



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Planning Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE:	11 th April 2017
DIRECTORATE:	Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
HEAD OF PLANNING:	Peter Baguley
APPLICATION REF:	N/2016/1588
LOCATION:	54 - 56 Thorn Hill
DESCRIPTION:	Change of use of dwelling house (Use Class C3) at numbers 54 and 56 Thorn Hill to two properties each containing 3 studio flats and two single bedrooms with shared facilities (8 residents per dwelling)
WARD:	Delapre & Briar Ward
APPLICANT:	CUSP Solutions Ltd
AGENT:	Rod Kilsby Partnership
REFERRED BY:	Councillor Vicky Culbard
REASON:	Parking issue
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 conversion of the property to flats and shared facilities is considered acceptable in principle being within an established residential area and would contribute towards the Council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply. The proposal would, due to its siting, scale and design, not have an undue detrimental impact on residential amenity, parking or highway safety and complies with Policies E20, H21 and H23 of the Northampton Local Plan, S10 and H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Permission is sought for a change of use from one large residential dwelling (comprising 2 properties at 54 and 56 Thorn Hill) to flats and shared facilities. The proposed layout of the buildings shows 6 double bedroom studio flats (3 per property) and 4 single rooms (2 per property). Parking would be mainly on-street although there is capacity for parking to the rear of the site in a parking court.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site consists of two three-storey residential buildings occupying a prominent position on the street. To the rear of the site, is a parking court with off-road spaces and garages. There is an area to the side which acts as a private enclosed garden space fenced off by 2m high wooden fencing. The site is not in a conservation area.
- 3.2 The existing buildings have been occupied as one single family dwelling by the Jesus Fellowship who own the property. The two properties are currently occupied by 12 people.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

2013 Permission for single storey rear extension to 54 Thorn hill

2013 Permission for erection of perimeter fence /wall to side of 54 Thorn hill.

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 Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

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 seeks to secure high quality design and good standard of amenity for existing and proposed occupiers.

Paragraph 32 seeks to secure safe access for all.

Paragraph 49 requires that housing applications are considered with presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 50 states that planning should deliver a wide choice of high quality homes; widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive, and mixed communities; should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends, and the needs of different groups in the community.

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:

- 5.4 Policy H1 - Housing Density & Mix & Type of Dwellings - States that development should provide for a mix of house types, sizes and tenures to cater for different accommodation needs. Housing developments will be expected to make the most efficient use of land having regard to the location and setting of the site, the existing character and density of the local area, accessibility to

services and facilities, proximity to public transport routes, the implications of density for affordability and viability, the living conditions provided for future residents, and the impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties. .

Policy S10 – Sustainable Development Principles - requires development to satisfy a range of sustainable development principles including through achieving the highest standards of sustainable design; maximising opportunities for reuse and recycling; and promoting walking and cycling.

5.5 **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 E20 – new development should adequately reflect the character of surroundings and ensure adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.

Policy H21 – Conversion to flats: subject to compliance with other policies of the Local Plan, permission will not be granted for the conversion of a house into flats where it is considered that the introduction of or increase in the number of conversions would prejudice the character or amenity of a particular locality, irrespective of whether or not the house is suitable for conversion.

Policy H23 – Conversion to flats: subject to compliance with other policies of the Local Plan, planning permission will not be granted for the conversion to flats of a dwelling with a combined floor area (measured internally) of 100 square metres or less and with a frontage (measured internally) of less than 4.7 metres

5.6 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016)
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **Councillor Vicky Culbard** - raised objection on parking and congestion.
- 6.2 **NBC Environmental Health** - no objection subject to consideration given to refuse storage.
- 6.3 **Highway Authority (NCC)** - the proposed development does not meet the LHA standards with regards to parking provision. Given the existing use of the property (Class C3), the off-street parking provision requirement would be 3 to 4 spaces. As per the Northamptonshire Parking Standards 2016, the proposed change of use would require 10 parking spaces. Therefore, the proposed development is under provision by at least 6 parking spaces.

