

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	Full Planning Committee - 01/07/2014	Item No: 5.10
Report Originator	Richard Marlow Development Officer	Application No: KET/2014/0329
Wards Affected	All Saints	
Location	87 King Street, Kettering	
Proposal	Full Application: Conversion of a workshop to 1 no. dwelling	
Applicant	Mr R Medhurst	

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 REFUSED for the following reason(s):-

1. The proposal would, by reason of its design features, confined site and relationship to its surroundings, constitute an unsympathetic development which is out of keeping with the surrounding character and the street scene, which is characterised by two storey terraced properties fronting the highway. The floor to ceiling glazing, Juliet balcony, front terrace, irregular roof plan and overall design would increase the prominence of what would otherwise be an ancillary building used in association with the neighbouring residential property. The irregular fenestration is contrary to the regular and uniform fenestration found in the street scene when viewed from the public realm which is the overriding character of the area. The scheme fails to demonstrate a high standard of design, respect and enhance the character of its surroundings and promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and therefore conflicts with section 7 and paragraph 61 and 64 of the NPPF and Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

2. The proposed conversion of this building will result in a cramped form of development and lead to poor living conditions and residential amenity for existing and future occupiers by virtue of its limited outlook and limited available outdoor space. The substandard quality of life that would result is contrary to Section 7 and one of the 12 Core Planning Principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy 13(l) and objective 8 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

Officers Report for KET/2014/0329

This application is reported for Committee decision because a ward member has asked for it to be considered.

3.0 Information

Relevant Planning History

KET/2014/0001 Conversion of workshop to 1 no. dwelling. Withdrawn 10 March 2014.

KET/2008/0811 Change of use from workshop to 1 no. dwelling. Refused 18 December 2008.

KET/2005/0328. Conversion of existing workshop/warehouse to 1 no. dwelling. Refused 03/06/2005.

KE/04/0950. Change of use to studio flat with courtyard. Refused 18/10/2004.

KE/2004/0146. Convert existing warehouse into residential 2 bedroom flat. Refused 26/03/2004.

KB/1952/0022 Proposed use of existing building for the repair and painting of motor vehicles. Refused 27 March 1952.

Site Description

Officer's site inspection was carried out on 2 June 2014. The application site is the located to the north of Kettering town centre within an established residential area comprising of Victorian terraced properties.

The site itself is a single storey cream and black painted brick garage/outbuilding with a corrugated metal roof which is located to the rear of 120 and 122 Wellington Street. There are three existing boarded up window openings in the west elevation and a four panel wooden garage door in the south elevation which abuts the back of the public highway.

There is a narrow pedestrian access to the east of the site between the application building and the blank flank wall of No.87 King Street, that runs through from King Street to Regent Street serving the houses on Wellington Street. The access also runs east behind the houses in both King Street to the south and Regent Street to the north.

Proposed Development

The application seeks permission for the conversion of the building to a single dwelling.

Any Constraints Affecting The Site

None

4.0 Consultation and Customer Impact

Environmental Health

No objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions for contaminated land and construction working hours should consent be given.

Neighbours

One neighbour objection on the grounds of:

- The noise, mess and congestion from demolishing the existing structure and building the new one would be terrible
- The very small plot of land which means the busy road would be used for storing materials resulting in massive congestion, disruption and inconvenience.
- The size of the plot means there would be no room for off road parking.
- This is an old street with an old sewerage system which would have difficulty in coping with the added demands another dwelling would place on it.

5.0 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Policy 4. Promoting sustainable transport

Policy 6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Policy 7. Requiring good design

Development Plan Policies

North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy

Policy 1. Strengthening the Network of Settlements

Policy 9. Distribution & Location of Development

Policy 10. Distribution of Housing

Policy 13. General Sustainable Development Principles

Policy 14: Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Construction

Local Plan

35. Housing: Within Towns

SPGs

Sustainable Design

6.0 Financial/Resource Implications

None

7.0 Planning Considerations

The key issues for consideration in this application are:-

1. Principle of Development
2. Design and Impact on Character of the Area
3. Residential Amenity

4. Parking and Highway Matters.
5. Sustainable construction and design.
6. Contaminated land

1. Principle of Development

Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages Local Planning Authorities to take a positive approach to proposals for residential development, which should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The application site is located within the town boundary of Kettering, as defined by Policy 35 of the Local Plan, in an established residential area. Policies 1 and 9 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) direct development to existing urban areas and indicate that Kettering is a 'Growth Town'. Policy 10 of the CSS establishes that Kettering will provide a focal point for residential development and sets targets for delivering housing. The principle of the conversion to residential of a site within an established residential area is therefore well established, subject to the detailed planning considerations set out below.

