



Supporting Planning Statement

Proposed development for 6.no self-contained retail units (Retrospective)

Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 1LD

Prepared on behalf of Mr. Paul Warner

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 CC Town Planning has been appointed by Mr. Paul Warner ('the Applicant') to prepare a supporting Planning Statement to accompany a full planning application for the proposed development of 6.no retail units (retrospective planning application) at Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 1LD ('the site').
- 1.2 The planning application is submitted to the Wellingborough area of North Northamptonshire Council ('NNC') as the determining Local Planning Authority ('LPA') for the area and seeks full planning permission.
- 1.3 The statement is structured to provide the LPA with the requisite level of information to justify the proposal and to enable the determination of the planning application at the earliest opportunity. Each section seeks to address a specific point and the document is structured as follows;

Section 2: Site & Surroundings

Section 3: Planning History

Section 4: The Proposed Development

Section 5: Planning Policy Context

Section 6: Planning Justification

Section 7: Conclusion

- 1.4 The following supporting drawings and reports are also submitted with the planning application:

- Site Location Plan 14/309
- Site Plan (Sheet 1) 22/004/041
- Site Plan (Sheet 2) 22/004/041
- Floor Plans and Elevations 22/004/001

2 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is located within the small scale out of town shopping complex of Nene Court, which is positioned directly off the B573. The proposed location of the 6.no small retail units is to be towards the north of the site, directly adjacent to the recently approved building which is home to a number of occupied retail units (Ref: WP/14/00309/FUL).
- 2.2 Originally, the Wellingborough Gas Light Co. built the site during the Victorian era as a gas works premises, and during the First World War, the site was temporarily used as a hospital for wounded soldiers. However, the site was eventually purchased in the early 1990's and has since been developed for a number of retail units.
- 2.3 The small retail complex of Nene Court, which is home to a variety of businesses including a café, bridal shop, an electrical store and a large outdoor furniture store, benefits from an extensive amount of free allocated parking spaces for both visitors and employees within the site to make use of. The area is accessed via a secure, established point of entry positioned on the western boundary of the site, located directly off the B573.
- 2.4 The surrounding areas of the site is predominantly compromised of further commercial and retail premises, including a van and car hire centre towards the south, with open countryside land providing the boundary to the east, and numerous residential units located further west.
- 2.5 Situated further north along the B573 lies a small bus stop which is served by the No.47 bus route supplied by Stagecoach Midlands. Within a 5 minute walk from the Nene Court Shopping Complex, this small bus stop connects the well established shopping village to Wellingborough town centre as well as the major town of Kettering and the surrounding areas. In addition, Wellingborough Train Station, which connects the town to many of the major settlements across the country, is also positioned approximately 800 metres north of the site, resulting in this small shopping village, which is home to several local businesses, being located within a highly sustainable and accessible location.
- 2.6 Located towards the south-east edge of Wellingborough, a large market town home to circa 50,000 people, Nene Court has a number of commercial and retail premises which are suitable for small, local businesses to operate from. Therefore, through this proposed development, the small complex will be able to expand and offer further retail premises to small local businesses within an area where there is an established demand for such units.
- 2.7 The below extract from the accompanying site location plan clearly details the extent of the application site along with its surrounding areas.

