



**NORTHAMPTON**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
Planning Committee

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 15 March 2016  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**DIRECTOR:** Steven Boyes

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2015/0987

**LOCATION:** Land off, St Crispin Drive, Northampton, Northamptonshire

**DESCRIPTION:** New Community Centre incorporating changing room facilities and Nursery School. New access road with parking facilities and relocation of play area. (As amended by revised plans received on 9/10/15)

**WARD:** Upton Ward

**APPLICANT:** Mr Keith Mitchell  
**AGENT:** Sursham Tompkins & Partners

**REFERRED BY:**  
**REASON:** NBC is the applicant

**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 community centre would provide for necessary community facilities whilst not resulting in any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst the proposal would impact on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building this would not be significant and would be offset by the wider benefits of the proposal. The proposal would not adversely impact on the amenities of existing neighbouring residents nor highway safety, subject to appropriate mitigation as required by conditions. The proposal is therefore compliant with the requirements of Policies SA, S10, C2 and BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

**2. THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The proposal is for the construction of a single storey new community centre, sports changing rooms and nursery school, an associated access road and area of parking. The existing play area would be relocated to the southern part of the application site.

2.2 Members may recall that this application was considered by the Planning Committee on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2015. The plans have now been revised, with the size of the building reduced by 9.5m. This

reduction would be on the side of the building adjacent to the listed church (to the north of the site), and therefore furthest away from the entrance and playground.

- 2.3 The changes relate to the reduction in size of the main hall, which would no longer be able to be divided into two halls, and a reduction in size of the café and meeting room as well as other internal changes. The nursery would be reconfigured internally but not reduced in size.
- 2.4 The design of the building remains similar to the previous design, but reduced in size. The building is of a modern design, comprising a wide, low building with a gently sloping flat roof and a separate circular element which would accommodate the nursery.
- 2.5 Linked to this would be four changing rooms, each incorporating showers and WC, together with officials' changing rooms, kit lockers and equipment stores. This area has been slightly reconfigured internally but not reduced in size from the previous plans.
- 2.6 As before, the parking area would provide 54 spaces, with five spaces for disabled people. These spaces have been slightly reconfigured to give them more space along with a change to the road alignment adjacent to these.
- 2.7 In terms of the external appearance, the building has been designed by means of a multi-disciplinary workshop to improve the original more standard design. The building has been designed in a modern style to represent an interesting feature in its own right which does not compete with historic buildings in the area. The reduction in size as shown on the amended plans would not compromise this design.
- 2.8 In addition a storm water run-off basin has been introduced to address previous drainage issues. This comprises a 43m long, 7m wide and 1m deep grass seeded depression being formed in the ground.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The site currently comprises an open field adjacent to relatively new housing to the east and a Grade II listed church and cemetery to the north, within the former St Crispins Hospital site, now redeveloped for housing. The site falls within the St Crispins Conservation Area.
- 3.2 Access to the site is via St Crispins Drive. The site was previously earmarked for the construction of a link road to Berrywood Road. The proposal was subsequently dropped due to the lack of a need for a link and to free up the site for this development.

### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 The development of the former St Crispin's hospital for residential use was approved in outline under application reference N/1997/0566 on 12th November 2002.
- 4.2 A revised application was submitted under reference N/2004/0719 which revised the proposal by removing the previously consented hotel and substituting residential conversion of the old hospital buildings.
- 4.3 Following on from these outline permissions, various reserved matters applications were approved for the detailed layout of the site.
- 4.4 In 2014 a variation to the S106 agreement was approved by the Planning Committee, to remove the obligation to provide a link road through the playing fields. This has freed up this site for this proposal.

## **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.

Section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires 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:

Section 7 – Requiring Good Design – States that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Section 11 - Conserving And Enhancing The Natural Environment – States that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity

Section 12 - Conserving And Enhancing The Historic Environment - This sets out that Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

### **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 SA (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) is a policy to ensure planning is not a barrier to new development.

Policy S10 (Sustainable Development Principle) sets out the list of principles for development to follow. This includes issues such as good design, energy efficiency and accessibility by sustainable transport modes (including walking, the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and green infrastructure.

