

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018  
**DEPARTMENT:** Planning Service  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Peter Baguley

**APPLICATION REF:** N/2018/1133

**LOCATION:** Sub Station, Angel Street

**DESCRIPTION:** New pre manufactured GRP substation adjacent to the existing substation at the Former Constabulary Offices

**WARD:** Castle Ward

**APPLICANT:** Northampton Borough Council  
**AGENT:** GSS Architecture

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**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 development as proposed is acceptable and would contribute to the aims of regenerating the town centre and providing a cultural focus within Derngate Conservation Area, through the provision of necessary infrastructure associated with the Museum extension. The design and appearance of the new build element is screen by existing structures on the site and would not result in demonstrable harm to the setting of the heritage assets. The proposal would not lead to any undue impacts in respect of flood risk, highways or impact on surrounding amenity in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies S10, E7, BN5 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 1, 5, 10 and 21 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

### **2 THE PROPOSAL**

#### **2.1** The application relates to the erection of a pre-manufactured glass reinforced plastic (GRP) substation adjacent to the existing substation, which lies to the side of the Former Constabulary Building close to the entry point to the car park at the rear of the building.

### **3 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The site is accessed from Angel Street and is part of a complex of buildings that were formerly Northamptonshire County Council's (NCC) offices. The buildings around this complex vary in date, the oldest, the Sessions House being constructed around 1667. Many of the buildings have been altered and adapted over the years.
- 3.2 At the entrance to the NCC IT building car park is a lean-to building constructed in brick, with a corrugated metal roof. The proposed sub-station lies to the north of this building against the cream rendered wall of the NCC IT building.

## **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 An application reference N/2017/1362 was approved for the remodelling and extension of the museum, new courtyard extension to provide a new shoe gallery, cafe and multi-functional space and to link the buildings. New substation, demolition to facilitate the extension. Change of use from Offices (Class B1) to museum (Class D1). At that time the substation was shown as within the courtyard of the museum, which reduced the space in the courtyard for future displays and exhibitions.
- 4.2 Following discussions with NCC, an alternative location was identified adjacent to the former Constabulary Offices, which is now used as part of the offices for NCC.

## **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 Central Area Action Plan (2013).

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:

Paragraphs 7-12 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development.  
Paragraph 124 - Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.  
Paragraph 178 – Ground conditions and pollution.  
Section 11 – Making effective use of land  
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

In particular Paragraph 192 states;

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

### 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 requires the Council to take a positive approach that reflects a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that proposals should be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Policy S10: sustainable development principles. This includes the location of services where they can easily be accessed by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to minimise noise pollution.

Policy INF1: supporting new development with good access to infrastructure including physical infrastructure (e.g. electricity and telecommunications)

Policy BN5: The Historic Environment and Landscape – Heritage assets and their settings and landscapes will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance.

Policy BN9 – planning for pollution control refers to the need to minimise the adverse impacts of noise.

### 5.4 **Northampton Central Area Action Plan 2013**

The Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) provides specific planning policy and guidance for the town centre and adjoining areas where significant regeneration and investment is proposed in the period up to 2026 and is in conformity with the objectives of the NPPF. Relevant policies include:

Policy 1: Promoting Design Excellence – make efficient use of land by promoting an appropriate mix of land uses in order to increase the vitality and vibrancy of an area and a wider range of choice for users.

Policy 5: Flood risk and drainage – within the Central Area, developments are expected to implement measures that will ensure that there is no increase in the floor surface water or foul sewage to the combine or foul sewage network.

Policy 21: Angel Street – seeks to introduce active frontages for the day time and early evening along Guildhall Road and the provision of a mix of uses including café and bars within the former County Council Offices.

Policy 36: Infrastructure Delivery – consideration to the infrastructure requirements of a development in conjunction with the appropriate service providers.

### 5.5 **Other Material Considerations**

Derngate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2006). At the time of publishing this document, the site was not included in the Conservation Area, but the plan proposed an extension to the Derngate Conservation Area which was subsequently confirmed.

## 6 **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **Town Centre Conservation Area Advisory Committee** - object to the application and consider it would have a negative impact on the area. They further note that the existing substation is encased with brick and suggest that the design could be improved.

## **7 APPRAISAL**

### **Design**

- 7.1 In terms of design, the proposed substation measures 3.11m x 2.265m and 2.3m in height. The front elevation indicates two doors the full width that open outwards for access. The elevations of the GRP enclosure are shown in a cream finish (RAL 9001).
- 7.2 Discussions have taken place with the applicant regarding the finish and it was noted that by proposing GRP the size of the structure could be reduced. A brick finish would have enlarged the footprint making it a similar depth to the existing substation and the applicant had aimed for a more subservient building in a colour to match the existing building, to make the proposed substation less conspicuous.
- 7.3 However, it is further noted that this proposed location is in lieu of the previous substation proposal in the courtyard of the museum, which would have had a greater impact in the street scene and on the future use of the courtyard, as well as any future uses of the former NCC Offices building fronting Guildhall Road.
- 7.4 It is considered that the scale and design of the proposal is acceptable and would not cause unacceptable impact in the locality.

### **Noise**

- 7.5 The Environmental Health Officer has not raised any concerns about the potential for noise and disturbance associated with the use. Given the uses in the surrounding area, it is considered that there is unlikely to be unacceptable noise impact as a result of this proposal.