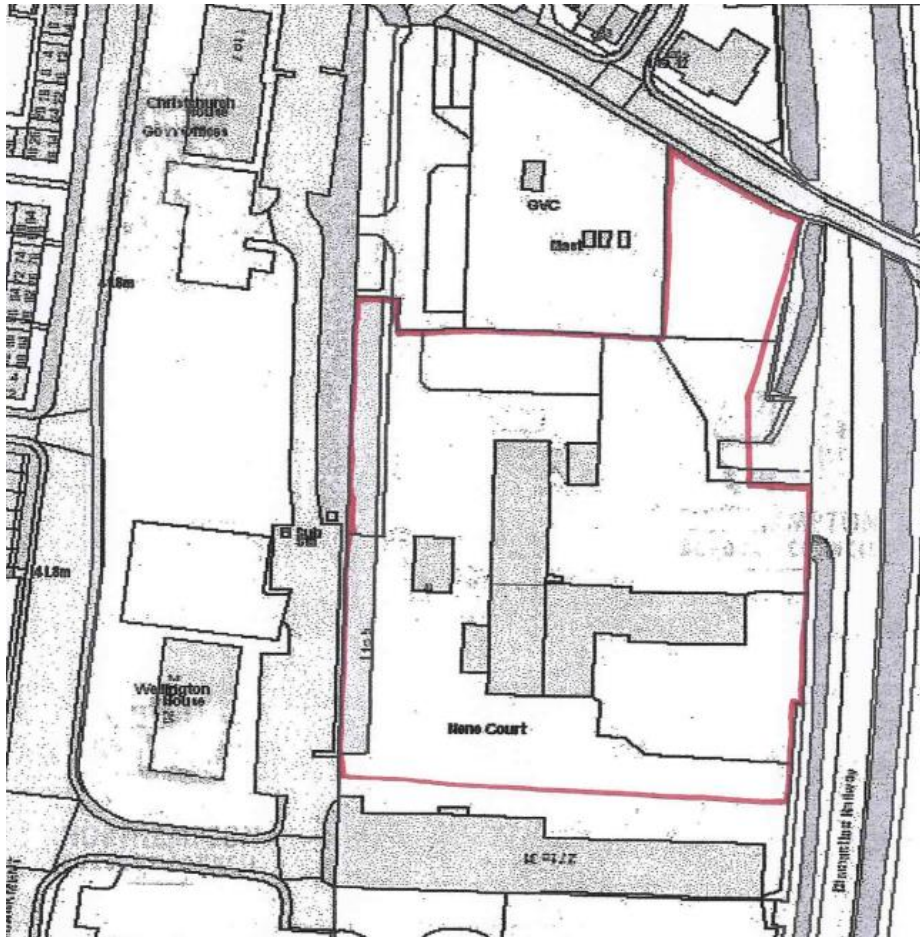


Figure 1 – Extract from accompanying Site Location Plan

3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The site itself has an extensive planning history which is of relevance to this application, and is set out in detail below.

- **BW/1990/0789** – Full planning permission was sought for the proposed refurbishment, renovation and conversion of existing industrial buildings into small and large workshops with retail and display space. In determining the application, the LPA granted full planning permission for the proposed development, subject to a number of conditions relating to the parking arrangements and retail space proposed.
- **BW/1990/0789** – An additional application was also submitted to the LPA for the same development as set out above, for a number of other existing units located on the site. In adopting a consistent approach to the commercial development of Nene Court, the LPA granted full planning permission for the proposed scheme.

- **WP/1991/0518** – To expand on the recent development within this area, the LPA granted full planning permission for the change of use to an existing building to create a themed restaurant.
- **WP/1992/0429** – Approval was granted for the proposed change of use to create a cafeteria and takeaway premises at Unit 2, Nene Court.
- **WP/14/00309/FUL** – A detailed planning application was submitted to the LPA which sought full planning permission to erect a single storey building within the confines of the existing shopping complex, which would host 5.no retail units, suitable for local businesses. Given the existence of retail premises within the immediate surroundings of the application site, it was determined that the principle of development was acceptable. With an appropriate design approach adopted, taking into account the existing character of the area, full planning permission was granted by the LPA accordingly.

3.2 As the above planning history sets out, it is evident that the application site has been continuously supported by the LPA for retail and commercial development of the sorts proposed within this detailed application. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that this development proposal is in line with the existing uses present at Nene Court, Wellingborough.

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 This detailed planning application is seeking retrospective planning permission for the proposed development comprising of 6.no retail units, contained within two newly constructed buildings.
- 4.2 The proposed retail premises will be positioned towards the north of the site, adjacent to the recently approved single storey building which is home to a further 5.no small retail units, suitable for local businesses (Ref: WP/14/00309/FUL).
- 4.3 Each of the proposed units will comprise of 16sqm of gross internal floor space, with each of the units having access to it own separate point of entry.
- 4.4 The buildings within which the 6.no units will be located in have been painted black, with a timber slat decorative finish. The windows and doors which are placed on the exterior of each of the buildings are of an aluminium frame with double-glazing, in an attempt to increase the sustainability of the units and reduce the heating costs associated with each of the respective buildings whilst creating a high quality addition to the Nene Court shopping complex.

4.5 The below extract from the accompanying floor plans details the extent of each of the proposed respective retail units.

