



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 23 August 2011
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2011/0558: Planning Application for a new road to link Nunn Mills Road with Ransome Road. The scheme incorporates three new bridges, including a single bridge over the existing rail crossing, together with improvements at the Bedford Road/Nunn Mills Road junction and reconfiguration to the existing public car parking located adjacent to Bedford Road. Nunn Mills Road/Ransome Road, Northampton

WARD: Delapre & Briar Hill

APPLICANT: West Northamptonshire Development Corporation
AGENT: Halcrow

REFERRED BY: Head Of Planning
REASON: Major Development

APPLICATION FOR CONSULTATION BY WNDC:

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that WNDC be advised that the Borough Council raises **NO OBJECTION TO THE PRINCIPLE** of the proposed development, provided that the issues below being fully addressed and the recommended planning conditions being attached to any grant of planning permission;
- 1.2 It is also recommended that should WNDC not give effect through planning conditions to the key areas of concern raised and agree to necessary S106 Planning Obligation to compensate for loss of open space in this report then the Head Of Planning be authorised to present the views of this Committee to the WNDC Northampton Planning Committee.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Applicant is seeking your Committees comments on a full planning application that seeks to provide a new highway connecting Ransome Rd with Nunn Mills Road.

- 2.2 Applicant seeks to provide a new highway connecting Ransome Rd with Nunn Mills Road to facilitate the larger regeneration of the area by opening up the locality for future commercial mixed use and residential developments. The entire route would have a length of 1.6 Km and would effectively provide a route linking Bedford Road with London Rd.
- 2.3 The intention is that the proposed development would be delivered in phases. An initial phase would involve upgrading the existing London Rd/Ransome Road junction and the specific upgrade of Ransome Road. Work on Ransome Road/London Road junction has commenced, this element forms part of a previous consent.
- 2.4 The current application relates to the second phase and seeks to specifically provide improvements to Nun Mills Road to provide a connection to Ransome Road. The proposal would also involve significant junction improvements at Bedford Road/ Nunn Mills Road.
- 2.5 The submitted scheme specifically includes two improvement schemes at the Bedford Road/Nunn Mills Road junction. These essentially seek to widen the road to improve traffic conditions at the junctions. Option one is considered to be an interim proposal and would involve being constructed initially and the second larger scheme would be constructed should future traffic growths request it.
- 2.6 Both of the proposed works involve the following works;
- An extended left turn lane from Bedford Road and:
 - An additional lane on Nunn Mills Road heading northwards over the river bridge
 - An additional left turn filter lane on Nunn Mills Road northbound, taken out of the signals, forming a give way priority with Bedford Road westbound.
- 2.7 The key difference between the first interim option and final stages of the proposed Bedford Rd westbound and Nunn Mills Road junction road design would be that in the initial phase would be the removal of the left turn filter lanes from Bedford Rd westbound and Nunn Mills Road northbound.
- 2.8 The interim improvement scheme is seeking to create a compact junction with reduced delays to pedestrians and cyclists and also seeks to minimise the amount of land taken up at the junction. Following advice from the Borough Council, further revised plans have been submitted to take the development way from Becketts Park and ensure that the existing mature trees, which align the boundary of the site, are retained.
- 2.9 The need for the final and second phase would therefore be re – assessed in the future.
- 2.10 The submitted proposal includes the following other key elements which would form part of the proposed works;