It is noted that whilst the existing use is Class C3, it is not currently being used in a typical way. There are 12 residents as part of a religious community at the current property, although it is hard to determine the likely car ownership of the residents. Therefore, the LHA must consider the existing use as a typical Class C3 use.

A parking beat survey was conducted in the area. The survey showed that whilst there are some vehicles parked inappropriately, there are a number of spaces available, so it appears to be partially down to convenience.

It should also be considered that parking levels will fluctuate to some degree.

In conclusion, the LHA has determined that whilst there may be enough spaces in the vicinity to accommodate the additional vehicles, due to the vastly greater demand it would generate (a total of 10 vehicles), it could potentially take up the remaining residual capacity. Therefore, any further application in the immediate vicinity that would increase demand could be objected to.

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of the development

- 7.1 By reason of the site's allocation for residential use in the Local Plan, it is considered that the development of this site for residential purposes is acceptable and compatible with the character of the surrounding area. If permitted, the proposal would contribute to the Council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply.

Size of property and residential amenity

- 7.2 The submitted plans show provision of 3 self-contained studio flats and two other bedrooms with shared facilities in each building. All bedrooms and habitable rooms would be served by adequate outlook and light via existing windows to front or rear.
- 7.3 The proposal also complies with Local Plan Policies H21 and H23 in that the frontage would exceed 4.7 metres and the ground and first floor areas exceed 100 square metres internally.
- 7.4 Notwithstanding the fact that the Council do not have any up to date space standards policy for flat developments, it is considered in this case that there would be sufficient amenity provided to serve future occupiers.

Highways and Parking

- 7.5 Parking within the vicinity of the site is mainly on-street although there is a parking court and garages to the rear. Visits to the site during the day reveal that there is much spare parking capacity, however, the Parking Beat survey indicates that evenings are busier. The nearest bus stop is within 130m of the property, located on Ashbrow Road. The applicant has submitted a Parking Beat Survey which the Local Highway Authority have commented on.
- 7.6 The Parking Beat Survey indicates that there is some spare capacity for on-street parking in the local area. Whilst the Highway Authority's concerns are noted, the existing property is a 12 person dwelling and the proposed use would be for 16 persons. There overall increase is 4 occupiers more and the difference is not significantly greater in this locality.
- 7.7 Notwithstanding the above, the property is close to a bus stop. It is not considered reasonable to refuse planning permission on potential traffic generation ground, bearing in mind some spare capacity has been shown in the Parking Beat Survey. Any approval would be subject to a condition to provide secure cycle parking at the rear of the site in order to promote sustainable means of travel to and from the site.

Refuse storage

- 7.8 Details have been submitted for the storage of refuse and materials for recycling, which is deemed acceptable. This is to be secured by condition.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

7.9 Compared to the lawful use, it is considered unlikely that the proposed use would lead to significant impact on neighbour amenity that would justify refusal of planning permission. Given that the existing property has 10 bedrooms with 12 residents, the proposed use is unlikely to generate noise and disturbance significantly over and above the current use.

8. Conclusion

8.1 While it is acknowledged that the conversion would result in a more intensive use of the property, the site is located within a residential area in a sustainable location, and would not have any undue adverse impact on parking or highway safety. In terms of amenity, the conversion and associated storage building would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity and the appearance and character of the area. If permitted the proposal would provide additional units and therefore contributes positively to the Council's 5 year housing land supply.

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: 16-177-01E and 16-177-02B.