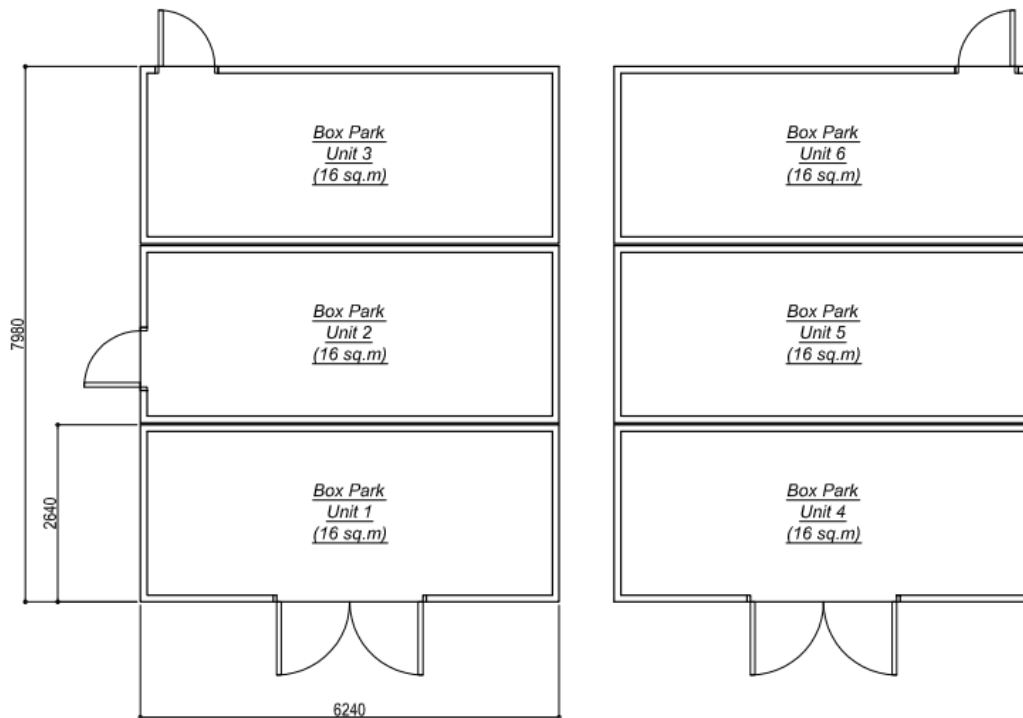


Figure 2 – Extract from Accompanying Floor Plans

4.6 As the proposed units will form a small element of the wider floor area, it is considered that adequate parking and access arrangements are available at the application site, given the extensive parking currently available within the Nene Court Complex.

4.7 Further to the above, given the retrospective nature of this proposed application, the development will not require any alterations to either the interior or the exterior appearance of the existing buildings located at the application site. With these existing buildings being considerate of the surrounding area, it is the case that the proposed scheme is in full accordance with the prevailing character and appearance of the area, with proposed uses that are consistent with existing uses located within the Nene Court shopping complex.

5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (The Act) requires that decisions on planning applications be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is also reinforced within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at Paragraph 2.

5.2 In assessing the planning policy context, consideration has been given to the adopted development plan and also to national planning guidance. All relevant documents are set out below in order of national and local levels.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (updated in 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The document sets out the Government's view of sustainable development and gives an overview of the economic, social and environmental roles which planning should play.

5.4 At the heart of the NPPF at Paragraph 11 lies the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which sets out that for decision making this means;

- *Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:*
 - *The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

5.5 Section 6 of the NPPF sets out the Government's objective of building a strong, competitive economy, with particular focus on supporting a prosperous rural economy. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

5.6 Section 7 seeks to support the role that town centres play, by protecting their vitality. Nevertheless, when considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and

scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.

- 5.7 Section 8 of the NPPF relates to the need to create healthy and safe communities, and requires development to promote social interaction, be safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- 5.8 Section 9 of the NPPF relates to the need to promote sustainable transport. At paragraph 107 it notes that when setting parking standards, a number of factors should be taken into account including: the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; the availability of public transport; and local car ownership levels. At paragraph 111 it notes that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.9 Section 12 of the NPPF notes that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. At paragraph 130 it notes that development should: function well and add to the overall quality of the area; be visually attractive; be sympathetic to local character and history; optimise the potential of the site and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

The Development Plan

- 5.10 The Development Plan for the site is currently comprised of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014), the Saved Policies of the East Northamptonshire District Local Plan (1996) and the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan (2018) in the determination of this planning application.

