

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 7th June 2018
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
HEAD OF PLANNING: Peter Baguley

APPLICATION REF: N/2018/0364

LOCATION: Castle Mound Site , St Andrews Road

DESCRIPTION: Repairs and landscaping of open green space including restoration of existing railing, steps and heritage boards. Installation of fencing along the top of the existing brick wall running along St Andrews Road. Landscaping will include removal of small trees and clearance of ground vegetation. Inclusion of a new play-maze and footpath along length of the site also to be included

WARD: Castle Ward

APPLICANT: Northampton Partnership Homes
AGENT: N/A

REFERRED BY: Head of 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 proposed works would preserve and enhance the historic Castle Mound site, the only remaining part of Northampton Castle. The works would enhance the interpretation of the history of the site and would have no impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers. The proposal therefore complies with Policies S10 and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 1 and 24 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan, Policy AB3 of the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for the repair and landscaping of the existing green space, including the restoration of railings, steps and heritage boards. A new path will be installed including a timber boardwalk bridge, boulders to represent the castle wall and a play maze with low stone walling to represent the castle rooms.
- 2.2 New 1m high mesh fencing will be installed on top of the existing boundary wall. Existing pathway would be resurfaced and improved.

3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site comprises an area of public open space which forms part of the site of Northampton Castle. The site is undulating in nature reflecting the remains of the castle and includes existing pathways and interpretation boards. The site is adjacent to a car park to the south, housing to the east and north and a main road to the west, beyond which is the car park of Northampton Station.
- 3.2 Access to the site is via a footpath from the car park to the south. The site is also accessible from St Andrews Road.

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 Central Area Action Plan (2013), and the adopted Spring Boroughs 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:

Paragraph 129 - Identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal

Paragraph 135 - The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. A balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

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:

S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
BN5 – The Historic Environment and Landscape

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 policies include:

Policy 1 – Promoting Design Excellence
Policy 24 – Spring Boroughs: Enhance the setting of the Castle Mound

5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016)
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 following policies are relevant to the determination of this proposal -

Policy AB3 – South Spring Boroughs: Heritage Gateway.

6 CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **NCC Archaeological Officer** – Confirm that revised plans address previous concerns as no new tree planting is now proposed and it has been confirmed that archaeological finds will not be placed under glazing. Recommend a standard archaeological condition amended to reflect that an approved scheme of investigation is in place but also to clarify that there shall be no glazing over found remains.
- 6.2 **Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – No objections.
- 6.3 **Historic England** – The proposed development of Castle Mound will enhance the character of Northampton Castle and will aid the regeneration of Spring Boroughs. Removal of some existing trees and vegetation will help to open up the site and make it more publically accessible. The ‘boardwalk / bridge’ over the alignment of the moat, glacial boulders representing the castle wall, maze partly demarcating rooms in the inner bailey and information boards will improve public appreciation and understanding of the castle. The two aspects (public display of part of the barbican and new tree planting) of the original proposals that were of concern have now been omitted from the amended proposals. Consider that the application meets the requirements of the NPPF.
- 6.4 **NBC Conservation** - The site itself is not a designated heritage asset, however, whilst not part of the Scheduled Monument, the site is historically sensitive as it forms part of the former Northampton Castle site. The site should therefore be considered a non-designated heritage asset. The principle of enhancing the area with features designed to encourage a greater appreciation of the historic value of the area is welcomed. It will however be very important to ensure the works are sympathetic to the known significance of the site and the buried archaeology ensuring the archaeological remains are safeguarded, enhanced and better appreciated.
- 6.5 **Arboricultural Officer** - The arboricultural proposals supporting the application to develop the Landscape Park are well considered and in the context of the proposed development are entirely justified and reasonable, raise no objections to the suggested tree removals.
- 6.6 **On letter of support** from a local resident – the proposal to enhance the Castle Mound area with heritage trail and measures to make the area more accessible to local residents and those interested in local history is very welcome on a long neglected but important historic site.

7 APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The issues to be considered are the impact on the historical significance of remaining parts of the Castle Mound and the extent to which the understanding of the significance of the site would be enhanced by the proposed works.
- 7.2 The works have been designed to both enhance the area and to provide better interpretation by making reference to the drawbridge, castle walls and the layout of rooms. As little of the castle site still remains, and little is visible within what does remain, this will allow for an enhanced interpretation of the site and a better appreciation of its history.
- 7.3 The comments made by relevant statutory consultees indicate no concerns as to any damage to the assets occurring subject to compliance with the submitted plans and in particular on the basis

that there is no display of archaeological finds under glazing, which is no longer seen as good practice. A condition to this effect is therefore proposed.