2. Design and Character

Policy 13(h) of the CSS requires new development to raise standards – to be of a high standard of design and architecture; to respect and enhance the character of its surroundings; and to create a strong sense of place by strengthening distinctive historic qualities and townscape through its design. Section 7 of the NPPF sets out the importance of good design and underlines how good design is indivisible from good planning and sustainable development. Paragraph 64 makes provision for Local Planning Authorities to refuse development of poor design which fails to improve the character and quality of an area.

The proposal involves the conversion of an outbuilding to a dwelling and alterations to its design. The building itself is highly visible within the street scene abutting the highway and sitting in line with the flank wall of no. 120/122 Wellington Street to the west and slightly forward of the building line established by the terraced properties to the east of the application site, which feature small bay windows at ground floor and low brick walls enclosing small front gardens. Crucially the building is single storey with a ridge height of 4.6m producing a structure that is set down from adjacent dwellings and which denotes its subservient and ancillary status within the wider street scene. The building itself is limited in size with a footprint of 4.55m in width and 7.8m in length which fills the majority of the plot and provides a narrow strip of wasteland to the west.

The surrounding development in the locale is characterised by a grid pattern of two-storey Victorian terraced houses fronting onto the street and which sit within narrow plots, often terminating to the rear with brick outbuildings. The highly uniform character of this part of York Road is distinctive of Victorian terraced streets and remains the defining character to this day.

The conversion would be achieved through amending the openings in the west elevation to provide three new obscured windows and the insertion of two rooflights into the east facing roof slope, whilst the north elevation would remain unchanged. The height of the building would be increased by 50cm providing 3.7m eaves and a 5.1m ridge allowing the proposed first floor bedroom to provide sufficient headroom for future occupiers.

The majority of the alterations are proposed to the front elevation which faces south and fronts King Street. The west facing roof slope would be removed for the first 3 metres and two internal walls created forming a recessed terrace area and a stepped front elevation featuring floor to ceiling glazing, a first floor Juliet balcony and the main entrance to the property. Abutting the highway the existing timber doors would be removed and replaced by a kitchen window and the terrace area.

Whilst contemporary in its design, the architectural detailing of the proposal fails to respect the local vernacular including the floor to ceiling glazing, and highway facing Juliet balcony proposed which is uncharacteristic in the locale and visually dominant. The proportions of the fenestration on the front elevation are unbalanced and predicated on a vertical emphasis with floor to ceiling treatments and stepped elevations not found elsewhere within the surrounding street scene. When considered in its context the proposal results in a cramped and incongruous form of development which is unsympathetic to and out of keeping with the character of the street scene.

The building itself is an ancillary residential building used as a garage/ outbuilding and has historically be used in association with the adjacent property at no. 120 Wellington Street. The application would increase the prominence of what would otherwise be an ancillary residential building and proposes irregular fenestration contrary to the other regular and uniform fenestration found in the locale which is the overriding character of the area.

It is considered that the proposal fails to improve or respect the character and quality of the area and the street scene, or promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and therefore conflicts with Section 7 and Paragraphs 61 and 64 of the NPPF and Policy 13 of the CSS.

3. Residential Amenity

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that development must secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Policy 13(l) of the CSS is clear that development must not result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider area, by reason of noise, vibration, smell, light or other pollution, loss of light or overlooking.

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF details that one of the 12 core planning principles should be to always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The application has been revised following previous refusals to produce the terrace area measuring approximately 3.7m x 2.1. This helps to address previous concerns about the lack of amenity space within the proposal but does not address the narrow

strip of wasteland to the west of the site which cannot be accessed via the three windows on the west elevation and would remain through this proposal. Two roofs light are proposed in the east facing roof slope and due to the increase roof height will pose no detriment to amenity.

