

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 6th September 2016
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
DIRECTOR: Steven Boyes

APPLICATION REF: N/2016/0847

LOCATION: Northampton Society Of Model Engines Delapre

DESCRIPTION: Erection of carriage storage and 2no. ground level tunnels

WARD: Delapre & Briar Ward

APPLICANT: Northampton Society of Model Engineers Ltd
AGENT: John Tomlinson

REFERRED BY: Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and 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 development due to its siting, design and scale would not have an undue detrimental impact on the amenity, appearance, character of the area in general, the Conservation Area or the setting of nearby listed buildings. The proposal thereby complies with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Polices E9, E18, E20 and E26 of the Northampton Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal is for the construction of a carriage storage shed which would be a brick structure with a flat roof, just over 1.5m in height and just over 11.5m in length. This would be situated adjacent to the track and used to store the “carriages” which are in fact of a ride on design, hence the small size of the structure. Also proposed are two “tunnels”. These would be positioned over two existing tracks at ground level and would consist of brick built tunnel mouths joined by steel profile sheeting as roof covering. At one end of the tunnels there would be a double tunnel mouth while the other ends would be two single tunnel mouths.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The site comprises the Northampton Model Engineers site, an established model railway site comprising tracks of different scales and associated station buildings. It is located to the northern edge of Delapre Park. The site is within the Delapre Park Conservation Area and adjacent to the

boundary of the registered battlefield site of the Battle of Northampton, which runs along the southern boundary of the application site. Within the adjacent grounds of Delapre Abbey there are eight listed buildings and structures, all of which are Grade II other than the Abbey itself which is Grade II*. The nearest of these is over 300m from the proposed works.

3.2 The site has been occupied for this purpose since 1965. There are residential and employment units located to the north of the site, the rest of the site is surrounding by parkland.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 A number of planning permissions have been granted over the years including the erection of club premises in 1979. Following this, the organisation was granted permission in 1980 for a workshop and toilets facilities, replacement railway track in 1997, a workshop in 1999 and a ticket office in 2012.

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(i) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that the Local Planning Authorities, when considering any listed building consent application or any planning application for development that affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention 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:

Paragraph 17: Planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Paragraph 132: When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation and any harm should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 134: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

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 BN5 “The Historic Environment”, which sets out that heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced and that where heritage assets are at risk they will be appropriately conserved and managed.

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 E9: Locally Important Landscape Areas - gives special importance to the impact of proposals to the character of locally important landscape areas.

Policy E20: New Development - the design of any 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 that development should be designed, located and used in a manner which ensures adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.

Policy E26: Conservation Areas - development must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, and not include the demolition of any building which makes a significant contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

Policy E38: Ancient Monument - planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the character or setting of a nationally important ancient monument (whether scheduled or not), important historic landscape or the site of the battle of Northampton.

5.6 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

The Site of the Battle of Northampton Conservation Management Plan 2014
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

6.1 **Environment Agency** – No objection.

6.2 **Historic England** – Application should be determined on the basis of national and local policy guidance and on the basis of specialist conservation and archaeological advice.

6.3 **Conservation** – No objection on conservation grounds. The proposed carriage sheds and tunnels will not be intrusive and will not harm the character or appearance of Delapre Park Conservation Area or the setting of the Abbey and outbuildings and battlefield.

6.4 **County Archaeologist** – Comments are awaited and will be reported to Committee by means of the addendum.

7. **APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 The issues to consider are the impact on the conservation area and the setting of the nearby listed Delapre Abbey and the Battlefield, as well as the impact on adjoining residential and commercial occupiers.
- 7.2 The proposal is for small scale structures within the confines of the existing model railway site. The site has been developed over the years with raised and ground level tracks, station buildings, a ticket office and storage sheds. Due to the enclosed nature of the site which is separated from the road by a stone wall and is surrounded by mature trees on most sides, as well as the walls of neighbouring commercial buildings, these structures are generally not visible from outside the site.
- 7.3 The proposed carriage storage building would only be 1.55m in height and 11.6m in length, and as such would not be a building in the conventional sense but a structure within which the ride on carriages could be stored, and from which they could readily be moved onto the track along rails. This would improve on the existing storage arrangements which require the carriages to be carried to and from the tracks. Due to the very small size of this building it would not be visible from outside the site and therefore would have no adverse impact on the setting of the conservation area, battlefield or listed buildings or the amenities of adjoining residential occupiers. In terms of the appearance of this structure, this would be a scale model of a carriage shed and as such it is considered that this would be in keeping with the character of the site as a model railway compound.
- 7.4 The proposed tunnels would consist of brick tunnel mouths, including a double mouth at one end where the tunnels would be side by side and two single mouths at the other ends, after the tunnels have diverged from each other. Between these ends the tunnel itself would be formed of profiled steel sheeting. Whilst these would be larger structures than the storage shed, being 2.5m in height and 20m and 24m in length, these would also not be visible from outside the site due to the screening of the site as discussed above.
- 7.5 In terms of the impact on adjoining occupiers, these proposed tunnels would be adjacent to the blank rear walls and the high boundary fence of neighbouring commercial buildings. As such the occupiers of these neighbouring premises would be unaware of the tunnels and there would be no additional impact in terms of noise.
- 7.6 Regarding the appearance of the tunnels themselves, the tunnel mouths would be scale models of real tunnel mouths, in keeping with the model railway. The tunnel roofs would be formed of steel sheeting and of a functional design in line with railway compound. They would be screened to a large extent by the existing vegetation and the tunnel sides would not be generally visible from the wider park area apart from visitors to the site, who would only be in this area when riding on a train as there is no public access on foot.
- 7.7 The site is outside the Battle of Northampton registered site but is in close proximity to this. Therefore there is the possibility of items of archeological interest existing in the area. As the foundations of the proposed structures would be very shallow, it is considered appropriate to impose a condition require a watching brief to safeguard any possibility of archaeological remains within the site.
- 7.8 A flood risk assessment was included with the application which states that the site would be at a low risk of flooding. The Environment Agency have confirmed that they have no objection to the application.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Overall, the proposed structures would have no adverse visual impact and would not affect the conservation area, the setting of the listed buildings and battlefield, or the amenities of adjoining