Policy S11 (Low Carbon and Renewable Energy) requires all new non-residential developments over 500m<sup>2</sup> gross internal floorspace achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of Very Good.

Policy RC2 (Community needs) requires proposals for new facilities to be supported by a long term maintenance and management plan. There is no evident plan, this should be provided

Policy BN1 (Green Infrastructure Connections) establishes the green infrastructure corridors (GI) of sub-regional and local importance. These should be conserved, managed and enhanced by incorporating existing and identified future networks into development proposals and securing contributions for the creation and future management of GI Networks. The policy goes on to set out the measures to be used to enhance existing and create new GI.

Policy BN2 (Biodiversity) establishes that development that maintains and enhances existing designations and assets or delivers a net gain in biodiversity will be supported.

Policy BN5 (Historic Environment and Landscape) states that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings and landscapes will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance and contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Policy INF1 (Approach to infrastructure Delivery) determines that new development will be supported by and provide good access to infrastructure, including physical, green and social elements.

#### **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:

Policy E7 (Skyline Development) aims to ensure that proposals do not have any detrimental effect upon the skyline of St Crispin / Berrywood (as seen from the west beyond the town's existing boundary).

Policy E9 (Locally Important Landscape Areas) in association with Appendix 28, establishes that the proposal is situated within a Locally Important Landscape Area. The policy aims to ensure that the proposal has no detrimental effect on the character of the area.

Policy E20 (New Development) Requires the design of any new building or extension to adequately reflecting the character of its surroundings in terms of layout, siting, form, scale and use of appropriate materials

E26 (Conservation Areas) Requires that development in conservation areas preserves or enhances the character and appearance of those areas

Policy L26 (Leisure Proposals), in association with Appendix 27, establishes the proposal site as an area where planning permission will be granted for recreational / leisure uses.

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

Northamptonshire County Parking Standards SPG 2003

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets

## **6. CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 Responses from statutory consultees and neighbouring residents to the original application were previously reported to the Planning Committee. At the time of that Committee meeting, there were matters outstanding in respect of the Flood Risk Assessment and Transport Assessment. Subsequently the Lead Local Flood Authority and Local Highway Authority respectively have confirmed that the reports into these matters were acceptable, in respect of the original proposal. The Lead Local Flood Authority further requested an additional condition for a surface water drainage strategy.
- 6.2 Upon the receipt of amended plans, a full reconsultation was carried out and the following further responses from statutory consultees:
- 6.3 **Historic England** – No further comments to add to previous advice, recommend that issues raised are addressed and that the application is determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of specialist conservation advice.
- 6.4 **County Archaeologist** – No further comments to make, comment requesting a condition for archaeological investigation is still valid.
- 6.5 **Arboricultural Officer** – Nothing to add to comments of previous arboricultural officer.
- 6.6 **Conservation Officer** - The revision relates to a proposed reduction in size, drawing the building approximately 9m further away from the boundary of the cemetery associated with the Listed Chapel. Whilst this is seen as positive, consider that this is insufficient to overcome the concerns regarding the impact on the setting of the Chapel and the open rural character of this part of the Conservation Area.
- 6.7 The amended plans were also notified to neighbouring occupiers and additional comments have been received from one nearby resident, as follows:
- A gully which has been added to comply with conditions regarding flooding due to excess surface water. Feel that this gully, will pose a danger to young children playing in the area. Who will be responsible for its maintenance?
  - Would request that the layout of this equipment be given careful consideration when it is re-sited especially the large swing which is designated to be positioned very close to residences of 61 Frank Large Walk and 201 St Crispin Drive. This swing is often used in the hours of darkness by older children and is already the subject of a nuisance factor, which would be even more of a nuisance when it is positioned more closely to the residences.
  - As the landscaping is no longer specified in detail request that no fast growing tall trees be planted as this would detract from the visual amenity currently available from lounge window.

## 7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The proposal is an amendment to a larger version of the same proposal, which was previously approved in principle by the Planning Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015, subject to the resolution of matters relating to surface water management and highway related concerns, both being matters which were subsequently resolved in respect of the previous scheme.
- 7.2 The issues to consider in respect of the amended plans are whether this affects the acceptability of the proposals in comparison to the previously considered larger scheme.

