

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2018/0700

**LOCATION:** Overslade House, 11 Overslade Close

**DESCRIPTION:** Conversion and extension including additional floor, proposed balconies and external alterations to form 40 no. apartments. New bin and cycle storage and new residents play area. Alteration to car park layout and erection of boundary fencing

**WARD:** East Hunsbury Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northampton Partnership Homes  
**AGENT:** Engie

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**REASON:** Council owned land

**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 principle of residential development on the site is acceptable and would result in the reuse of an empty residential property with associated social, economic and environmental benefits. As part of a balanced assessment, it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, neighbouring amenity and highway safety. The development is therefore compliant with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies S1, S10, S11, H1, H2, H4, H5, BN2, BN7 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and Saved Policies E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

### **2 THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the conversion, extension and external alterations to the existing building to provide 40 residential apartments. The proposed apartments would be social rented properties operated by Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) and comprise 31 x 2 bed unit and 9 x 3 bed units. The extensions and alterations to the existing building would include the addition of a new floor and balconies, cladding and alterations to windows and doors and also a new lift/entrance extension. The resulting building would be four storeys in scale with a flat roof form.

- 2.1 The proposals also includes alterations to the existing car park layout to form a total of 59 parking spaces, a bin store adjacent to the southern boundary, a cycle store adjacent to the eastern boundary and landscaping, including a play area for residents and boundary enclosures.

### **3 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The application site is located in East Hunsbury on Overslade Close, which curves around the western and northern frontage of the site. The site is designated as a residential area together with 8 bungalows to the north west of the site; however the site is surrounded to all other sides by the Mereway District Centre. Indeed, there are wellbeing and veterinary clinics and the Abbey Centre served off Overlade Close and the site backs onto the Tesco Mereway supermarket to the south east and Saints Francis and Therese Church and Hunsbury Library to the south west.
- 3.2 The application property currently comprises an empty apartment block that contains 65 x 1 bed units and a wardens flat. It has an L-shaped floor plan and is three storeys in scale with a deep spanned gabled roof. The site has a landscaped frontage to Overslade Close, with an access to the western corner of the site and parking for 54 vehicles wrapping around the southern corner of the building.

### **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 87/0305: Erection of 65 Bedsits and Wardens Accommodation. Approved.

### **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.

#### **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 6, 7, 8 and 14 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17 - Core planning principles

Paragraph 32 - Safe and suitable access

Paragraph 49 - Housing applications

Paragraph 50 - Wide choice of high quality homes

Section 7 - Good design

Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

#### **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 S1 - The Distribution of Development

Policy S10 - Sustainable Development Principles.

Policy S11 - Low Carbon and Renewable Energy  
Policy H1 - Housing  
Policy H2 - Affordable Housing  
Policy H4 - Sustainable Housing  
Policy H5 - Managing the Existing Housing Stock  
Policy BN2 - Biodiversity  
Policy BN7 - Flood risk  
Policy BN9 - Planning for Pollution Control  
Policy INF1- Approach to Infrastructure Delivery  
Policy INF2 - Contributions to Infrastructure requirements

#### 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)

#### 5.5 **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 **Anglian Water** – No objections but highlight that Anglian Water has assets located close to or crossing this site.
- 6.2 **Arboricultural Officer (NBC)** – The landscaping proposals are reasonable, albeit modest in scale with the extent limited by the bulk of the existing soft landscaping shown to remain.
- 6.3 **Councillor Phil Larratt** – This is a far better facility than what has been there to date. Therefore, subject to representations from constituents, happy to support the application.
- 6.4 **Development Management (NCC)** – A development of the proposed size and mix is expected to generate 12 nursery / pre-school places, 7 Primary School Pupils and 4 Secondary and Sixth-form School Pupils. However, the County Council cannot presently determine the Early Years capacity in the area as its evidence base is being updated and the schools in the area would be able to accommodate the likely number of Primary Pupils. Secondary capacity is extremely limited and this matter would fall to be addressed under CIL. As the proposal relates to conversion it is expected that there would not be a requirement for additional fire hydrants, but it is recommended that a contribution of £7,607 is provided for libraries. In addition, an advisory note relating to broadband is recommended.
- 6.5 **Ecological Adviser (NCC)** – Based on the ecology survey that accompanied the application, bats comprise the only ecological constraint on the site. However, following the receipt of a Bat Emergence Survey during the course of application, no ecological objections subject to conditions to secure bat boxes and a landscaping scheme to secure biodiversity benefits.
- 6.6 **Environment Agency** – No comment.
- 6.7 **Highway Authority (NCC)** – Following a review of the Transport Statement, content that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon the highway.
- 6.8 **Lead Local Flood Authority** – Insufficient information available to comment.

