

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 13th February 2018
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
HEAD OF PLANNING: Peter Baguley

APPLICATION REF: N/2017/1539

LOCATION: Land at Blackthorn Local Centre, Blackthorn Bridge Court

DESCRIPTION: New build dispensing pharmacy

WARD: Talavera Ward

APPLICANT: Suhail Sharief
AGENT: Mr Paul Griffiths

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: NBC owns the 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 retail unit would result in a sustainable development that would contribute to the vitality and viability of the neighbourhood centre, without any significant retail impact on the town centre or other centres. In addition, subject to the conditions below, it would not have any undue adverse impact on the street scene, the highway network or the amenities of adjoining and nearby residential occupiers. The proposal thereby complies with Policies S10 and N11 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies E20 and B22 of the Northampton Local Plan, Policy RE1 of the Growing Together Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The application relates to the erection of a single storey building for use as a pharmacy. The building is indicated to be constructed of red brick with a monopitch tiled roof and has been designed to be in keeping with the adjacent retail units.

2.2 The floor area of the proposed building and the associated service yard is approximately 100 sq. m and incorporates a pharmacy/dispensing area, interview room, kitchen area and toilet.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The site is located adjacent to the Blackthorn Local Centre, off Blackthorn Road in the Eastern District of Northampton.

- 3.2 The Local Centre consists of a supermarket, which currently houses the existing pharmacy, but both uses have outgrown the building.
- 3.3 The application site lies adjacent to the supermarket, close to the public open space and play areas. The site is well situated in terms of parking, pedestrian links to residential areas, and other commercial uses.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 An application was submitted in June 2016 (N/2016/0685) to erect a new pharmacy on an adjacent site. The land had been the subject of approval by the Council's Cabinet in May 2015, but in the meantime, play equipment had been installed on the land by the Growing Together Neighbourhood Forum, following a successful bid for Lottery Funding.

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 and emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans where relevant.

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:

Paragraphs 19 and 20 relate to the need to support economic growth and meet the development needs for business.

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 S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
Policy N11 Supporting Areas of Community Regeneration

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 E20 - New development (Design)
Policy E29 Shopping Environment: new or replacement shop fronts
Policy B22 supports small business units that comply with parking standards and are compatible with neighbouring land uses within and outside business areas

- 5.5 **Supplementary Planning Documents**
Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016)
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

5.6 **Other Material Considerations**

Growing Together Neighbourhood Plan

The Growing Together Neighbourhood Plan (Covering Blackthorn, Goldings, Lings and Lumbertubs) was made on 3 April 2017.

Policy DES1: High Quality Design:

- (d) Create well defined, attractive and secure streets and spaces, faced by active frontages and benefiting from good levels of natural surveillance and lighting;
- (f) Integrate refuse and recycling storage facilities to mitigate the visual impact that they may have on the public realm. The storage and collection of refuse and recycling materials must be considered as part of the initial design process for all new development, and these facilities should be designated as an integral part of the built form of the development proposals;
- (g) Incorporate the principles of 'Secured by Design', or any equivalent standard;
- (h) Provide adequate levels of parking taking into consideration the type of development;
- (i) Respond to and enhance the setting of Local Green Spaces and other valued green spaces.

Policy CO2: Loss of Community Facilities relates to the loss of facilities such as play areas and recreational facilities and only supports proposals that would provide equal or greater benefits to the community.

Policy RE1: Neighbourhood Centres supports proposals which would contribute to the vitality and viability of, in this instance Blackthorn Neighbourhood Centre.

Policy OS1: Local Green Spaces designates this site was within an area of significance to the local community and to resist development on this land unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

6. CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **Public Protection (NBC)** – no objections subject to conditions relating to noise mitigation for any plant to be installed on the building.
- 6.2 **Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – security advice has been given, but no objections have been raised to the proposal.
- 6.3 **Highway Authority (NCC)** – no objections subject to no encroachment onto the public highway.
- 6.4 **Growing Together Neighbourhood Forum** – fully support the application. It is also noted that the Forum is appreciative of the applicant and agent's willingness to work with the Forum and the community it represents in amending the proposal in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan. This collaboration has been a model of good practice.