North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

- 5.11 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (NNJCS) is the strategic Part 1 Local Plan for Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough Councils and covers the period 2011 to 2031. The plan sets out the key strategic policies and the long-term vision and objectives for the entire plan area for the period up to 2031.
- 5.12 Policy 1 on the NNJCS confirms that the LPA will take a positive approach to determining development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF. The LPA will continuously work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.

- 5.13 Policy 3 requires development to be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting.
- 5.14 Policy 7 of the NNJCS provides that development should support and enhance community services and facilities.
- 5.15 Policy 8 sets out the North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles which provides criteria for all new development to adhere to such as the need to respond to surrounding character, protect residential amenity, make safe and pleasant spaces and create connected places.
- 5.16 Policy 9 relates to sustainable buildings and states that development should incorporate measures to ensure high standards of resource and energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions.
- 5.17 Policy 11 sets out the hierarchy for development to be distributed across the North Northamptonshire area. Development within the Growth towns, including Wellingborough, will be the focus for infrastructure investment and higher order facilities to support major employment, housing, retail and leisure development.
- 5.18 Policy 15 relates to the creation of well-connected towns and neighbourhoods, stating that development should seek to encourage sustainable modes of transport, including measures to contribute towards meeting the modal shift targets in the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan. Access from the edge of towns to their centres should be improved by focusing activity and investment on the main radial routes.
- 5.19 Policy 22 sets out the delivery of economic prosperity stating that a stronger more sustainable economy that can deliver a net increase of 31,100 jobs will be sought. Prioritising the enhancement of existing employment sites is a key objective of this policy, whilst also setting out to safeguard and enhance North Northamptonshire's tourism and cultural assets and support proposals which seek to expand the tourism industry in sustainable ways.

The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (Part 2) (2019)

- 5.20 The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (PBW) (Part 2) was adopted by the Council on 26th February 2019 and aims to guide future planning decisions in the area. Those policies considered relevant to the determination of this application are outlined below.
- 5.21 Policy R1 sets out the retail hierarchy, illustrating that retail development should take place at a scale appropriate to the size and function of the centre within which it is to be located in.

6 PLANNING JUSTIFICATION

6.1 The following section seeks to provide justification for the proposed development in light of the content of the relevant planning policies identified above.

Development Principle

6.2 This proposed development is seeking retrospective planning permission for 6.no self-contained retail units within two newly erected buildings, at the site of Nene Court, Wellingborough. The application is retrospective in nature given that the Applicant has already erected these structures which are to host the proposed 6.no retail units.

6.3 In terms of the sites location, in principle the LPA should accept that the proposed development is acceptable, given that it seeks to expand upon an existing retail complex, through the provision of 6.no units suitable to host small local businesses.

6.4 As per Section 6 of the NPPF, it is a key objective of the Government to help build a strong and competitive economy. It is essential that planning decisions help to create conditions in which both local and national businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Through this proposed development, a number of small new premises will be provided, which will be suitable for local businesses and as such, this scheme is considered to be in accordance with the approach contained within Section 6.

6.5 This is further emphasised by recent events that have taken place. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many small local businesses have been set up and established as a result of individuals taking the initiative to start up their own business ventures during times of uncertainty in regard to standard employment opportunities. Many of these businesses have experienced unprecedented growth and as such will be seeking a small premises in which they can operate from, away from the owners home. Therefore, the proposed units will provide the opportunity for such small businesses, as well as more established local businesses to grown and expand, in line with the adopted approach set out within the NPPF. With this development creating conditions for local businesses to invest, adapt and grow, it is considered that the proposal, in principle, is acceptable given the approach taken in Section 6 of the NPPF.

6.6 Furthermore, it is also highlighted within Section 6 that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account the needs of local businesses. Given the scale of this proposed development and the gross internal area of each of the units, it is considered that local business need has been taken into full consideration by the Applicant, through the provision of 6.no small scale retail units which are

of an appropriate scale and location to accommodate the needs of small local businesses across the Wellingborough area.