- 6.9 **East Hunsbury Parish Council** – Overlade Close is quite narrow but serves a busy community centres, businesses and a group of residential bungalows, and any additional on-street parking would cause problems. Therefore, the car parking must be adequate for 40 apartments. The Parish Council accepts that not all residents may own cars, but provision for further spaces should be made available to prevent parking on the street should the need arise.
- 6.10 **Public Protection (NBC)** – The refuse provisions appear adequate for the size of the development. Recommend a condition to secure mitigation measures to support the Low Emission Strategy and an advisory note regarding construction hours.
- 6.11 **Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – Historically the block has been beset with issues of Anti-Social Behaviour and criminality and, in order to not replicate past mistakes, a comprehensive layered approach to security is required; it is disappointing that there is no reference to security in the application. It is not clear how post will be delivered; there should be a means of delivery that does not involve entering the block. The bin and cycle stores should be brick. The development should be gated. The interior of the block should be compartmentalised.
- 6.12 The application has been advertised but there has been **no neighbour representations** to date.

## 7 APPRAISAL

### Principle of development

- 7.1 The application site is in a residential area within the urban area of Northampton and therefore development of the site for residential purposes is acceptable in principle under Policy S1 of the Joint Core Strategy. In addition, Policy H5 of the Joint Core Strategy seeks to encourage the re-use of empty dwellings for residential use.
- 7.2 The Council cannot however presently demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Therefore, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 14 of the NPPF, development should be permitted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The development of the site for housing would contribute, albeit on a small scale, towards the Council's housing supply with associated social and economic benefits and this therefore weighs in favour of the proposal.

### Layout and design

- 7.3 Saved Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan and Policy H1 of the Joint Core Strategy place great importance on the quality of design of new developments and is in conformity with the NPPF which advises that planning should always seek to secure high quality design.
- 7.4 The existing property comprises a large block of flats with a three storey scale and a deep spanned gabled roof. Buildings in the surrounding area are predominantly single storey in scale but there is some variety in design and materials. For example, bungalows located next to the church / community centre, and a variety of different elevation and roof treatments such that there is not a strong building character in the immediate vicinity of the site. Furthermore, the application property is set away from its neighbours such that it appears as a standalone building.
- 7.5 The application proposals would remove the existing gabled roof and add an additional storey onto the building. This new storey would be a flat roofed clad structure and the existing lower floors and new lift extension would also have sections of new cladding to link the new storey into the existing building. The alterations to the existing building would also introduce full height windows to kitchen and living rooms and these would also benefit from new metal balconies at upper floor level. As such the appearance of the building would be refreshed and modernised, with the overall design of the building enhanced. The scale of the building would however be increased and there would as a result be an increase in prominence from Overlade Close. However, only the new lift extension to the rear corner of the building would be higher than the existing ridgeline of the property. Furthermore, given the existing variety of built form in the locality and that the design

alterations would improve the appearance of the building, it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable impact of the character and appearance of the area.

