

Alex Powell

From: Linzi Melrose <linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk>
Sent: 11 December 2019 11:31
To: Maria Philpott
Cc: Richard Colson; Andy Lord
Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment
Attachments: 152-154 Watling Street East, Towcester Protected Species Survey.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Maria,

Further to my previous email, I now have the species survey for submission, attached.

Apologies for the delay, extra work was required regarding the proposed mitigation as one bat was found in the loft space of the rear of the building.

Kind regards

Linzi

Linzi Melrose

Tel: 01604 654888

Email: linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk



From: Linzi Melrose
Sent: 28 November 2019 14:08
To: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>
Cc: Richard Colson <Richard.Colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>
Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Hi Maria,

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you. We were waiting for the ecology report however we are still waiting for this so decided to send you over everything to get the ball rolling again, with the ecology report to follow in due course.

As such, please find attached a letter setting out a comprehensive reply to all of the issue raised to date.

Also attached are the following:

- Photographs of the site
- FRA/Drainage strategy
- Revised drawing package
- Viability assessment
- Letter from Mr D Batty of Berrys

As mentioned, the ecology report will follow in due course.

I hope this addresses all of your concerns and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on all of the attached.

Kind regards

Linzi

Linzi Melrose

Tel: 01604 654888

Email: linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk

From: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>

Sent: 21 November 2019 09:52

To: Linzi Melrose <linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>

Cc: Richard Colson <Richard.Colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>

Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Ok, thank you both for your emails. It would be better to receive all amended/additional information in one go.

Thanks,
Maria

Maria Philpott BA (Hons.), Dip UP, Dip Hist. Cons MRTPI

Principal Planning Officer, Development Management

Place and Growth Directorate

South Northamptonshire Council

Tel: 01327 322261

Email maria.philpott@southnorthants.gov.uk

www.southnorthants.gov.uk

**Please note that I only work on Tuesdays, Wednesday mornings and Thursdays*

From: Linzi Melrose <linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk>

Sent: 20 November 2019 15:31

To: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>; Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>

Cc: Richard Colson <Richard.Colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Tracey Hill <Tracey.hill@southnorthants.gov.uk>;

Emily Shaw <Emily.Shaw@SouthNorthants.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Hi Maria,

Sorry for the delay on this. We should have the amended information for you by the end of the week. I will aim to send everything in one go.

Kind regards

Linzi

Linzi Melrose

Tel: 01604 654888

Email: linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk

From: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>

Sent: 20 November 2019 14:40

To: Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>; Linzi Melrose <linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk>

Cc: Richard Colson <Richard.Colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Tracey Hill <Tracey.hill@southnorthants.gov.uk>; Emily Shaw <Emily.Shaw@SouthNorthants.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Andy/Linzi,

Please could one of you provide an update regarding this application. I thought you were going to be sending through amended information on 17th October?

Thanks,
Maria

Maria Philpott BA (Hons.), Dip UP, Dip Hist. Cons MRTPI
**Principal Planning Officer, Development Management
Place and Growth Directorate
South Northamptonshire Council**

Tel: 01327 322261

Email maria.philpott@southnorthants.gov.uk

www.southnorthants.gov.uk

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From: Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>

Sent: 15 October 2019 18:06

To: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>; linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk

Cc: 'Richard Colson' <richard.colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Tracey Hill <Tracey.hill@southnorthants.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Hi Maria

Thank you for your email and for looking to work with us on the proposals.

Yes I am in full agreement of an extension of time until the 14th February 2020 for both applications as listed above.

This also takes a little bit of time pressure of us both to make more meaningful submissions and responses.

I am meeting an Ecologist on site Friday morning by way of an update on that particular aspect of the application(s)

Regards

Andy Lord

Development Manager
Clayson Country Homes
345a Wellingborough Road

Northampton
NN1 4ER

M: 07802 572949
T: 01604 604033
E: andy@claysongroup.com

From: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>
Sent: 15 October 2019 17:18
To: Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>; linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk
Cc: 'Richard Colson' <richard.colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Tracey Hill <tracey.hill@southnorthants.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Andy,

Following a discussion with Tracey, we are prepared to accept your resubmission information on the proviso that we can agree an extension of time on the applications? You will be resubmitting a significant amount of new or additional information, some of which will still not be received this week (ecology and drainage reports) and we will require time to reconsult with the consultees. From experience, viability assessments also require additional time to consider.

Therefore if you wish the application to stay pending, I would suggest a new expiry date of **14th February 2020** is reasonable. This essentially allows just over 2 further months to assess the application and will allow for targeting taking to committee on 6th February, with report deadlines being towards the end of January. Any earlier than that, we will be hitting the Christmas break and not allowing ourselves sufficient time to assess the amended information.

I'd be grateful if you could confirm agreement to this extension of time please – which is to apply to both the planning and listed building applications.

