



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 12th May 2020
DEPARTMENT: Planning Service
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING: Peter Baguley

APPLICATION REF: N/2020/0168

LOCATION: Community Room, 19A Blackberry Lane

DESCRIPTION: Change of Use of Community Room (Use Class D2) to Dwelling (Use Class C3), with off road parking and dropped kerb and demolition of link office structure

WARD: Delapre & Briar Ward

APPLICANT: Northampton Partnership Homes
AGENT: Sketchhaus Ltd

REFERRED BY: Director of Planning and Sustainability
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 proposal site is in a sustainable location, with good access to the town centre and public transport. The proposed conversion would contribute to the Council's 5-year housing supply. Subject to the conditions proposed, the development would not lead to any unacceptable adverse impacts on existing highway, or existing and proposed residential amenity, or adjacent land uses. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies SA, S10, H1, of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

2 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 It is proposed to change the use of the property from a community room (Use Class D2) to a single dwelling (Use Class C3) with three bedrooms, disabled bathroom, kitchen and living room, with off road parking and dropped kerb and demolition of link office structure.

2.2 The proposal also includes minor alterations to window openings and door.

3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site comprises a single storey pitched roof building which is located within a primarily residential area. The site is currently a community room with an office linked to an attached residential dwelling. The property is accessed off Hunsbarrow Road leading onto Blackberry Lane, which is a cul-de-sac comprising of terrace bungalows. To the rear of the site is a grassed area leading to a communal parking area. Pedestrian access to the property is at the front facing onto Blackberry Lane.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None.

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, Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013)

6 National Policies

- 6.1 **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:

2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
4 – Decision Making
5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

6.2 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:

SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
H1 – Housing Density and Mix and Type of Dwellings

6.3 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 policy is material to this application:

E20 – Design of New Development

6.4 Supplementary Planning Documents

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004
Northamptonshire County Parking Standards 2016

7 CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 7.1 **NCC Highways** - no objection subject to acceptable visibility splays for pedestrian are provided; also comment on drainage, access gradient and surfacing.
- 7.2 **Environmental Health** – no comments on the application.
- 7.3 **Councillor J. Davenport** - feel that the centre is used every day and the loss will further isolate vulnerable residents of the local community.

8 APPRAISAL

Principle of development

- 8.1 Paragraph 118 of the NPPF, encourages the use of brownfield sites and the re-use of under-utilised land and buildings for residential use where there is an identified need for additional housing in the area.
- 8.2 The site is currently used as a local community centre. The proposal intends to convert the building into a single bungalow, which will comprise of three bedrooms, an open plan kitchen living area and wet room. To the front of the dwelling two off road parking spaces will be created and the existing rear grassed area will be enclosed to create a garden.
- 8.3 Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH), have confirmed that the change of use is down to site being underutilised. NPH conducted a review of usage of all the community hubs as part of a wider review of assets, it was concluded that many of the facilities were not used. This review was submitted to Northampton Borough Council to progress to the next stage to either invest in certain facilities, to re-provide new where necessary or to find alternative uses to those where there was insufficient demand. It was therefore decided the application site would be better utilised as a dwelling and by undertaking the submission of a planning application allowed a full and detailed consultation process to be undertaken with residents and other interested parties. A site notice was put up in the local area and neighbour consultation letters were sent out, no responses from any of the residents was received in relation to the application. In addition, NPH has confirmed that there are two other hubs in Parsons Meade (1.2 miles away) and George Nutt Court (1.4 miles away) which are located within acceptable distances to serve the local residents.
- 8.4 The site is in a sustainable location, with good access to the town centre and public transport. Subject to the considerations discussed within the remainder of this report, the principle of conversion of the existing building to residential dwelling is considered acceptable.

Design

- 8.5 The NPPF advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. These aims are reflected in Policy S10 of the JCS which require new development to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design incorporating safety and security measures.
- 8.6 In respect of the existing building, the development would only make minor changes to the external appearance of the building. The north side elevation of the building has a link infill structure used as an office, this will be removed and two additional windows inserted. The front elevation will include the removal of the existing doors and a new double-glazed door with side light inserted along with the removal of the existing full height windows which will be replaced with new double-glazed windows. For the south side elevation, the existing full-length windows will be removed and replaced with new double-glazed windows, the existing window to the rear will be removed and replaced with a new double-glazed patio door.

- 8.7 These changes are considered to be minimal; no objections have been received regarding these changes and they will not have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of the local area.

Amenity

- 8.8 Policy H1 of the JCS requires new development to have regard to the living conditions and amenity of both future occupiers and the occupiers of neighbouring properties.
- 8.9 The existing building would be converted to provide one 3-bed dwelling. All rooms within the converted building and would have sufficient daylight and outlook and are considered to be of reasonable size. Outdoor amenity space would be located to the rear of the site and is of a reasonable size. To the north-east of the site is a public footpath leading to Briar Hill playing fields. It is considered an acceptable level of amenity would be provided for proposed occupiers.
- 8.10 In respect of neighbouring amenity, the proposal includes minor alterations to the existing doors and windows and the addition of patio doors to the rear and two additional windows on the side north elevation. The area is predominately residential and consists of terrace bungalows of the same age and design as the community room, these are set back from the highway and to the rear of the site where there is a communal car park. To the north of the site is a single two storey dwelling which the office structure is linked to, this will be removed and two additional windows inserted on the ground floor facing onto the blank side elevation of this neighbouring property. No other alterations are proposed and it is not considered residential amenity of these properties would be adversely affected.