### Principle of the development

- 7.3 The principle of development was considered in the previous Committee report, and in this respect it is considered that the reduction in size does not affect the acceptability of the proposal in principle.

#### **Impact on the adjacent listed building, conservation area and street scene**

- 7.4 The proposed building is situated within the St Crispin Conservation Area and is adjacent to the Grade II listed St Crispins Hospital Chapel (the Listed Building), now operating as the St. Neophytos Greek Orthodox Church.
- 7.5 The proposed building would, under the amended plans, now be 9m from the boundary with the cemetery of the Listed Building and at its closest point 40m from the main building of the Listed Building itself.
- 7.6 Notwithstanding the fact that the previous scheme was considered acceptable in this regard, this amendment is considered to represent an improvement in the relationship with the Listed Building, particularly in respect of the separation from the cemetery.
- 7.7 The building as amended would remain to be forward of the front of the Listed Building by around 40m, but due to the increased separation from the boundary the impact on important views of the Listed Building would be reduced. Nevertheless, there would still be an impact to the setting of this Listed Building within the context of the field to the rear and when viewed from properties on Frank Large Walk.
- 7.8 As set out in the previous Committee report it was considered that the impact on principal views of the front elevation of the church, from the old Kent Road, and on other listed buildings and the wider conservation area would be unaffected by the proposal and it is considered that amendments to the scheme would not affect this conclusion.
- 7.9 Whilst there would be a remaining impact on the setting of the adjacent listed building, this is reduced by the revised plans and is to some extent unavoidable. This must nevertheless be given considerable weight which must be balanced against the significant benefits of the development, as set out in the conclusions below.

#### **Wider Design Considerations**

- 7.10 In respect of wider design considerations it is considered that the amendments to the scheme do not affect the broad conclusions reached in the previous report that the design was acceptable. It should be noted, however, that lighting and landscaping details are not now included in the proposals, due to the need for amendments to these to reflect the changed building design. Conditions are therefore recommended, requiring such details.

#### **Impact on wildlife and trees**

- 7.11 It is considered that the proposed amendments would not result in any greater impact on wildlife or trees than the previously considered scheme.

#### **Impact on neighbouring properties**

- 7.12 In terms of the impact on adjoining and nearby residents it is considered, as before, that the building is sufficiently distant from the residential properties to prevent any adverse impact from overshadowing or visual dominance but the building would nevertheless be clearly visible to residents in an area which is currently an open field. This would significantly change the outlook for these residents but it is considered that the building is of an attractive appearance and that

visual amenity would not be compromised in the area. The reduced size of the building would reduce this impact.

- 7.13 In terms of noise from the use of the building, concerns were raised by Environmental Health in respect of the previous proposal, however they also recommended that this matter could be satisfactorily controlled by conditions. The proposed hours of use of the building would be from 8am to 6pm for the nursery use and for the community centre use from 8am to 10pm on Sundays to Fridays and from 8am to midnight on Saturdays. It is considered that these hours are reasonable for the proposed use and that subject to the noise mitigation measures which would be secured by condition would prevent any significant impact. Given the smaller size, and therefore capacity, of the amended building, such impacts would also be reduced.
- 7.14 Comments from one nearby resident in respect of these amendments raise concerns in respect of the proposed storm water gully, the position of the play equipment and the landscaping. In response to this, conditions are proposed requiring the ongoing management of all aspects of the surface water drainage scheme, details of landscaping (which would have been required in any event) and details of the precise positioning of play equipment.

### **Impact on Highways**

- 7.15 The proposed development includes a number of uses which would attract a potentially large number of users to the site. However, this is a centre which is intended to serve the local community, and which users would be able to walk to. Nevertheless, it is also recognised that there will be those who choose to drive, and in addition to this the adjacent playing pitches would be used by teams coming from a wider area, and it is this element of the proposal which would generate the greatest level of potential demand for parking.
- 7.16 Comments received from the Highway Authority in respect of the previous proposals initially raised some minor concerns, but these were subsequently resolved following the previous Committee meeting at which this application was considered and approved in principle. The plans as amended are, insofar as they relate to highway matters, in accordance with the revisions as agreed with the Highway Authority in these discussions. At the time of writing this report no further comments have been received from the Highway Authority, any which are received will be reported to Committee by means of the addendum.