The submitted plans indicate that the building would be raised by 50cm to provide additional headroom at first floor level. The positioning of the structure and its close proximity to surrounding development would result in an increase in overshadowing impacts for neighbouring properties by reason of the natural path of the sun, in particular to the garden of No. 124 Wellington Street although this would not be to unacceptable levels. Overbearing impacts would also result from the increase in the height of the building given the minimal separation distance, approximately 3.5m between the building and rear ground floor elevations of nos. 120/122 Wellington which results from the historical link between the two buildings. The increase in height is however limited and there are no windows serving habitable rooms which appose the site. As such overbearing impacts will not reach unacceptable levels.

The proposal would result in unsatisfactory living conditions for the future occupiers of the dwelling. Private amenity space is limited and no refuse storage details have been provided. However it is evident that the terrace will become the area for the permanent storage of the refuse bins and recycling boxes that would be provided by the council.

It is apparent from the submitted plans and having visited what is a severely constrained site that the cramped proposal would result in unsatisfactory living conditions for the future occupiers of the building. The confined proportions and attempt to convert a single storey garage/outbuilding into a two storey dwelling will create amenity impacts for the future occupiers and a substandard quality of life that would conflict with objective 8 of the CSS and paragraph 9 of the NPPF. The development fails to provide high quality housing and does not provide a development that functions well or establishes a comfortable place to live as set out in Section 7 and amplified within paragraph 58 of the NPPF. The development would make for a deficient standard of amenity for residents and neighbouring properties contrary to Policy 13(l) of the CSS.

4. Parking and Highway Matters

Policy 13(d) and (n) of the North Northamptonshire CSS requires that developments have a satisfactory means of access and provide for parking, servicing and manoeuvring in accordance with adopted standards and do not have an adverse impact on the highway network.

An objection to the application has been received in relation to the lack of off road parking. The applicant in their planning submission document considers that the terrace area to be created within the site could provide a parking space to accommodate a 'Smart' car or electric vehicle. This element does not accord with the Highway Authorities Standing Advice and therefore cannot be considered as a providing off road parking.

The site is located within close proximity to the town centre, in an accessible urban location whereby alternative modes of transport to the car would be on offer. It is

not considered that an additional 1 bedroom dwelling in this location would result in an unacceptable over intensification of traffic; generate a significant amount of extra vehicular movements; or cause existing highways and accesses to exceed their capacity.

The proposal accords with objective 5 and policy 13 (e) of the CSS which seek to support modal shift and a shift away from reliance on use of the private car. Policy 4 of the NPPF details that opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people should be exploited. There is also no evidence that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the highway network or prejudice highways safety in accordance with policy 13 (n). There is some conflict with policy 13 (d) of the CSS in that the proposal does not provide for parking but in this instance and given the town centre location this is outweighed by the other material considerations and would not warrant refusal.

5. Sustainable construction & design

Policy 14(b) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy states that development should meet the highest viable standards of resource and energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions. All developments should incorporate techniques of sustainable construction and energy efficiency, provide for waste reduction/recycling and water efficiency and be in accordance with the requirements of the North Northamptonshire Sustainable Design SPD.

The applicant has submitted a Sustainability and Energy Statement, and a Sustainable Design SPD Checklist which demonstrates how the requirements of the CSS and accompanying SPD would be met by the development. Subject to conditions which secure accordance with these documents and waste storage details to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation, it is considered that Policy 14(b) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy has been met.

6. Contaminated Land

Due to the previous potentially contaminative use of the site and the underlying geology present throughout Northamptonshire, a full ground investigation will be required to prevent unacceptable risks to future occupants of the site. Subject to this, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

The benefits of making use of under-used space to create an additional small dwelling in an accessible urban location do not outweigh the matters in relation to the failure to demonstrate a satisfactory standard of design which respects and enhances local character. The cramped site would create unsatisfactory living conditions for future occupiers. The proposal is therefore contrary to the NPPF, local planning policies, unacceptable and recommended for refusal.

Background Papers

Title of Document:

Date:

Contact Officer:

Previous Reports/Minutes

Ref:

Date:

Richard Marlow, Development Officer on 01536 534316