### **Residential amenity**

- 7.6 Saved Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan, Policy H1 of the Joint Core Strategy and the Core Planning Principles in the NPPF all seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 7.7 In terms of the residential amenities of neighbours, the application building is some 25 metres away from the nearest bungalow to the opposite side of Overslade Close and some 30 metres from the Presbytery at Saints Francis and Therese Church. As such, it is considered that the proposed alterations to the property including the addition of a new floor and external balconies, would not adversely impact on the residential amenities of any neighbouring property.
- 7.8 Turning to the amenities of future occupiers of the new dwellings, all habitable rooms would be served by windows and the ground floor units would all benefit from a narrow amenity strip enclosed by railings to provide a buffer area to the parking and communal amenity areas and the upper floor flats would all be served by balconies. As well as the communal amenity areas, the development also includes a play area to meet the needs of families that would occupy the development. The separation of this play area from the adjacent units is not ideal, however the equipment has been set as far as practicable from the nearest units, with enclosures and landscaping also seeking to provide a buffer between the play area and residential units. As such, and given that the play area is only intended to serve residents and its position within the site would help facilitate this, it is considered that its impact on future occupiers of the development would not be objectionable. The development also includes a large bin store that would be adequate to serve the development. As such, subject to conditions, it is considered that the proposal would afford an acceptable standard of amenity for future occupiers of the site.
- 7.9 Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable impact with regard to the amenities of neighbours and would afford an acceptable standard of amenity for future occupiers of the site.

### **Parking and Highway Safety**

- 7.10 The application proposals would be served off the existing private access drive and would enlarge the existing parking area from 54 spaces to 59 car parking spaces with a 36 space cycle store also proposed. The County Parking Standards seek 1 car parking per 1 bed dwelling and 2 parking spaces per 2/3 bed dwelling, which equates to 66 parking spaces for the existing use and 80 parking spaces for the proposed development. In addition, the County Parking Standards also seek visitor parking spaces for residential developments at one 1 space per dwelling. As such, the County Parking Standards would suggest that there is an existing parking shortfall on the site and that this would be exacerbated by the proposals.
- 7.11 However, the application has been supported by a Transport Statement and this examines 2011 Census data for the local area (Northampton O30A), which shows that only 25% of household living in flats within the local area own a car. Furthermore, the 2011 Census data shows that only 28% of social rented households in the local area own a car. In addition, the Transport Assessment looks at the sustainability of the site location, which is adjacent to a District Centre including a supermarket, library and other facilities, and also noted that the site is within reasonable walking distances to schools and Hunsbury Hill County Park. The Transport Statement also identifies that there are bus stops on Clannell Road (some 110 metres from the site) and at the Tesco supermarket (some 250 metres from the site) and concludes that the site is in a highly sustainable location. Finally, the Transport Assessment assesses TRICS data for the existing and proposed use, and this analysis indicates that proposed use would be likely reduce the number of vehicle movements from the site.

- 7.12 The County Highway Engineer has assessed the submitted Transport Assessment and raises no objections to the scheme. Therefore, in light of the above and subject to a condition to secure the car and cycle parking detailed on the submitted plans, the proposal is considered acceptable on parking and highway safety grounds.