- The existing pay and display car park off Bedford adjacent to Midsummer Meadow would be extended into the open space and the existing access off Nunn Mills/Bedford Road junction would be closed and a new vehicular access would be provided off Bedford Road. The additional parking would utilise a grasscrete or reinforced grass involving a permeable plastic grid to minimise the paved area to the area.
- The width of Nunn Mills Road would be reduced between the Avon access and Ransome from 7.3 to 6.5m to provide a lower grade road. The speed limit at this part would be reduced from 30mph to 20 mph.
- A new bridge (Ransome Road Bridge) would be provided for access across the existing railway track. This would consist of 3 spans with a length of 47 m and constructed from pre cast concrete slabs. External features would include headwalls and parapets features. The bridge would contain brick arches as a feature. It would have a maximum height of 10.2 m, which includes 1.8 high parapets, and have a total length of approx 69 m.
- To meet with new highway standards a new replacement bridge (River Nene Bridge) is also proposed for the existing River Nene Bridge. This would span over the abutments/foundations of the existing bridge and designed to provide maximum clearance during periods of heavy flooding.
- Vehicular access to the Avon and Nunn Mills development sites would be provided via a new roundabout on Nunn Mills Road.
- Alterations in connection with the existing sluice gate bridge would involve the replacement of a small portion of the existing structure and the remaining part of the bridge remaining untouched. A dedicated vehicular access is to be also provided to enable the Environment Agency to maintain the sluice.
- Creation of a mini roundabout along Nunn Mills Rd to facilitate other junctions and open up the site and to allow for large vehicles to turn and manoeuvre.
- Environmental Improvements to the eastern section of Ransome Road.
- Development access to service existing uses on Nunn Mills Road.
- A new footpath and cycle path will be provided along the link route and this would involve part of the existing cycle/footpath outside the Avon site being realigned.
- Provision of a Mini roundabout at Nunn Mills Road to connect to Ransome Road.

2.11 With regard to drainage related matters, details have been submitted which relates to the drainage strategy, which includes storm water run off from neighbouring road catchments. The attenuation facilities would be sized to accommodate the increased run off which would ensure that the effect of the proposed road works on receiving water courses is no greater than at present, and takes into effect the impact of climate change. The road drainage design would cover any culverts required below the roadway to maintain connectivity with existing watercourses and those needed to serve future developments.

- 2.12 The proposal has been amended following discussions with your Borough Councils Officers the key changes include the submission of a Heritage Report and changes to the alterations to Bedford Road/Nunn Mills Road junction affecting Becket's Park and the Midsummer Meadow car park. The proposal has been revised to minimise the effect on Becket's Park and ensure the protection of major trees
- 2.13 The new road along Nunn Mills road would provide a 7.3 m wide carriageway between Bedford Road and Avon with a maximum speed limit of 30 mph. A 6.5m wide carriageway with a speed restriction of 20 mph would be provided between the Avon access and Ransome Road. The layout of the Nunn Mills Road/Ransome Road has been altered to provide a mini roundabout.
- 2.14 The application is accompanied with a Planning, Design and Access Statement, Transportation Assessment, Ecological Reports, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Ecological Reports and a Phase 1 Geo – Environmental Audit. A Tree Survey and Methodology were separated on the 2 August and a Heritage Statement was submitted on 4 August, along with revised details plans.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site lies to the south east of the town centre and covers an area of approximately 10 hectares. Vehicular access to the site is gained through Ransome Road from the South and Bedford Road to the north. The southern half of the site containing Ransome Road is presently disconnected from Nunn Mills Road and abuts the boundary of Delapre Conservation Area and the grounds of Delapre Abbey (Convent of St Mary De La Pré) which is listed Grade II*. Its Stable Block, Billiard Room, Garden Wall and Gateway, Game Larder, Coach House and Park House are recognised for their group value and listed Grade II.
- 3.2 The northern part of the site contains Nunn Mills Road, which is accessed off Bedford Road and is currently flanked by Becket's Road and Midsummer Meadow. Nunn Mills Road currently serves the former Power Station and the Avon Offices Head Quarters. Along the northern edge the River Nene flows through the northern part of the site under a road bridge and a sluice bridge on Nunn Mills Road.
- 3.3 The eastern and southern boundaries of the site run along the boundary of a designated Battlefield (Battle of Northampton - 1460).
- 3.4 The immediate area is industrial/commercial in nature, which includes a railway goods yard which crosses the. There is a former railway locomotive shed, constructed in 1873, which is listed Grade II. This building is located to the west of the development site and, now disused. The building is a rare example of a Midland Railway locomotive shed.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

07/0406/FUL/WNN Planning Application for construction of an access road from Bedford Road to the former Nunn Mills Power Station and Avon office sites was submitted by Persimmon Homes and Taylor Wimpey in December 2007. This was granted planning permission by WNDG granted in December 2008.