### **Flood Risk**

- 7.17 In respect of flood risk, discussions with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) continued after the previous Committee meeting also. This resulted in the submission of a revised Flood Risk Assessment, which the LLFA confirmed was acceptable. The revised layout accords with the details as set out in this report, including the proposed storm water basin. At the time of writing this report, no further comments have been received from the LLFA, any which are received will be reported by means of the addendum.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The weighing up of the positive and negative aspects of the development was considered within the previous Committee report with the conclusion being that the positive elements in terms of the substantial public benefits arising from the development would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the setting of the adjacent listed building and that no other interests of acknowledged importance would be unduly adversely impacted, or could not be satisfactorily ameliorated by conditions. The development has been reduced in size and as such it is considered that its impacts would now be even less significant.

## 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: PL10 E, PL10 C, PL11 E, PL12 C, PL13 C, PL14 C, PL15 A.

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

- 3) The premises shall be open only between the following hours in respect of the approved uses - Nursery School: 8:00am to 6:00pm from Mondays to Fridays; Community Centre: 8:00am to 10:00pm on Sundays to Fridays and 8:00am to midnight on Saturdays; Changing Rooms: 8:00am to 8:00pm on any day.

Reason: In the interests of the protection of residential amenities in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 4) A scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which specifies the sources of noise on the site whether from fixed plant or equipment or noise generated within the building and the provisions to be made for its control and the approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the development being first brought into use and retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby occupants from noise and vibration in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 5) A scheme for the collection, treatment and dispersal of cooking smells and fumes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved scheme shall have been implemented prior to the development being first brought into use and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the surrounding locality and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6) Details of any external lighting to the building and the car park shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter be implemented in accordance with those details before development being first brought into use and retained thereafter.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 7) Details and/or samples of all proposed external facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development will harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 8) Full details of facilities for the secure and covered parking of bicycles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and provided prior to the development being first brought into use and retained thereafter.



Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate facilities in accordance with Policies S10 and C2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 9) Full details of the proposed surface treatment of all parking areas and footpaths shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 10) Full details of the method of the treatment of the external boundaries of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, implemented prior to the occupation of the building hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the boundaries of the site are properly treated so as to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 11) Notwithstanding the submitted scheme, a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 12) All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and which shall be maintained for a period of five years; such maintenance to include the replacement in the current or nearest planting season whichever is the sooner or shrubs that may die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 13) The car parking spaces shall at all times be reserved for the parking of vehicles by staff and visitors and there shall be no storage of goods, materials, refuse, pallets or skips thereon.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking facilities are maintained in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

- 14) No development shall take place prior to the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure investigation is carried out in a timely manner.

- 15) No development shall take place until a finalised Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All trees shown to be retained in the approved plans shall be protected for the duration of the

development by (a) stout fence(s) to be erected and maintained on (an) alignment(s) to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development works shall take place. Within the fenced area no development works shall take place on, over or under the ground, no vehicles shall be driven, nor plant sited, no materials nor waste shall be deposited, no bonfires shall be lit nor the ground level altered during the periods of development.

Reason: In order to ensure adequate protection of existing trees on the site in the interests of achieving a satisfactory standard of development and maintaining the amenity of the locality in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan. This is a pre-commencement condition as it is essential that the tree protection measures are in place before any work which may cause damage to the trees is carried out.

- 16) 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 of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The drainage strategy should demonstrate the surface water run-off generated up to and including the 1in100 year critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site following the corresponding rainfall event. The strategy shall include provision for the future maintenance of all aspects of the drainage scheme. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, both on and off site. In accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition as it is necessary for the drainage scheme to be finalised before any work is carried out.