7. APPRAISAL

Principle

- 7.1 The Blackthorn Neighbourhood Centre is a small group of retail and community units located close to play areas and other local facilities. Currently there is one larger general retail unit, which incorporates the pharmacy. Local usage of these facilities has meant that both the retail unit and

the pharmacy find themselves requiring additional floor space, but there are no other units available to meet their requirements.

- 7.2 Discussions have been ongoing with the applicant for a number of years, which resulted in a report to Cabinet in May 2015 seeking approval for the disposal of an adjacent piece of land. For operational reasons, this original site was no longer available at the time the previous planning application was submitted, but this alternative location was identified and this subsequent proposal submitted.
- 7.3 This site offers a development that can be made more secure and is more favourable to Northamptonshire Police. It is also better located in terms of its relationship with the surrounding units. The current site also offers a better arrangement for deliveries and servicing, compared to the previous standalone proposal.
- 7.4 The proposal is supported in the Policies S10 and N11 of the WNJCS and Policy B22 of the Northampton Local Plan which seeks to provide sustainable local facilities to serve communities and encourage regeneration of areas such as Blackthorn.
- 7.5 In addition, the proposal is supported through the Growing Together Neighbourhood Plan. Policy RE1 encourages facilities that promote the vitality and viability of the Blackthorn neighbourhood centre. The addition of a unit will allow both the existing retail unit and the pharmacy use to grow to serve the wider needs of the community.
- 7.6 As the proposal relates to a retail use outside the town centre, the proposal will be liable for Community Infrastructure Levy. As this area is covered by a Neighbourhood Plan, a percentage of this contribution will be passed to the Growing Together Forum for use on projects within the community.
- 7.7 The unit is not of sufficient size to warrant the submission of a retail impact assessment, but it is considered that its size is would not adversely impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre or any nearby neighbourhood centres.
- 7.8 In terms of design and appearance, the design is in keeping with the existing units with a mono pitch roof and is indicated to be constructed in materials to match the existing.

Highways

- 7.9 Following consultation with the Local Highway Authority, no objections have been raised. The initial drawings indicated that the building encroached into the public highway (being the footpath around the site). The scheme has now been amended to set the building back and remove a corner, which not only overcomes this issue, but improves pedestrian visibility.

Impact on residential amenity

- 7.10 There are residential properties close to the neighbourhood centre, but none that directly overlook the application site. The nearest property is 32 Blackthorn Road, which is angled such that there are no windows overlooking the site, and is of a sufficient distance (19.5m) not to cause a significant loss of daylight or sunlight to the property.
- 7.11 The only potential impact on residential amenity that could arise from the development is if the proposed pharmacy included an air conditioning unit. Details of this have not been submitted with the application and further consent would be required if any external plant was to be added in the future. Further consideration could be given to noise impact at that time, if appropriate.
- 7.12 The parking area for the neighbourhood centre is at the access point from Blackthorn Road/Blackthorn Bridge Court. Customers' vehicles would not access the rear of the unit,

although deliveries would be via the service yard at the rear, which is close to the rear gardens of 23-25 Blackthorn Road. This is also the servicing area for the existing retail unit, and it is considered that the pharmacy will not generate a significant amount of delivery traffic that would adversely impact on the residential amenity of these properties.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 It is considered that the proposed retail unit would result in a sustainable development that would contribute to the vitality and viability of the neighbourhood centre, without any significant retail impact on the town centre or other centres. In addition it would not have any undue adverse impact on the street scene, the highway network or the amenities of adjoining and nearby residential occupiers and is therefore considered in accordance with the requirements of national and local planning policy and guidance.