### **Other Considerations**

- 7.13 The Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) highlights the historic anti-social behaviour and crime related issues on the site and seeks a gated development and also various security measures. However, it is understood that the historic problems of the site were related to the tenure mix of the property and this would change under the current application from 1 bed units to 2/3 bed units and thus the demographic makeup of the building would differ significantly. Furthermore, it is considered by officers that should the entire development be enclosed by high fences and gates then this would create the appearance of a secure institution and a fear of crime that would not be befitting to the family friendly residential environment that the development is seeking to create. Therefore, and taking into account that there would be surveillance of the car parking from the flats, it is considered that the proposed railings to the main boundaries, but open main vehicular and pedestrian access route into the site provides an acceptable compromise in this instance. Furthermore, whilst the bin and cycle stores are not brick construction, they would be concrete clad such that it is considered they would be sufficiently robust structures. It is however recommended that a condition is added to secure external post boxes to the building as recommended by the CPDA.
- 7.14 Whilst the application site is not located in Flood Zone 2 or 3, it is categorised a major development and has therefore been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Assessment. The Lead Local Flood Authority has advised that the submitted surface water drainage information accompanying the application is not sufficient. However, the proposal is for a conversion with only a small increase in footprint to add a lift shaft and only a small increase in hard surfacing to facilitate 4 parking spaces, a cycle store and a small play area. Furthermore, the submitted FRA indicates that the new block paving would be of permeable construction. As such, subject to a condition to secure the permeable paving, it is considered that it would not be reasonable to seek further sustainable drainage details or works for the proposed development, bearing in mind the proposal is substantially for residential conversion with less number of dwellings.
- 7.15 The application has been accompanied by an Ecology Survey and a Bat Activity Survey. These documents have been assessed by the County Ecologist and are considered to demonstrate that, subject to conditions to secure biodiversity enhancements as part of a landscaping scheme and bat boxes and also an informative regarding nesting birds, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact with regards to biodiversity and protected species.
- 7.16 An Arboricultural Assessment has also accompanied the application. This document finds that there are no protected or Category A trees within the site and the development would also not adversely impact on the Category B trees within the site, subject to tree protection measures. As such, and having regard to the comments of the Arboricultural Officer, no objections are raised to the application on tree related grounds subject to a condition to secure tree protection measures.
- 7.17 In terms of sustainability, as the proposal is for a conversion with a reduction in the number of units, it is not considered reasonable to require renewable energy technology or other sustainability measures.
- 7.18 Environmental Protection have requested the installation of electric vehicle charging points for the development. However, the proposal is not in an Air Quality Management Area, is for a reduction in the number of units on site and would only create 5 additional parking spaces such that it is considered that it is not reasonable to require such facilities for the development.
- 7.19 The consultation response from Environmental Protection indicates that a full Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is not necessary for this proposal, which predominantly

comprises a conversion application and benefits from a large parking area that can accommodate construction related facilities set away from neighbouring residential properties. Furthermore, and there are controls under the Environmental Health and Highways legislation to address construction related issues should they arise.

- 7.20 In respect of Section 106 matters, the existing property is reducing from 65 x 1 bed affordable units to 40 mixed 2/3 bed affordable units managed by NPH. As such, the proposal would not have any implications with regards to affordable housing and Saved Local Plan Policy H2, other than providing an improved tenure mix on the site. Furthermore, given that the proposal is for a reduction in the number of units on site, it is considered that it would not be reasonable to seek any Section 106 financial contributions from the proposed development. In any event, it is noted that there is no requirement for highway works arising from the proposal and NCC Development Management are not seeking any Section 106 education contributions. Although, it is also noted NCC Development Management suggest in their consultation response that the development should make a contribution to libraries, but it is not considered this could be reasonably sought from a development that is reducing the number of units and is next to an existing library.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 To conclude, the site is in an existing housing area within the urban area of Northampton and the principle of residential development on the site is therefore acceptable under the development plan. However, the Council cannot presently demonstrate a five year housing land supply and it is therefore necessary to assess the proposal against the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this instance, the proposal would comply with the development plan and would result in the reuse of an empty residential property with associated social, economic and environmental benefits. Furthermore, subject to conditions, no harm has been identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Therefore, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

## **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 attached schedule of approved plans.

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

3. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, tree protection measures shall be installed in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Report and the development shall thereafter be constructed in accordance with the tree protection details in the submitted Arboricultural Report.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the locality in accordance with Policy H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that existing trees are protected.

4. Prior to the construction of the development hereby permitted, details of all proposed external facing materials (including materials for the extensions, cladding, bin and cycle stores) 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 in accordance with Policy H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

5. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. 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.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity, biodiversity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policies H1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

6. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, details of external post boxes to serve the new flats shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

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

7. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, a scheme for bat boxes, including a timetable for the implementation of the scheme, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved bat box scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard protected species and biodiversity in accordance with Policy BN2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

8. The parking spaces and manoeuvring areas shown on the approved plans shall be constructed and laid out prior to the occupation of the building hereby approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the free flow of traffic or conditions of highway safety in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. The approved new bin and cycle stores shall be implemented in full prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

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

10. The approved new means of enclosures shall be implemented in full prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the boundaries of the site and new flats are properly treated so as to secure a satisfactory and safe standard of development in accordance with Policies H1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

11. Prior to the construction of the play area hereby approved, full details of the equipment 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 interest of visual and residential amenity and too ensure the provision of adequate facilities in accordance with Policies H1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.