### **Highways/Parking**

- 7.6 The site is currently hard surfaced by not used for parking or any other specific use. The proposal would not impact on the highway or parking within the site.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 7.7 The National Planning Policy Framework, Policy BN7 of the Joint Core Strategy and Policy 5 of the Central Area Action Plan require that development proposals do not increase the risk of flood and, where possible, offer betterment.
- 7.8 The application site is located in an area designated as Flood Zone 1 which is identified as an area of low probability of flooding, land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.
- 7.9 The site area is under 1 hectare and is not affected by other means of flooding of the site. In addition, the extension is located on an area which is currently hard surfaced, so there is no increase in size of the non-permeable area. In this instance there is no requirement for the application to include a flood risk assessment

### **Impact on neighbouring uses and historic environment**

- 7.10 The uses in this area are predominantly commercial, but within an area containing a number of heritage assets. The NPPF requires that consideration is given to any demonstrable harm arising from the proposal and if the benefits outweigh the harm caused.

- 7.11 The structure would be visible from certain directions into the site, although the existing security hut and brick substation would screen the proposed substation from the street view. The substation is required for the operation of the museum and is an essential part of its infrastructure. This location is considered to be less prominent than the previously approved structure in the courtyard and would not obstruct views of the rear of Sessions House or Gaol block. It is therefore considered that the benefits of this proposal outweigh any harm caused.
- 7.12 The County Archaeologist has been consulted and any comment received will be reported to the Committee via the addendum.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The development as proposed is acceptable and would contribute to the aims of regenerating the town centre and providing a cultural focus within Derngate Conservation Area, through the provision of necessary infrastructure associated with the Museum extension. The design and appearance of the new build element is screened by existing structures on the site and would not result in demonstrable harm to the setting of the heritage assets. The proposal would not lead to any undue impacts in respect of flood risk, highways or impact on surrounding amenity in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies S10, E7, BN5 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 1, 5, 10 and 21 of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

## **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, Block plan (SK20), SK21, SK600.

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

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

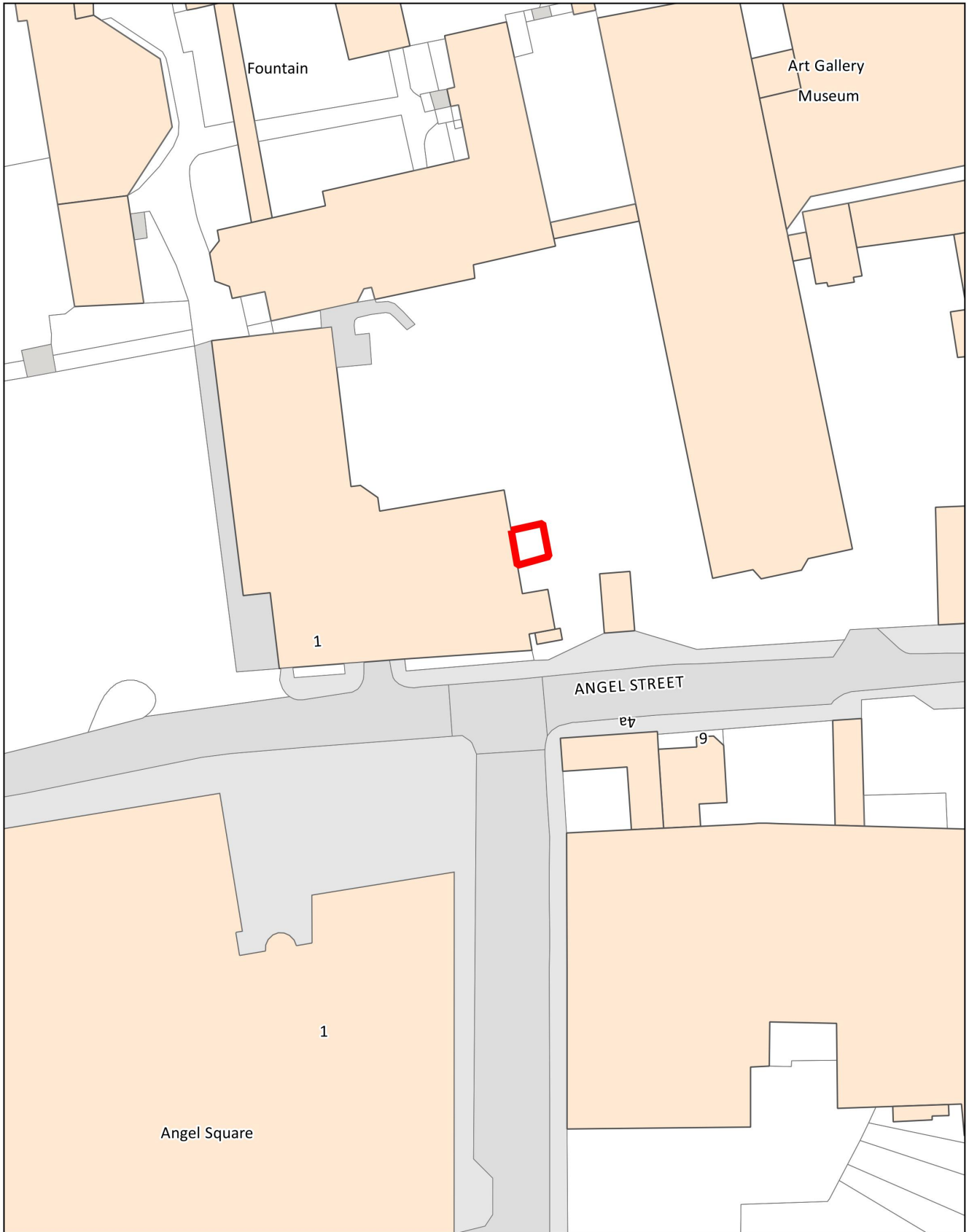
- 10.1 N/2018/1133.

## **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: **Sub Station, Angel Street**

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Date: 04-10-2018

Scale: 1:500

Drawn by: -----