- 6.7 In addition to the above, Section 7 of the NPPF is also a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. Despite the NPPF seeking to protect the vitality of town centres, Paragraph 88 demonstrates that when considering out of centre proposals, preference should be given to sites that are accessible and which benefit from a good standard of connections to the town centre.
- 6.8 As set out above, the site is located within an extremely accessible location, just a short drive from the A45 and along the B573. There is a direct bus route, service No.47, which connects the site to the town centre of Wellingborough. Subsequently, material weight should be afforded to this consideration when determining this detailed retrospective planning application. The site is positioned within an easily accessible location which has excellent connections to the town centre of Wellingborough. As such, in accordance with the adopted approach of the NPPF, the LPA should make preference to the expansion of this out of centre shopping complex due to its accessibility and good standard of connections, despite being located outside of the defined town centre boundary for Wellingborough.
- 6.9 Policy 11 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy also supports this development proposal. The hierarchy of development for the plan area sets out that development within the Growth towns, including Wellingborough, will be the focus for infrastructure investment and higher order facilities to support major employment, housing, retail and leisure development. Therefore, given that this proposal is intended to support local business and increase the number of units available for retail premises at Nene Court, a site which is located within the confines of the growth town of Wellingborough, it is reasonable to conclude that the adopted local Development Plan supports this proposal for a facility which will ultimately support retail investment.
- 6.10 Furthermore, Policy 15 on the NNJCS, which relates to access and connectivity, demonstrates that access from the edge of towns to their centres should be improved by focusing activity and investment on the main radial routes. Given that the B573, off which the application site is located, is served by a bus route providing direct access to the town centre of Wellingborough, it is reasonable to suggest that this development which focuses investment along a main radial route, should be supported. As a result of the sites strong connections to Wellingborough town centre, it is the case that this development can indirectly support the vitality of the centre by attracting further visitors to the Wellingborough area, who can easily access the town centre given the application sites location along a main radial

route. Consequently, this development will benefit the town of Wellingborough and help to reduce the predicted impact of a 12% fall in the town centres shopping turnover.

- 6.11 Further to the above, Policy 22 provides for the delivery of economic prosperity, setting out that a stronger and more sustainable economy will be sought. Through this development of 6.no retail units at Nene Court, Wellingborough, small local businesses will be able to expand and grow, thus helping to enhance the local economy and ultimately create further jobs for the town of Wellingborough and its surrounding areas.
- 6.12 As per the adopted local Development Plan, the proposed development will be subjected to sequential testing, given that it is seeking to expand the existing premises of Nene Court, which is not considered to be a local centre as per Policy R1 of the Wellingborough Local Plan Part 2. Nonetheless, given the small size of the proposed units, it is considered that this development is a far more appropriate proposal for an out of centre site like Nene Court, rather than being located in the town centre, which predominantly comprises of much larger retail units than those proposed within this submission.
- 6.13 This conclusion is also supported by the local Development Plan. Within the supporting text of the Part 2 Local Plan, it is set out that the unit sizes of local centres are much smaller compared to those in the town centre and therefore, any new retail units of a small size would be more susceptible to smaller edge or out of centre development. Therefore, the LPA should seek to support this proposal, as it is determined that the development will not impact the vitality of Wellingborough town centre as the proposed units will only host small independent businesses, which are not in direct competition with the many major retail occupants currently located within Wellingborough town centre.
- 6.14 Overall, it has therefore been concluded that the proposed development will deliver additional retail units within an existing shopping complex, that will help to support local businesses to grow and expand. The development will therefore deliver 6.no units which will help to secure economic prosperity across the area of Wellingborough, without detrimentally affecting other local centres or the town centre of Wellingborough, particularly when consideration is afforded to the size of the proposed units. As such, and as demonstrated by the above assessment, the principle for this proposed scheme can therefore be established, given that the development is in full accordance with Policy 11, 15 and 22 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Section 8 of The Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough (Part 2) (2019) as well as Sections 6 and 7 of the NPPF.

Character and Appearance

- 6.15 The character and appearance of the existing Nene Court shopping village will be maintained, despite this proposed development. The retail units themselves have been designed in a way which is considerate of the prevailing characteristics of the shopping complex, providing small scale retail units of the sorts which already exist at present within the confines of the site.
- 6.16 A timber slat decorative finish has been applied to the exterior of the buildings to provide for an attractive addition to the site. Furthermore, with aluminium framed double-glazed windows, the units themselves are considered to be of a high quality in terms of design, which are in keeping with the prevailing character of the wider Nene Court site.
- 6.17 The below image illustrates the extent of the retail units in which this retrospective planning application is in relation to.