This consent included an improvement scheme at the Bedford Road/Nunn Mills Road Junction. This allowed for a signal-controlled junction to be provided.

WN/2006/0014 Outline Planning application for Mixed Use Development, incorporating residential, community facilities, local leisure and retail centre, plus access arrangements at Bedford Road and Southbridge Road, at Land at Avon and Nunn Mills. Resolution to grant planning permission given in January 2007 subject to the completion of S106.

The resolution involved planning permission for up to 1,250 dwellings, however only 650 dwellings can be delivered prior to the link being provided.

WN/2006/0016 Planning application for 800 Residential units, community facilities and associated development, access improvements and retention of operational railway line at land off Ransome Road. Resolution to grant planning permission given in January 2007 subject to the completion of S106.

However only 450 dwellings can be delivered prior to the opening of the link between Nunn Mills Road and Ransome Rd.

WN/2006/0171 Demolition of existing buildings and erection of five storey office building, new access, lower ground, decked and small surface level car park, landscaping and associated infrastructure works at Avon Cosmetics site, Nunn Mills Road. Planning permission granted 20 December 2007

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

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 current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved

policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 **National Policies:**

Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment

Planning Policy Statement 9 - Biodiversity

Planning Policy Statement 23 -Planning and Pollution Control

Planning Policy Guidance 13 – Transportation

Planning Policy Guidance 24 - Planning and Noise

The Draft National Planning Policy Framework has recently been published and is capable of being a material consideration, although the weight to be given to it will be a matter for the decision maker's planning judgment in each particular case.

5.3 **Northampton Borough Local Plan**

E6 - Green Space Policy

E20 – New Development

D17- Southbridge Area

The Southbridge Area policy states planning permission will be granted for a mixed use development and also retail uses at the Power Station site, all subject to the necessary infrastructure being provided.

5.4 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

Nene Meadows Masterplan Nov 2010.

6.0 **Other Policy Considerations**

Planning Policy Statement: Ransome Rd/Nunn Mills Development Area (2003)

- 6.1 The Statement confirms the preferred form of development that the Borough Council expects to take place in the area as a pre – cursor to a formal Action Plan. It proposed that an Action Plan would form part of the New Local Development Framework for Northampton. On transportation matters for the development of the site it identified the following elements.

- Necessity for a road link between Bedford Road and London Road, necessary junction improvements and the construction of a bridge over the railway;
- Provision of public transport service between Eagle Drive and Ransome Road (subject to a need being established);
- A pedestrian bridge between the two sites and measures to promote sustainable modes of transport to the railway station and town centre;
- Provision of a public riverside walkway/cycle paths connecting existing developments and improved cycle links to Hardingstone and Brackmills and
- Measures to safeguard the rail line and a site for a new station

Northampton Central Area Action Plan Pre Submission Draft 2010

6.2 Policy 29 The Waterside: Avon Nunn Mills/Ransome Road recognises the site should be developed in a comprehensive and complementary manner to function as a new unified community. On Transportation related matters this includes the following objectives;

- Inclusion of a continuous street between Bedford Road and London Road designed not to encourage through traffic from the wider radial route and respect the wider residential character;
- Provide two new junctions at Cotton End/London Rd and Nunn Mills Road/Bedford Road that create good townscape and give priority to pedestrian and cyclists;
- Support improved public transport connectivity
- In the case of the Nunn Mills/Bedford junction it should respect the historic integrity of Becketts Park and its assets including its boundary walls and mature trees;
- Proposal should encourage suitable access to Delapre Lake, the Abbey and its environs.