occupiers. Any impact on archaeological remains could be mitigated by a suitable condition. The development is therefore considered acceptable and the recommendation is for approval.

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 (1:1250), Location Plan (1:500), 01 (Carriage Store), 02 (Tunnel Portals).

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

- (3) Prior notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority of the exact date on which it is proposed that construction of the development hereby permitted is to begin. During the construction period representatives of the Local Planning Authority shall be allowed access to the site in order to observe and inspect all excavation works and record all findings of archaeological interest. If required they shall be allowed to excavate such remains, provided that this shall not interfere unreasonably with the progress of the development.

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

- (4) The proposed tunnel enclosure profile steel sheeting shall have an olive green colour finish (ref 12B27) in accordance with the details submitted on 24th August 2016 and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to preserve the character of the conservation area in accordance with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

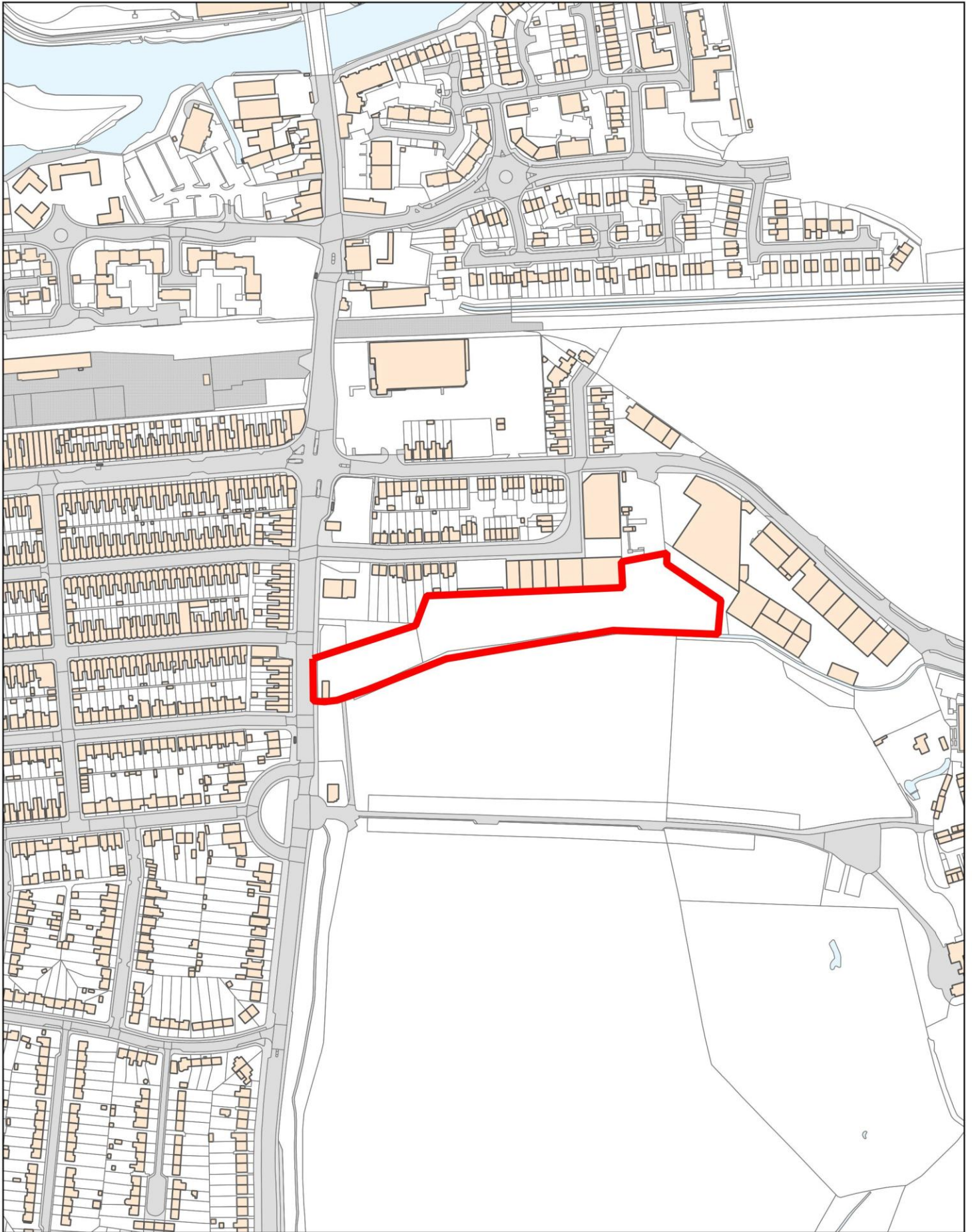
- 10.1 N/2016/0847.

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.



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Date: 23-08-2016

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