Highway Matters

- 8.11 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 8.12 Access to the site would be via the existing access from Blackberry Lane, the proposal includes two off road parking spaces. The Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016) advise that applications for a 2/3 bed dwelling should provide 2 parking spaces, therefore the development complies with the Northamptonshire Parking Standards. The Highway Authority have not raised any objections to the scheme but have given observations in relation to the existing low level shrubbery, the access gradient, the drainage and the proposed access surfacing, these technical details would be agreed by conditions. It is not considered that the proposal would lead to any unacceptable adverse impacts on existing highway conditions within the area such that the application should be refused on this basis.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal would utilise a building that is currently under used. The proposal involves minimal changes to the fabric of the building or the external layout. It is considered that there is no significant demonstrable harm in terms of this particular use. The site is in a sustainable location with good access to the town centre and public transport and the development would make a positive contribution to the Council's 5-year housing supply. The development would not lead to any unacceptable adverse impacts on existing highway or existing or proposed residential amenity, or adjacent land uses.
- 9.2 The proposal is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions.

10 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:SK06 20/02, SK06 20/03.

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

3. All existing low-level shrubbery within the pedestrian visibility splays, must not exceed 0.6m in height above footway level at any time. The maximum access gradient shall not exceed 1 in 15 for a minimum of the first 5.0m from the highway boundary. All private vehicular access surfacing shall be finished with a hard bound surface for a minimum of the initial 5.0m from the highway boundary.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no extensions including roof alteration/enlargement shall be erected to the dwelling hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to prevent overdevelopment of the site in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan and Policy H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

Informative:

You will need to obtain formal street naming and numbering for the new unit(s) through Northampton Borough Council Building Control. For further information please call 01604 838920 or email buildingcontrol@northampton.gov.uk

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

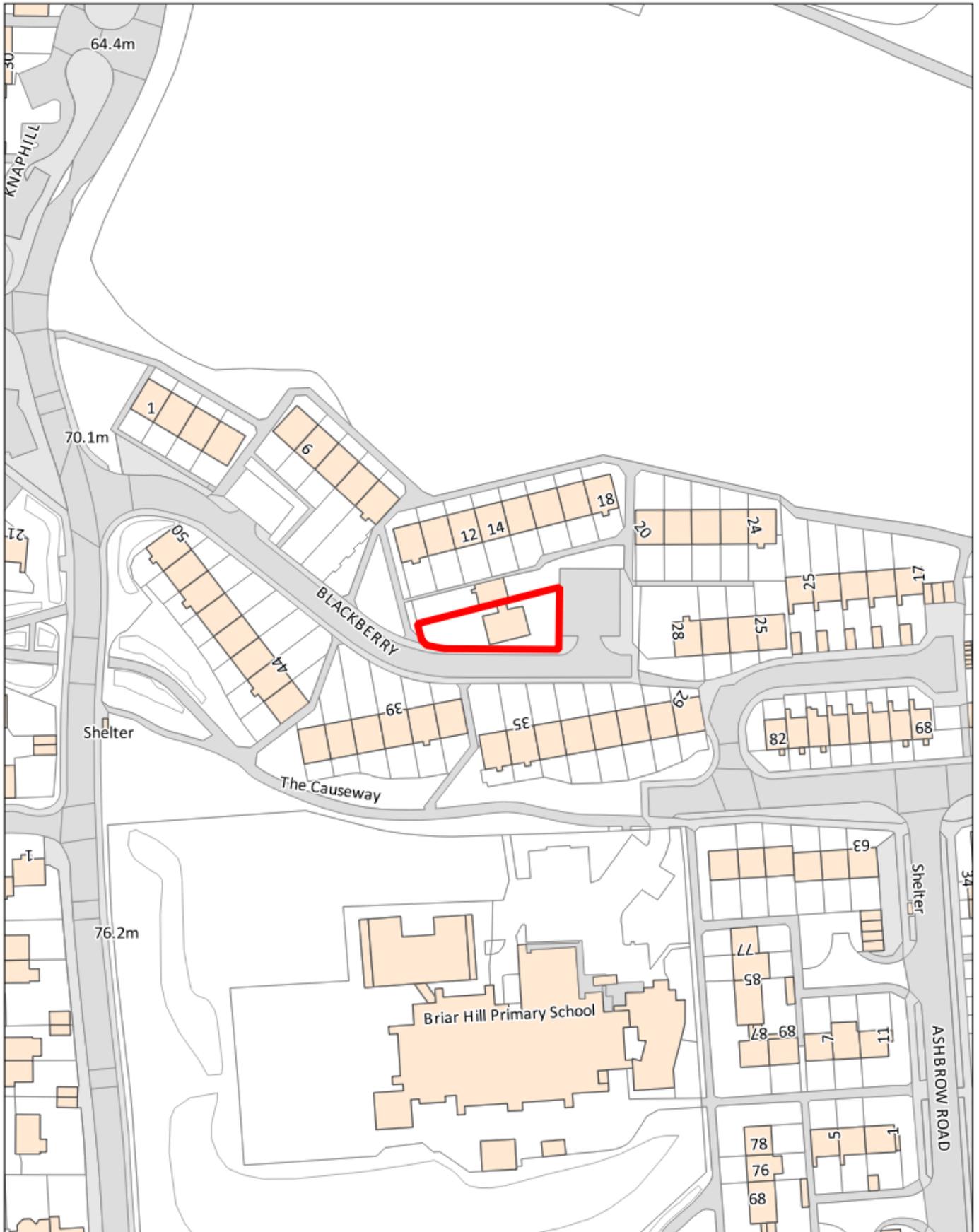
- 11.1 None.

12 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The development is not CIL liable.

13 SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 13.1 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: **19A Blackberry Lane**

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Date: 23-04-2020

Scale: 1:1,250

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