

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	Full Planning Committee - 29/10/2013	Item No: 5.2
Report Originator	Richard Marlow Development Officer	Application No: KET/2013/0067
Wards Affected	William Knibb	
Location	Soans Yard, Bridewell Lane (land off), Kettering	
Proposal	Application for Conservation Area Consent: Demolition of 2 cottages	
Applicant	Mr K Jones	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To describe the above proposals
- To identify and report on the issues arising from it
- To state a recommendation on the application

2. RECOMMENDATION

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER RECOMMENDS that this application be APPROVED subject to the following Condition(s):-

1. The works to which this permission relates shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) and to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented consents.

2. The buildings shall not be demolished before planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment and refurbishment of the wider Soans Yard site as detailed in application KET/2013/0066

REASON: To ensure the character of the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced in accordance with policy 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Officers Report for KET/2013/0067

This application is reported for Committee decision because the application is linked to application KET/2013/0066 which is subject to unresolved, material objections.

3.0 Information

Relevant Planning History

KE/1994/0063 Change of use of former ambulance station from light engineering to offices for volunteer groups. APPROVED 22/03/1994.

KE/1981/0930 Change of use to use for removal, replacement and repair of radiator, automotive and auto-electrical components in vehicles. APPROVED 13/01/1982.

Site Description

Officer's site inspection was carried out on 03/10/2013.

The site comprises of a red brick and rendered former residential cottage with a single aspect that faces west towards the area of hardstanding in front of the former ambulance station located off Market Street. The site lies within the Conservation Area and the primary shopping area as set out in the adopted Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP). The site is adjacent to the primary shopping frontages on Market Street but does not contain any designated primary or secondary frontages.

To the north and east of the site is an area of former commercial and industrial buildings is subject to a separate linked application (KET/2013/0066) that would bring about the redevelopment and refurbishment of the vacant buildings for a mixture of retail and restaurant uses.

Proposed Development

The demolition of two cottages associated with the former ambulance station within The Yards quarter and site Y2 – Soans Yard established by the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan.

Any Constraints Affecting The Site

Conservation Area

4.0 Consultation and Customer Impact

English Heritage

Do not wish to comment in detail and have provided the following general observations to be considered in the determination of this application:

Although the cottages are modest buildings architecturally and have no

statutory designation, they form an interesting group with their neighbours, which contributes to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. Indeed the Kettering Conservation Area Appraisal at paragraph 8.2.7 (Private Areas) acknowledges the ‘...*tightly planned rear yard and service ranges*’ as being among the ‘...*special features of the town centre*’ and makes specific reference to the north side of Market Street. While the applicant’s Cultural Heritage Statement of Significance makes general reference to the Kettering Conservation Area Appraisal, it does not explore it any further, or acknowledge the level of significance that this adopted policy document assigns to the sites character, and how this contributes to the general character and appearance of the conservation area.

The application drawings indicate proposed new shop fronts and changes to the fenestration of some of the remaining buildings. No other detail is provided with regard to materials, architectural design and detailing, and without this level of detail it is difficult to be convinced that these design choices are appropriate to the character of the buildings or the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Highway Authority

No comment

Northamptonshire Archaeology

No objection

Environmental Health

No comment or objection

Neighbours

One letter of support for the proposal.

One letter raising concerns regarding parking and waste storage for the proposal and surrounding traders.

5.0 Planning Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

National Planning Policy Framework

Policy 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Development Plan Policies

North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy

Policy 13 - Sustainable Development Principles

Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan

Policy 3 - Primary Shopping Area (Primary and Secondary Frontages) and the Evening Economy

Policy 12 – Heritage, Conservation and Archaeology

Policy 17 - The Yards
Policy 18 – Site Y2 – Soans Yard

SPDs

Urban Codes

6.0 Financial/Resource Implications

None

7.0 Planning Considerations

The key issue for consideration in this application is the principle of demolition, in the context of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and policy 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In assessing the proposal consideration should be given as to whether the loss of the cottages and changes to the extant buildings would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area and whether this can be justified as necessary in order to achieve a greater, overall enhancement to the conservation area.

There is a general presumption against demolition of historic buildings within the Conservation Area as detailed as paragraph 14.1.5 of the Kettering Conservation Area Appraisal (30 March 2007). The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies this area as forming part of the Shopping Centre character area with streets that are closely defined with buildings built hard up to the pavement edges following the organic curves of the generally narrow shopping streets and dominated by two principal open space, the Market and Horsemarket from which most of the other streets lead.