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

- 3) The bin and cycle storage areas shown on the approved plan 16-177-01 E shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the property as flats and retained in that form throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity to comply with Policy H30 of the Northampton Local Plan and H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

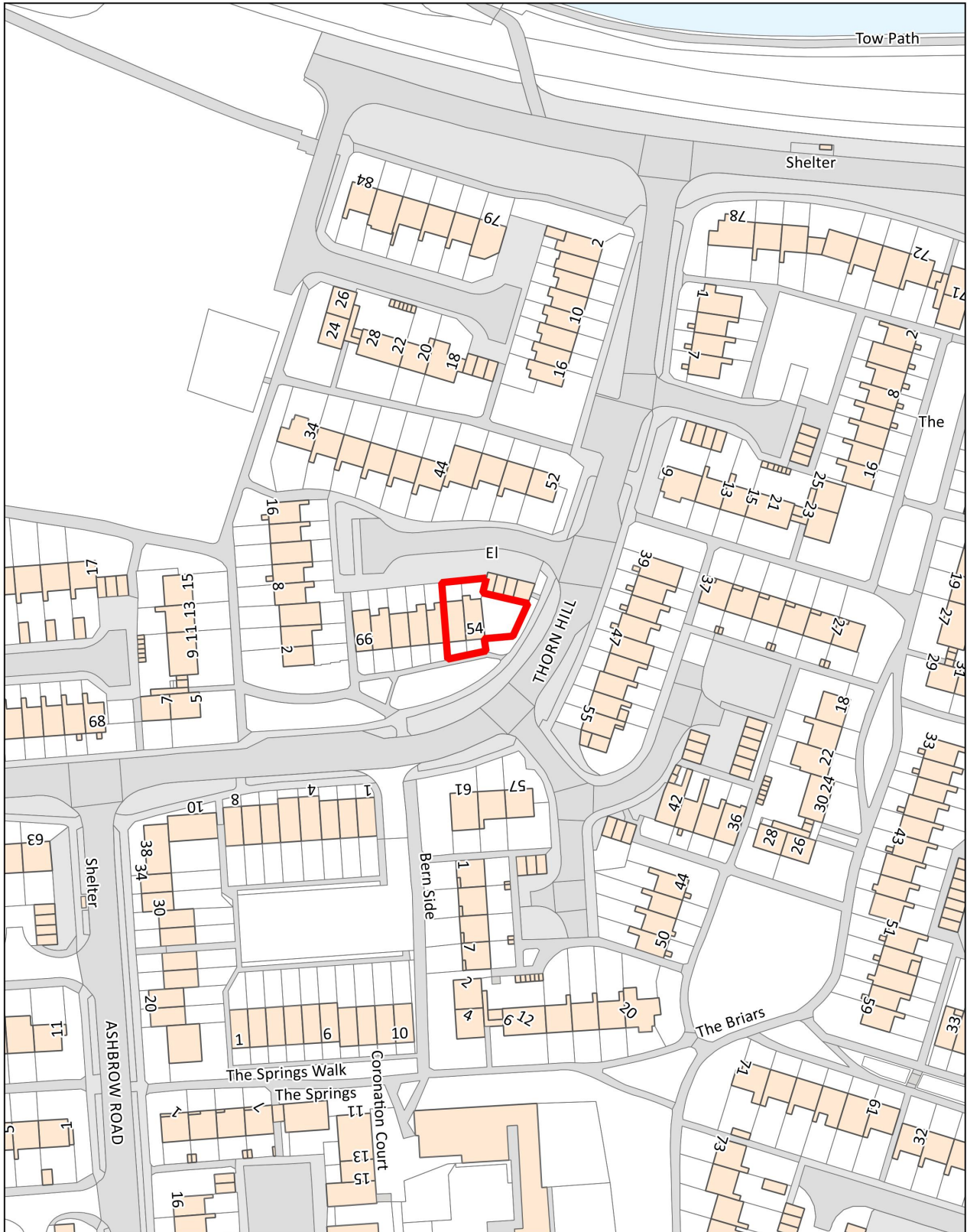
10.1 N/2016/1588.

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: **54 - 56 Thorn Hill**

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Date: 28-03-2017

Scale: 1:1,250

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