Maria

Maria Philpott BA (Hons.), Dip UP, Dip Hist. Cons MRTPI
**Principal Planning Officer, Development Management
Place and Growth Directorate
South Northamptonshire Council**
Tel: 01327 322261
Email maria.philpott@southnorthants.gov.uk
www.southnorthants.gov.uk

**Please note that I only work on Tuesdays, Wednesday mornings and Thursdays*

From: Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>
Sent: 10 October 2019 15:12
To: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>; linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk
Cc: 'Richard Colson' <richard.colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Tracey Hill <Tracey.hill@southnorthants.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Maria

We have reviewed your email and would say the following. This is a brief summary of our thoughts and as explained our resubmission timeline is below.

Principle

We believe that we can clearly demonstrate that the actual use of the building (part residential, part commercial and part leisure) for use as a 'club' of this nature is not tenable anymore. Any other commercial use such as PH or Restaurant adjustment to the existing fabric than our residential proposal as the frontage would need to be opened up dramatically.

We also believe that the use to be Sui Generis thereby implying that any new specific use would be a change of use. In reality the previous use as Conservative Club became financially untenable and also generated very little employment for the town.

We therefore think we can clearly answer the issues raised in your email.

Design and Over Development

We are on board to your recent suggestions about the boundary to the adjacent property at 150 Watling St and will be making changes by 17th October 2019 to overcome this. At the same time we will be clarifying the boundary and adjacent relationship issues your email raises.

We are proposing a smaller footprint to that of the existing building.

Parking

We do not agree with your comments on parking and believe this to be a perfectly sustainable location for scheme proposed. We have no anecdotal evidence of the number of car movements associated with the now redundant use or what any other commercial use may generate but given the consented properties on Moat Lane of a similar nature (flats) were approved with 0 parking and the number of parking opportunities locally we believe our approach is correct.

Heritage

We believe that the comments regarding harm are positive and will be weighted against the use of the building. We will also provide more evidence on the interior impact on the building.

Ecology

We will undertake a phase 1 desktop next week for submission in October 2019

FRA

We will submit a drainage strategy in October 2019.

S106 and Affordable Housing.

We will submit with our revised scheme on the 17th October 2019 a viability assessment demonstrating the scheme cannot carry any affordable homes from a viability perspective.

We believe that we can answer your queries within the timeframe submission of October 2019 at the latest allowing you to reconsult on the revised information in the live application period. We would like a resolution on the current application(s) and will not be withdrawing the submitted information in order to respond to the consultations.

As discussed above our first round of resubmitted material will be with you on 17th October 2019. Drainage and Ecology reports will follow in October 2019.

Regards

Andy Lord

Development Manager

Clayson Country Homes
345a Wellingborough Road
Northampton
NN1 4ER

M: 07802 572949
T: 01604 604033
E: andy@claysongroup.com

From: Maria Philpott <Maria.Philpott@SouthNorthants.GOV.UK>
Sent: 08 October 2019 17:00
To: 'linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk' <linzi.melrose@cctownplanning.co.uk>
Cc: Andy Lord <andy@claysongroup.com>; 'Richard Colson' <richard.colson@cctownplanning.co.uk>; Tracey Hill <tracey.hill@southnorthants.gov.uk>
Subject: S/2019/1728/MAF & S/2019/1729/LBC - 152/154 Watling Street, Towcester - conversion to 15 flats - Case Officer Assessment

Linzi,

I have assessed the above proposal and discussed with colleagues as appropriate and unfortunately have to advise that the proposal is currently unacceptable to the Council as there are a number of issues. These are set out in the following sub-headings for your information:

Principle

The proposal represents the loss of a commercial use in the town centre which is contrary to Development Plan policies and the NPPF without full justification to demonstrate that it is unviable including that the site has been properly marketed for commercial/leisure uses for a minimum period of 12 months from an agreed start date. The marketing strategy should conform with the following:

- Secure valuations by three reputable commercial agents and evidence of marketing at that value to ensure it is at a commercially realistic rate
- Produce a marketing strategy to be drawn up that includes advertising in local press and appropriate trade publications such as Estate Gazette as well as the internet and a "For Sale" board outside the premises unless demonstrated that it is inappropriate (e.g. where this might negatively affect the trade)
- Maintain a detailed record of viewings of the premises, including feedback from potential purchasers and any offers made to be submitted to SNC at the end of the agreed marketing period.

Whilst I appreciate that you have supplied a letter from Berry's to provide some further information on this, this is not considered to be adequate justification for the change of use as it does not meet our marketing criteria stated above. The Council is not therefore convinced on the justification for permitting a conversion away from a commercial/leisure use in Towcester Town Centre at the present time.

See attached comments from our Economic Development department and from Planning Policy for your information as well as a further email response from Economic Development on the letter from Berry's.