- 17) Notwithstanding the submitted plans, full details of the positioning of individual items of play equipment within the playground area shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The equipment shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of adjoining occupiers, in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

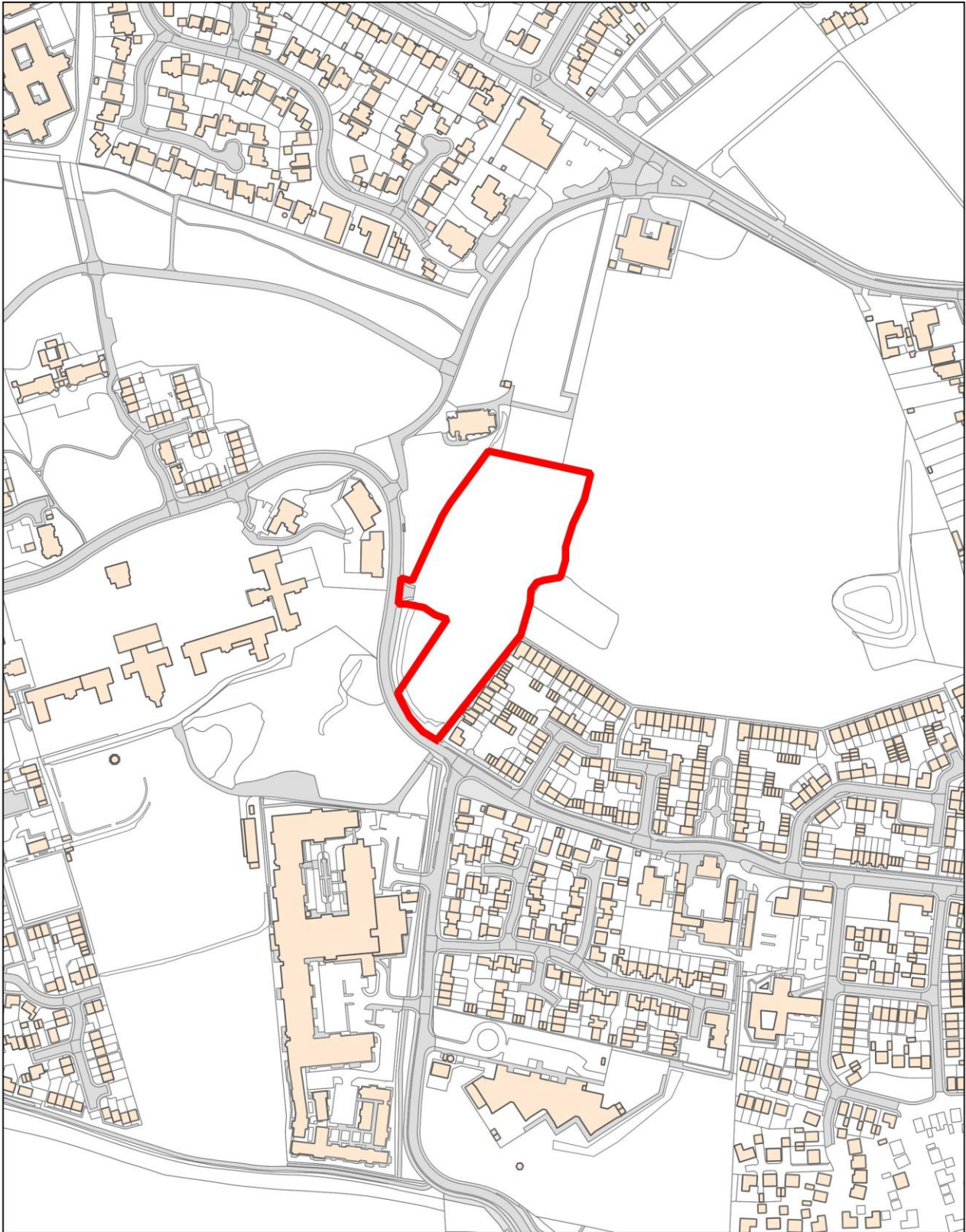
- 10.1 Application File N/2015/0987

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None.

## **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: **Land off, St Crispin Drive**

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Date: 24-02-2016  
Scale: 1:3,320  
Drawn by: Planning