

## Planning Statement

RE: Land to west of St Peters Way, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, NN9 5SD

### BACKGROUND

1. This is an application for Permission-in-Principle ('PiP') for the 'Erection of self-contained dwellings' (the 'proposed development') at Land to west of St Peters Way, Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, NN9 5SD ('site').
2. The application is made under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017 as amended. The proposal seeks permission-in-principle for residential development comprising the erection of a minimum of 4 and maximum of 6 dwellings. The Permission-in-Principle consent route has two stages. The first stage establishes whether a site is suitable in principle. The second stage, i.e. the technical details consent, is where the detailed development proposals are assessed.
3. The current proposal relates to the first stage and therefore only the principle of the proposal in respect of its location, land use and amount of development can be considered. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters can only be considered at this stage with other matters considered at the technical details consent stage.
4. National Planning Practice Guidance clarifies that the scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. In addition, local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission [NPPG, Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615].

5. Local planning authorities must specify the location of the site, the type of development and provide an indication of the amount of development the site has permission in principle for. The amount of residential development must be expressed as a range, indicating the minimum and maximum net number of dwellings (i.e. taking in to account any existing dwellings on the site) which are, in principle, permitted [NPPG, Paragraph: 052 Reference ID: 58-052-20180615].
6. It is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle and its terms may only include the site location, the type of development and amount of development [NPPG, Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 58-020-20180615].
7. Once a valid application for permission in principle has been received, the local planning authority should make a decision on the proposal as quickly as possible, and in any event within the statutory time limit unless a longer period has been agreed in writing with the applicant. The statutory time limit is 5 weeks, counting from the day after the local authority has received a valid application [NPPG, Paragraph: 053 Reference ID: 58-053-20180615].