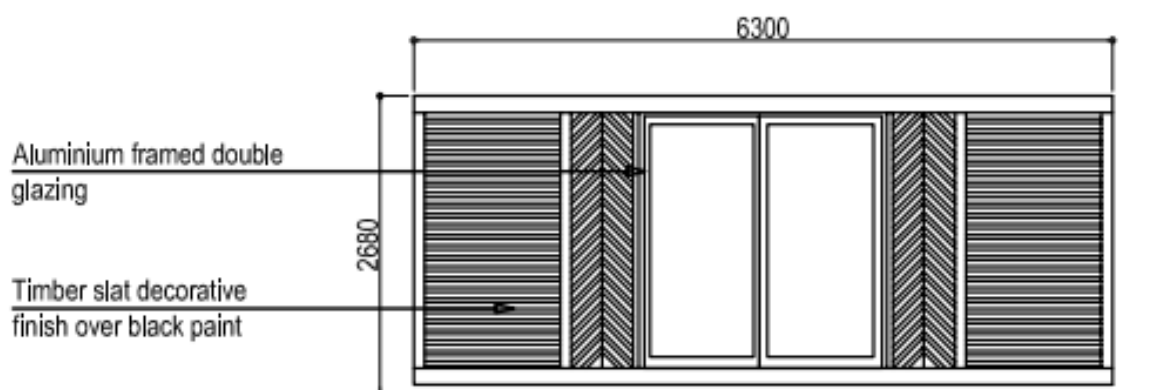


Figure 3 – Extract from Accompanying Elevations Illustrating the External Appearance of the Proposed Units

- 6.18 It is therefore considered that the proposed development, based on its submitted design approach, would result in a scheme that is in full accordance with the prevailing character and appearance of the Nene Court shopping village, within which the buildings are located within. As such, the proposal is considered to be in full accordance with Policies 2 and 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as well as Section 12 of the NPPF.

Access and Parking

- 6.19 It is of real importance to note that the proposed parking and access arrangements are as exist at present within the application site. Nene Court benefits from ample free parking spaces which can be utilised by employees of the sites units as well as guests and visitors. Given the small scale nature of the proposed retail units, it is the Applicants view that such

parking arrangements should be considered as adequate and appropriate despite the intensification of use at the site which will result from the proposed development.

6.20 The below aerial extract clearly details the extent of the available free parking spaces at the Nene Court Shopping Village.



Figure 4 – Aerial Extract of Nene Court Demonstrating Parking Spaces Available at the Application Site

6.21 Furthermore, the proposed access arrangements have been determined as acceptable by the LPA within previous applications that have been submitted to the LPA in relation to the site at Nene Court Wellingborough, with objections received in relation to highway safety.

6.22 Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development provides for satisfactory provision in relation to highway safety matters as a result of the existing number of free parking spaces located within the confines of the site at Nene Court, along with an established point of entry which is considered to be adequate. It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme is in full accordance with Policy 8 (b) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as well as Section 9 of the NPPF and should therefore not be refused on matters relating to the impact of the proposed development upon highway safety.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This statement has been prepared by CC Town Planning, to accompany a full retrospective planning application for the proposed development for 6.no self-contained retail units, contained within two newly constructed buildings at Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, NN8 1LD.
- 7.2 The enclosed application is seeking full retrospective planning permission for the erection of these new buildings which are home to 6.no retail units comprising of 16sqm each. Each of the units benefits from their own point of entry, with sufficient parking space to serve these units already present within the confines of the application site at Nene Court.
- 7.3 This accompanying Planning Statement has set out that the proposed development would make a positive contribution to enhancing the local economy, by providing a number of small retail units which would offer appropriate accommodation to local businesses. Despite the site being located outside of the designated town centre area, it is considered that the development proposal is appropriate and would indirectly support Wellingborough town centre, due to Nene Court's excellent links to the wider public transport network. As such, in line with the adopted local planning policy approach, the principle of development has therefore been established accordingly.
- 7.4 Furthermore, the development is also considered to offer an adequate parking and access arrangement, given the presence of numerous free parking spaces located within the confines of the application site, along with the existing access point associated with the shopping complex of Nene Court. Furthermore, given the high quality design of the retail units, it is reasonable to determine that the character and appearance of Nene Court and the wider surrounding area will be protected, despite the erection of these newly constructed buildings which will host 6.no self-contained retail units at the application site.
- 7.5 Therefore, given the assessment set out above, it has been demonstrated that the proposed scheme for 6.no small retail units to be located at the existing shopping complex of Nene Court, Wellingborough, is in full accordance with the various Development Plan documents set out above as well as nation planning policies contained within the NPPF.
- 7.6 As such, for the reasons set out herein, we respectfully request that full planning permission be granted for this submitted application at the earliest opportunity possible.