Avon Mills Development Parameters Draft June 2011

6.3 This draft documents sets out various options on how the site can be sensibly developed and identifies key qualities and characteristics which would lead to the creation of a successful community and delivering a flagship mixed use development and in turn contribute to the wider growth and regeneration of

Northampton. The intention is that eventually this document will be adopted by the Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Document following discussion and consultation with the landowners and subject to the usual consultation as set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

7 THE SCHEME

- 7.1 The proposal is considered essential and acknowledged in both the Northampton Local Plan and the Central Area Action Plan that the appropriate road infrastructure should be provided to ensure that proper access is considered to maximise the potential land use available. The Central Area Action Plan sets out development principles to guide the scheme. It has always been envisaged that the Avon, Nunn Mills Road/Ransome Road site would be bought forward in a comprehensive manner.
- 7.2 WNDC has been negotiating with and is intending to help bring the site forward by promoting a Compulsory Purchase Order to ensure that the road infrastructure is provided in a proper and phased manner. However, by bringing the application for the road link forward in advance of a comprehensive master plan and development framework, a number of fundamental deficiencies are inherent in the scheme as a direct result of the road being bought forward as a stand alone infrastructure scheme.
- 7.3 Notwithstanding this, it is considered that given proper planning consideration to the key elements of the scheme and ensuring that proper safeguards are imposed through the recommended planning conditions being attached than this proposal can be supported.

8. KEY CONSIDERATIONS

TRANSPORTATION

- 8.1 The County Highway Authority should be satisfied that the solutions proposed to the improvements to the highway network are satisfactory both in highway safety and environmental terms and proactively seek to ensure compliance with the aims and objectives of Manual for Streets 1 & 2 and take into account the potential impact of the development in other locations associated with the growth agenda in a sustainable manner;
- 8.2 The proposed road link has been grossly engineered and does not reflect contemporary thinking in highway development and government policy. A Design Audit should be carried out and submitted to the Borough Council to demonstrate and ensure that the development accords with the advice in Department For Transport Manual For Streets 1 and Manual For Streets 2;
- 8.3 Details of all the pedestrian and cycles routes in terms of layout and desire lines being submitted, agreed with the Borough Council and delivered to a high standard. Details to include the design of street lighting, signage and other associated street furniture being agreed prior to their implementation;

- 8.4 That further consideration is given to changing the design of the railway bridge crossing the disused railway line in terms of its size, design, materials and external appearance and if applicable further changes and details be submitted and agreed to improve the appearance of the proposed bridge in terms of its effect on local heritage assets and terms of its materials and external appearance. The bridge should be well designed and of a residential scale;
- 8.5 Ensure the design of the proposed link road promotes and supports future buildings sited to enable a strong development active frontages being provided and ensure the design of the road facilitates and promotes an integrated network of streets and spaces;
- 8.6 Design the proposal to promote a new continuous residential street level site between Bedford Road and London Road designed not to encourage through traffic from the surrounding radial route ways that is consistent with the predominantly residential character of the locality.

FLOODING & DRAINAGE MATTERS

- 8.7 The Environment Agency should be satisfied that the development would not put existing and future potential occupiers in the vicinity at an unacceptable risk from flooding, or unacceptably increase the risk of flooding within the catchment of the River Nene and its tributaries, or adversely affect water quality;
- 8.8 Further details being submitted to the Borough Council and agreed on a sustainable urban drainage approach and all necessary mitigation measures are provided and maintained as fit for purpose in perpetuity. Swales should not be used as part of the drainage network on areas directly along the route of Nunn Mills Road and underground storm cells provided. Placing swales at this site would use up valuable development land and result in a poor urban design solution.

HERITAGE

- 8.9 Further details being submitted to the Borough Council to enable the impact on the Heritage Assets to be fully considered. In particular the relationship of the proposed railway bridge in terms of height and appearance on the setting of the nearby former railway locomotive shed, which is listed Grade II. The bridge should be of a residential scale and respect it's setting. A building condition survey on the listed building should be provided.