Design and Overdevelopment

The proposal is considered to be an overdevelopment of the site and consequently, the design of the first floor with the external balcony access is not considered to be an appropriate design feature in this urban location and looks an incongruous feature. The requirement for this, the significant number of window openings, together with no car parking and little private amenity space for each unit strongly results in the proposal being considered an overdevelopment of the site.

We are also unsure what the proposed arrangements are at the rear of the units in the rear projection (south elevation). Is this access from a rear door to Northampton Road, or are these to be separated with fencing to

provide some small, private amenity space? If the latter, what is the intention for the unit at the far end (nearest the Masonic lodge) as the boundary here is left open?

See comments from the Crime Prevention Officer.

Residential amenity

Having viewed the proposal from the neighbouring property at No. 150, the proposal will cause direct overlooking into their garden. However, I am satisfied that this could be overcome by the removal of the Juliet balconies and the setting of the bedroom windows at a high level. However, given the other issues with the application, I am not requesting you to amend the proposals in this respect at this stage so it would form a further reason for refusal.

Parking

The overdevelopment of the site gives rise for the need for a significant amount of car parking. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is a sustainable location for new development, the proposal will however require the need for at least 15 car parking spaces, potentially more. There is no on-street parking available in this very high density part of Towcester which also gets very congested with traffic. The public car parking available locally is restricted to 3 hourly and therefore does not provide sufficient provision. It would also potentially result in the loss of a considerable amount of car parking for the town centre, intended to support the local economy and provide sufficient parking for visitors to the town and businesses of the town.

See attached comments from Highways.

Heritage assets

The proposals are considered to cause less than substantial harm to the heritage assets, and this harm should be weighed against the public benefit. Public benefit also includes considering alternative uses for the building to secure its optimum viable reuse that will support its long-term conservation in accordance with Para. 193 of the NPPF. There is no consideration/assessment of alternative uses and until the site has been properly marketed in accordance with the above, the Council would not be able to support the loss of the commercial use, its retention may also be the least harmful to the listed building and provide a suitable reuse. The application also does not include any assessment of the significance of the interior of the building.

This issue applies to the listed building application and the associated planning application and would form reasons for refusal on both applications.

See attached comments from the Council's Heritage Officer and also comments from the Georgian Group.

Ecology

No Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been submitted with the application to assess the potential for bats and breeding/nesting birds at the site, as well as other protected species. This is required before determination of the application so that mitigation measures required can be properly assessed and planned for as part of the proposals.

See attached comments from the Council's Ecology Officer.

Surface Water Drainage

Lack of information submitted. An FRA is required to be submitted including a Drainage Strategy for the proposal.

See attached comments from the Surface Water Drainage team. I have not received a response from the Environment Agency.

Building Control comments

“Means of escape from flats to be in accordance with Approved Document B Volume 1 Section 3. Inner rooms are not permitted on flats with a floor level more than 4.5m above ground level. Windows on the shared balcony access are to have a 30 minute fire rating and are to be have no openable lights. Access for the fire service to be in accordance with Approved Document B Volume 1 Section B5”

Affordable housing and s106 Heads of Terms

As the proposal is above the threshold of 10 dwellings, it becomes necessary to provide financial contributions towards infrastructure. In accordance with Policy H2 of the Joint Core Strategy, sites of 5 dwellings or more should also provide 40% affordable housing. No information has been supplied regarding proposals for affordable housing and no viability information has been provided with the application to justify a lack of provision. Viability information has been mentioned on site, but this really should have been provided up front with the application so it can be assessed from the beginning. Due to the issues with this application, I have not considered all the Heads of Terms that may otherwise be required for this application, but it is likely that some other financial contributions such as recycling etc. will also be required as well as those required by the County Council.

See attached response from Northamptonshire County Council regarding infrastructure funding and please refer to the Council’s SPD on Developer Contributions.

Next Steps

I hope you can appreciate that there is a significant number of issues here regarding this proposal which makes it unacceptable, including the omission of reports and lack of detail. In addition, the proposal has generated a lot of public concerns and objections (please see the planning register for comments), these mainly relate to the proposal being overdevelopment and the lack of car parking. There are too many issues outstanding on this application to consider as part of the application, therefore I would suggest that the current applications are withdrawn and that instead you undergo pre-application discussions with the Council so as to assess together what uses could be a viable at the site and how this could be put together (once a full marketing period has been completed). If they are not withdrawn, then it would be my intention to report these applications as they stand to planning committee with recommendations for refusal.

I’d be grateful if you could consider this email in detail and then advise me of your intended course of action please by **Thursday 24th October** so that I can then begin my committee report writing if necessary. If you would like to discuss this with me verbally at any point, please do not hesitate to contact me (noting my part time hours below).

Many thanks,
Maria

Maria Philpott BA (Hons.), Dip UP, Dip Hist. Cons MRTPI
**Principal Planning Officer, Development Management
Place and Growth Directorate
South Northamptonshire Council**
Tel: 01327 322261
Email maria.philpott@southnorthants.gov.uk
www.southnorthants.gov.uk

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