**10 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

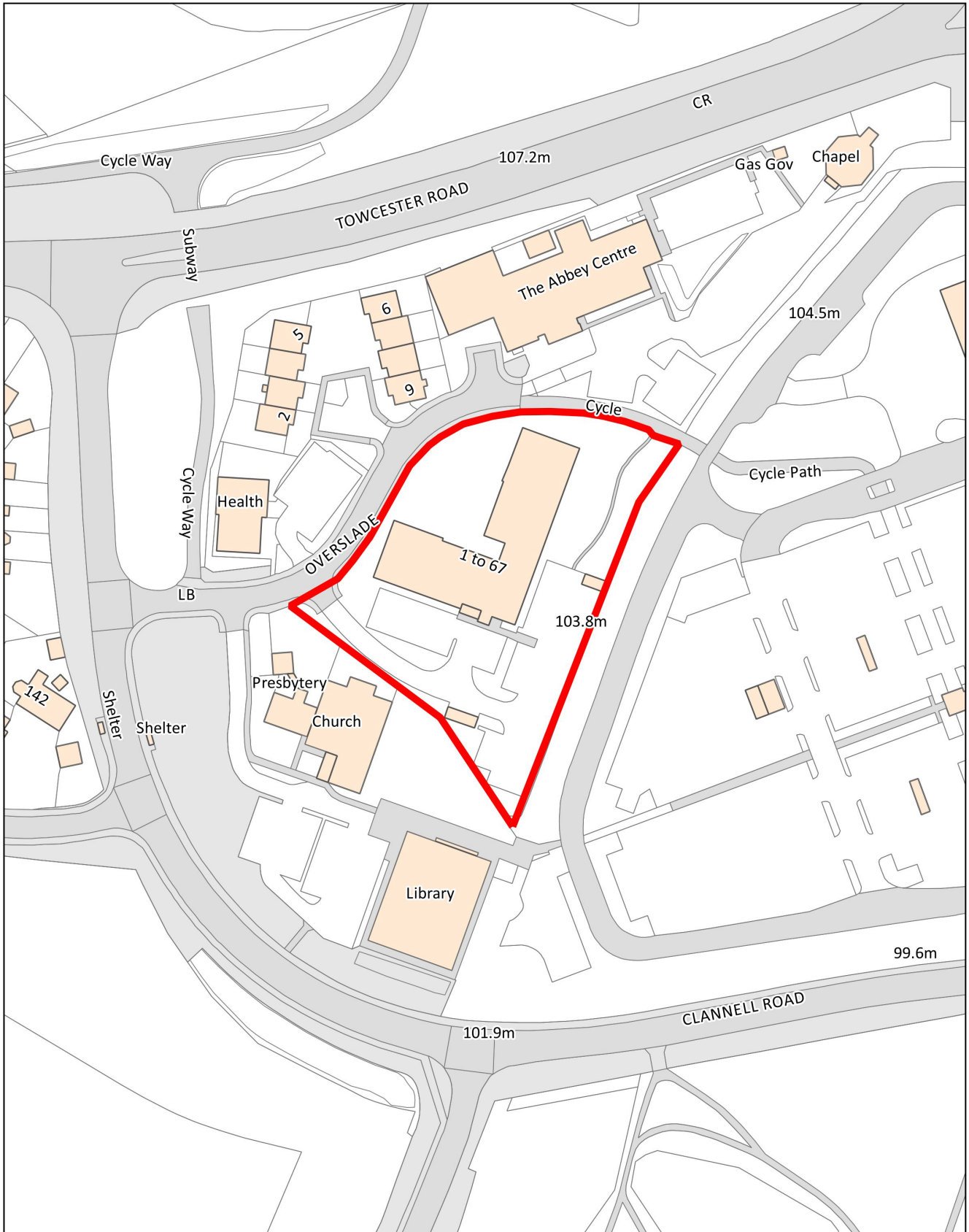
10.1 87/0305.

**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: **Overslade House. 11 Overslade Close**

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