IMPACT ON TREES, LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

- 8.10 Safeguarding mitigation measures are provided with advice from the Borough Council to protect matures trees indicated for retention on Becketts Park and where appropriate replacement tree planting is provided;
- 8.11 Enhanced landscaping details are provided to the Borough Council, particularly relating to the Midsummer Meadow open space car parking area both within the existing car park and around it, including the Bedford

Road/Nunn Mills Road Junction to improve the approach from a major route way in addition to the extended car parking area;

- 8.12 The completion of a Section 106 Planning Obligation requiring compensatory provision for the loss of open space at Midsummer Meadow in connection with the revised parking.
- 8.13 That the development actively promotes a green corridor and a strong landscape framework to facilitate the linking of streets and spaces and semi matures trees are planted along the route of the proposed link road.

9. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 9.1 The following key areas are recommended for inclusion as conditions in the event that WNDP are minded to approve the application in addition to the completion of S106 Planning Obligation to provide compensation for the loss of open space. The Head of Planning be authorised to agree the detailed wording of such conditions with the applicant.
- (1) No development shall commence until details of all hard and/or soft landscape works landscaping for the site have been submitted, which shall include details of the types, sizes, locations of the planting of semi – mature trees along Nunn Mills Road have been submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;
 - (2) A landscape management and maintenance plan, including a survey of the existing landscape and its condition, long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance operations for all landscape be submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;
 - (3) No development shall take place until a masterplan for the site development has been submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;
 - (4) No development shall take place until details of measures to be taken to prevent spoil/mud from vehicles leaving the site during the construction works being deposited on the public highway have been submitted to the Borough Council for agreement.
 - (5) No development shall take place until full details of the proposed boundary treatment of the site have been submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;
 - (6) No development shall commence until a full construction details of the highway adjacent to Becketts Park at a scale of 1:200 and details of tree protection measures during the construction have been submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;
 - (7) No development shall take place until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context, including alternative attenuation measures have been provided for the swales indicated along Nunn Mills Road of the development, have been submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;

- (8) No consent is granted for the drainage details relating to swales indicated along Nunn Mills Rd;
- (9) No development shall take place until a detailed design audit has been carried out to demonstrate accordance with Transport Manual For Streets 1 & 2 and submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;
- (10) No development shall take place until a desktop study in respect of possible contaminants within the site is completed and a site investigation has been designed. The scope and methodology of the desk top study and the site investigation report shall be submitted to the Borough Council for agreement;
- (11) Details including routes and siting of all the pedestrian and cycle routes shall be submitted to the Borough Council for agreement.
- (12) Details of the design and siting of all signage, street furniture, lighting and street furniture and CCTV provision shall be submitted to the Borough Council for agreement.
- (13) A further comprehensive detailed Heritage Assessment and Buildings condition survey on the listed Railway Locomotive Shed shall be submitted to the Borough Council for agreement.
- (14) Revised details of the design of Ransome Road Bridge, including materials, elevational details, height and length shall be submitted to the Borough Council for agreement.
- (15) No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation for archaeological observation and recording during development shall be submitted to the Borough Council for agreement.
- (16) No development shall take place until all necessary consents, licenses, permits or agreements have been completed or obtained in respect of the proposed development.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The Avon/Nunn Mills/ Ransome Road site is an area of extensive area of vacant, derelict under utilized land of approximately 41 hectares in close proximity to the town centre. The site has been subject to a number of planning applications and master planning objectives. The principle of the development is consistent with the existing National and Local Framework policies. If the proposal were to be redesigned in accordance with good planning standards and therefore revised, it would have the potential to facilitate the larger regeneration of the area by opening up the locality for future commercial mixed use and residential developments leading to the creation of mixed-use sustainable neighbourhood.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Initial Planning Submission and Ecological Reports, Heritage Statement and revised plans received 5 August 2011.