The two cottages are located within the Kettering Conservation Area and are therefore considered as designated heritage assets. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF specifies that any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. To this end the applicant has submitted a Cultural Heritage Statement of Significance Report and Structural Survey to support this application. This is consistent with paragraph 128 of the NPPF which states that the level of detailed should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

The cottages are an early 20th Century development built sometime after 1925 as established by the date stone on the Ambulance Station. The building is a modestly designed two storey brick with upper storey rendered and pan tile roof construction. The buildings have a single aspect facing west and form an incongruous element within the local vernacular of Market Street and Soans Yard. The orientation and siting

of the buildings tucked behind the commercial properties to the north of Market Street result in the buildings being largely hidden from view when approached from Market Street and having no impact on the setting of the Grade II listed buildings comprising of the former Sun Hotel on the southern side of Market Street at nos. 19-21. The applicant's heritage significance report notes that the building has been altered externally and internally since originally built reflecting the needs of the individual operators at particular points in time.

The buildings have been vacant since October 2008 and together with the wider site have fallen into disrepair. Based on the information provided and having inspected the site both internally and externally it is considered that the loss of low quality vacant and boarded up buildings will improve this area of the town centre providing they are replaced by well-designed development that will enhance the public realm and the wider Conservation Area whilst helping to facilitate a high quality town centre environment in accordance with the NPPF and the objectives of Policies 12, 17 and 18 of the Kettering Town Centre AAP. Policy 17 allocates the Yards as an area that can become a distinctive and special place within the town, offering a range of niche and independent retail units whilst policy 18 identifies Soans Yard as the priority for delivering the first phase of retail development in the Yards.

The Yards site is Council owned and the Council has sought to bring forward regeneration of the area in partnership with an appointed developer through a joint venture. Marketing of site and development appraisals have provided an understanding of the areas potential and justification for the Yards proposals within the KTCAPP. However attempts to bring the site forward in the short term have previously been unsuccessful in part as a result of the difficulties in accessing the site and providing sufficient footfall through the site to attract potential occupiers.

The removal of the cottages would facilitate improvements to pedestrian access and movement through the site as part of the wider redevelopment of the site proposed through the linked redevelopment and change of use application (KET/2013/0066) and ensure that the most historically important buildings and spaces within the wider site are brought into viable use that would secure their future. In particular the rear workshops and private spaces of Soans Yard that may date back to the late eighteenth century are highlighted within the Conservation Area Appraisal for their historical merit, with the tightly planned rear yard forming part of the special features of the town centre. Such a proposal for the wider area accords with the principles of the Yard established through policy 17 of the KTCAAP which envisages the regeneration of the wider site through the enhanced setting and viable re-use of the other historic buildings on the site; enhanced pedestrian linkages and through movement; and creation of new public realm. NPPF paragraph 137 is clear that Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal the significance of their Conservation Areas

and preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset.

Policy 12 of the NPPF distinguishes between whether the proposal would result in substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset or less than substantial harm. Given that the designated heritage asset is the Conservation Area in its entirety, and due to the lack of historical merit in the buildings proposed for demolition through this application, it is considered that the proposal will lead to a less than substantial harm and the proposal should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, including securing its optimum viable use in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF. The demolition will help to increase permeability through the site and thus support commercially viable reuse of the site, whilst maintaining the tight-knit pattern of development that is the defining character of this area.

Paragraph 141 of the NPPF recommends recording of the heritage asset to be lost proportionate to their importance. However, based on the evidence provided, the site visit and the response from the Northamptonshire Archaeological Advisor it is not considered that a recording condition prior to demolition is warranted in this instance.

It is considered that the requirements set out in paragraph 134 have been met and subject to a condition which ensures that planning permission is granted for redevelopment of the site prior to demolition then unwarranted demolition of the cottages without reasonable prospects for delivery of the wider scheme can be prevented.

Conclusion

The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions regarding the time period for commencement and to ensure that planning permission is granted for re-development prior to demolition.

Background Papers

Title of Document:

Date:

Contact Officer:

Richard Marlow, Development Officer on 01536 534316

Previous Reports/Minutes

Ref:

Date:

SITE LOCATION PLAN

Soans Yard, Bridewell Lane (Land off), Kettering
Application No.: KET/2013/0067



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