- 7.4 Tree planting had also been previously proposed, this also has been removed from the proposal as this has the potential to cause damage to archaeological remains. Removal of some trees to open up the site is proposed and this would enhance the site and has raised no objections from the Arboricultural Officer. The planting of flowers is also indicated however this element of the proposal does not in fact require permission, but would nevertheless enhance the site.
- 7.5 In respect of any impact on adjoining occupiers, it can be noted that the site is close to residential occupiers. However, the site is already open to the public and includes existing paths. Whilst the new works may increase access to the site it is not considered that this would be likely to result in significant numbers of new visitors in the long term. Therefore it is considered that the impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers would be limited and would be acceptable. No objection has been received from the Police Adviser who comments that it is not considered that anti-social behaviour would result.
- 7.6 The site is adjacent to a large surface car park from which access is available, and is within walking distance from both the town centre and the railway station, meaning there would be no concerns over parking requirements for those accessing the site.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed works would enhance a neglected area of the town centre and would enhance the historic area of the Castle Mound, the only remaining part of Northampton Castle. The works would enhance the interpretation of the history of the site and would additionally have no impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

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: Location Plan, N1477 GA_2B, Tree Location and Removal Plan, Timber Bridge Abutment Sketch, Timber Kit Bridge Type B.

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

(3) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the programme of archaeological work in accordance with the submitted written scheme of investigation (reference SP 7491 6055) except that archeological features shall not be preserved in situ with glazing.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological research in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

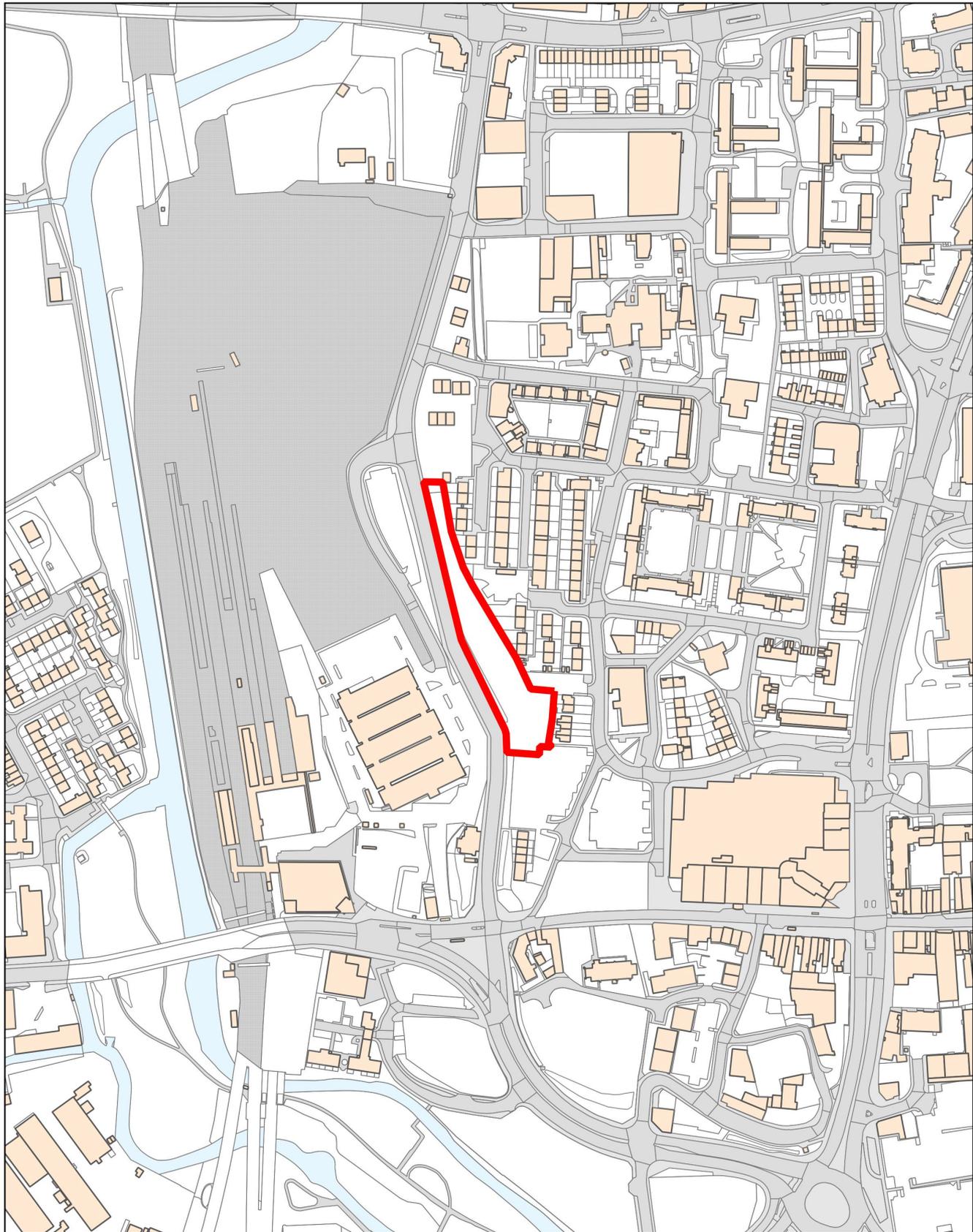
- 10.1 Application file N/2018/0364.

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: **Castle Mound, St Andrews Road**

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Date: 17-05-2018

Scale: 1:3,254

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