8.2 The application is therefore recommended 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: GT 163 A / 00 A, GT 163 A / 01 A, GT 163 A / 03 A

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

3. Details of all proposed external facing materials shall first 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 E20 of the Northampton Local Plan and Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4. Prior to installation of the shutters, full details of the proposed shutters shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

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

5. Full details of all external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation. The approved details shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

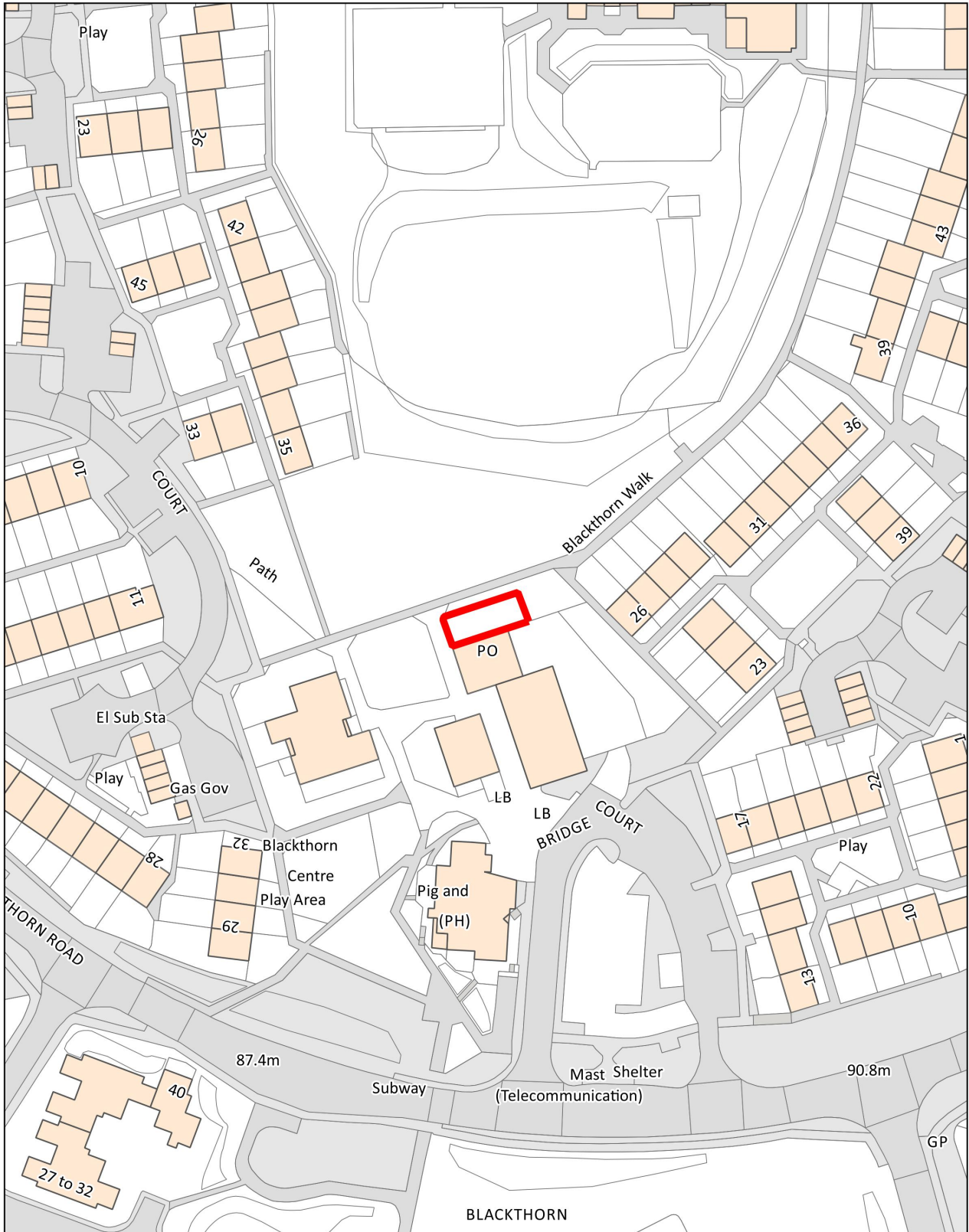
10.1 N/2017/1539

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The development is 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: **Land at Blackthorn Local Centre**

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Date: 02-02-2018

Scale: 1:1,000

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