in April 2017. Given the limited passage of time since then, an unchanged planning policy context and no significant alterations within the character of the surrounding area, it is considered that the conclusions of the Inspector are material to the outcome of this application. Due to there being comparable massing between the appeal and current proposals, it is considered that the Inspector's conclusions are relevant to the determination of this application and the harm identified carries some weight.

7.8 Whilst it is appreciated that any impact upon the amenities of surrounding properties in terms of matters such as light, outlook and privacy would not be significant; that a satisfactory level of amenity could be secured for future occupiers of the development; and that there would be a neutral impact upon the highway system owing to the availability of car parking on site and proximity of the site to the town centre, this does not outweigh the harm as previously identified.

7.9 It is considered that the points raised by Environmental Health, Highways and Anglian Water could be addressed via conditions if needs be and as such planning permission could not reasonably be resisted on these grounds. Whilst the comments from NCC Development Management in respect of broadband and fire hydrants, these matters are site management issues and addressed under building regulations, respectively.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Whilst it is acknowledged that the development would provide additional units of residential accommodation, it is considered that the harm to the visual amenity and the historic environment would mean that the proposal fails to accord with the requirements of national and local planning policies.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

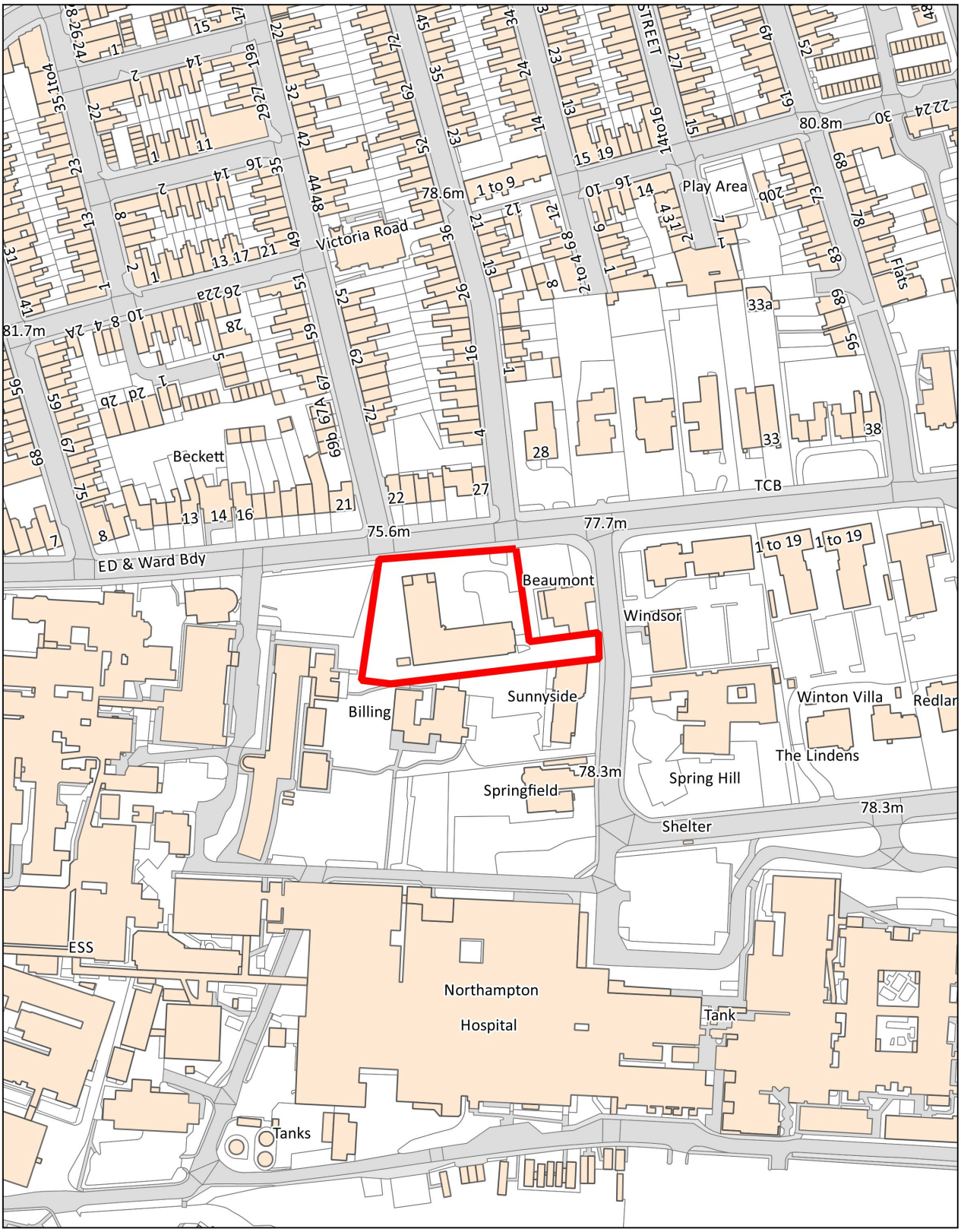
10.1 N/2016/0351 - Appeal Decision dated the 12th April 2017.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The development is 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.



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title: **Beaumont House, Cliftonville**

Date: 20-03-2018

Scale: 1:2,000

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