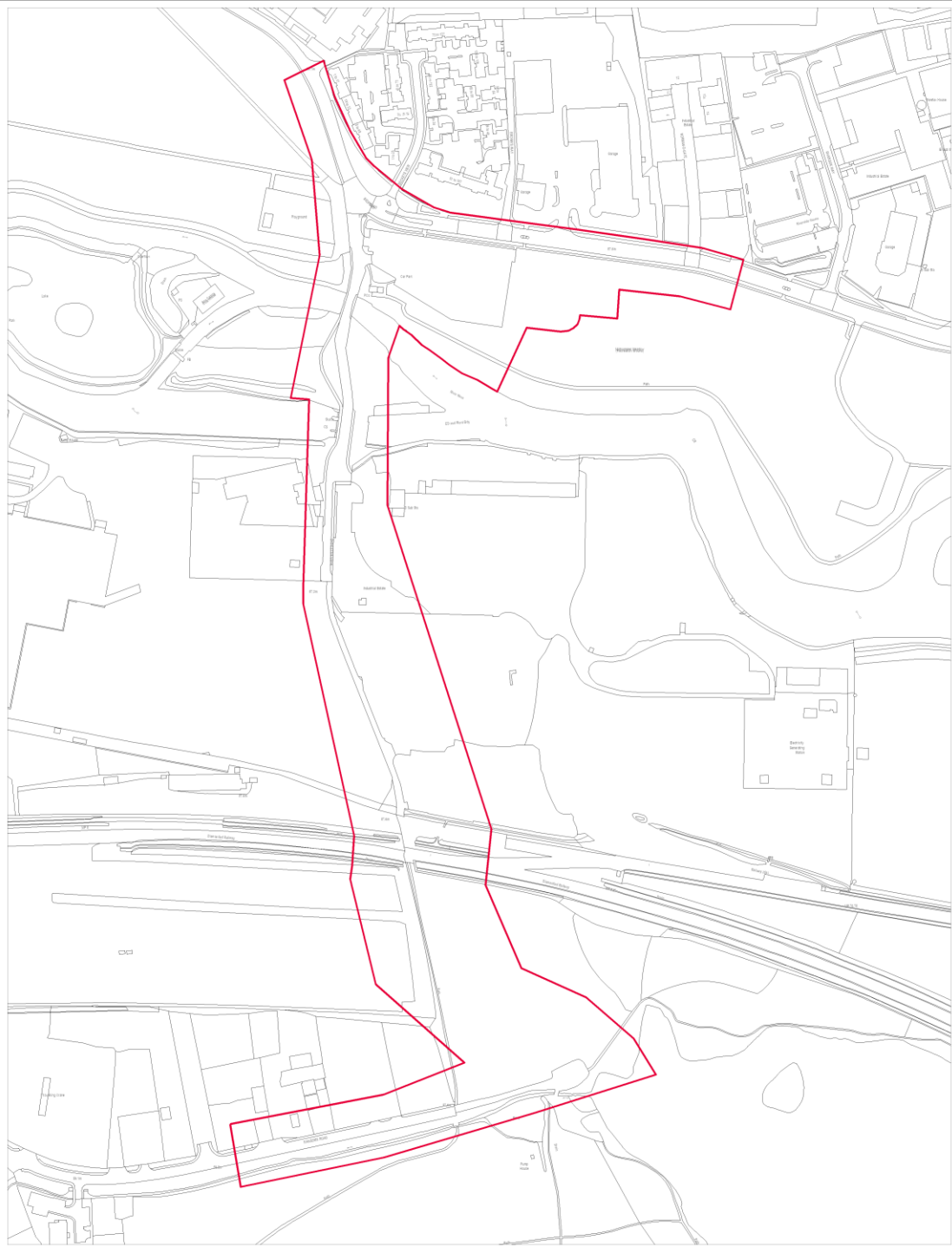
12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None identified

13. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

13.1 In considering the proposal regard has been given to securing the wider regeneration objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

Position:	Name/Signature:	Date:
Author:	Reddy Nallamilli	12/8/2011
Head Of Planning Services Agreed:	Susan Bridge	12/8/2011



Name: SW
Date: 11th August 2011
Scale: 1:3500
Dept: Planning
Project: Site Location Plan

Title
Nunn Mills Road

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