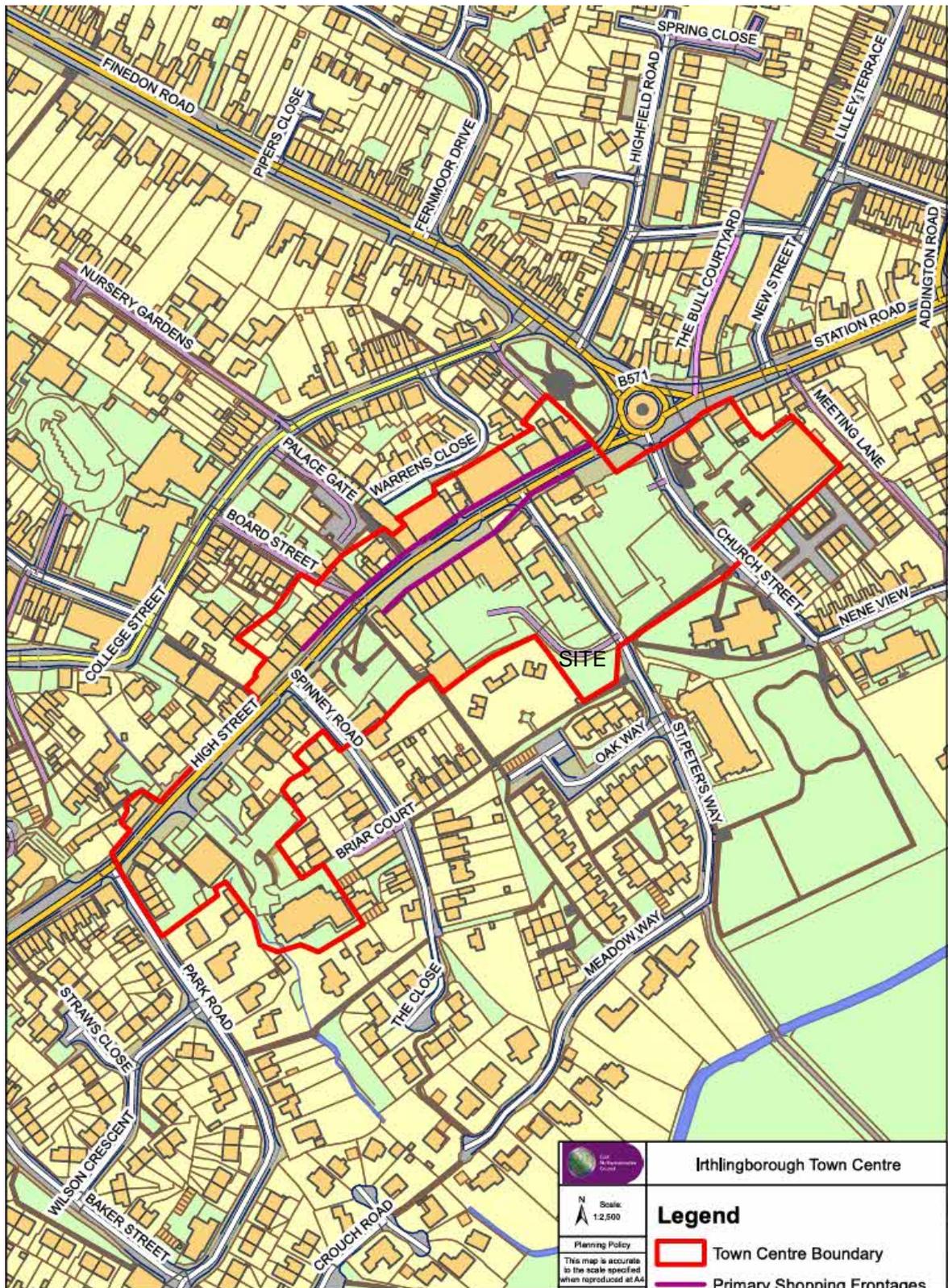
## CONTENT OF APPLICATION

8. The application is supported by the following documents and drawings:
  - a. Application Form
  - b. Planning Statement
  - c. Site Plan/Location Plan

## CONSIDERATIONS

### A. LOCATION

9. In terms of the first issue, 'Location', the site is located within the settlement of Irthlingborough, and within the defined town centre boundary under the terms of Policy 11 of The East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 as the following map extract from the Local Plan confirms.



10. The site is included in a site allocation EN35 in the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2. EN35 is described as Former Select & Save, 13-21 High Street/ St Peter's Way Car Park, Irthlingborough and allocated for redevelopment.

11. Successive planning decisions have confirmed that the location of the site is appropriate for residential use.
12. In the Council's consideration of planning application NE/23/01084/FUL in December 2023 for a residential development on this site, they confirmed that:

**7.1 Principle of Development**

- 7.1.1 The application site is situated within settlement of Irthlingborough, circa 85 metres from the south of the primary shopping area as identified on the 'Defined Shopping Area' Plan endorsed by the East Northamptonshire Council Local Plan (Saved Policies) (1996). Policy 11 of the JCS identifies Irthlingborough as a 'Market Town' where new development is encouraged. Policy 28 of the JCS reflects Policy 11 and supports residential development with the settlement.
- 7.1.2 Therefore, the principle of residential development is acceptable, subject to the considerations set out below.

13. In the Council's consideration of planning application NE/22/01375/FUL in December 2022 for a residential development on this site they confirmed that:

**7.1 Principle of Development**

- 7.1.1 The application site is situated within settlement of Irthlingborough, circa 85 metres from the south of the primary shopping area as identified on the 'Defined Shopping Area' Plan endorsed by the East Northamptonshire Council Local Plan (Saved Policies) (1996). Policy 11 of the JCS identifies Irthlingborough as a 'Market Town' where new development is encouraged. Policy 28 of the JCS reflects Policy 11 and supports residential development with the settlement.
- 7.1.2 Therefore, the principle of residential development is acceptable, subject to the considerations set out below.

14. In summary, the site is located within the settlement area of Irthlingborough and the designated town centre. Irthlingborough is a designated market town where new development is encouraged. The Local Plan apportions 17.8% of the total JCS requirement to Irthlingborough. The site forms part of a site which is allocated for redevelopment in the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2.
15. These locational attributes of the site mean that the location of the site is an appropriate one for residential development and this has been confirmed by the Council in their consideration of two previous residential proposals for the site.

16. The principle of a residential development in a town centre is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) which confirms at paragraph 90:

90. Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:

a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters;

## B. LAND USE

17. The question posed by an application for PiP is simply: - is the proposed land use acceptable. The Council has highlighted in their consideration of previous applications NE/23/01084/FUL and NE/22/01375/FUL for residential development on the site that “Residential dwellings are located to the north, south and west of the application site” and that there are “several apartments recently permitted” to the north-west of the site.

18. The site is adjoined to the north-west by Royal Oak Court, St. Peters Way, Irthlingborough, NN9 5SD – a residential block containing flats (Images 1 & 2). To the south-east on the opposite side of St Peters Way is Farrar Court, 7 St. Peters Way, Irthlingborough, NN9 5WB which contains 29 one- and two-bedroom flats for persons over 55 (Image 3).

19. To the south, are the residential properties in Oak Way, a terrace of semi-detached bungalows (Image 5), with Oak Terrace providing a separation from the application site (Image 4). Finally, to the south-west the site is adjoined by the Louisa Lilley Almshouses, comprising 6 single storey dwellings (Image 6).



Royal Oak Court



Royal Oak Court



Farrar Court



Oak Terrace

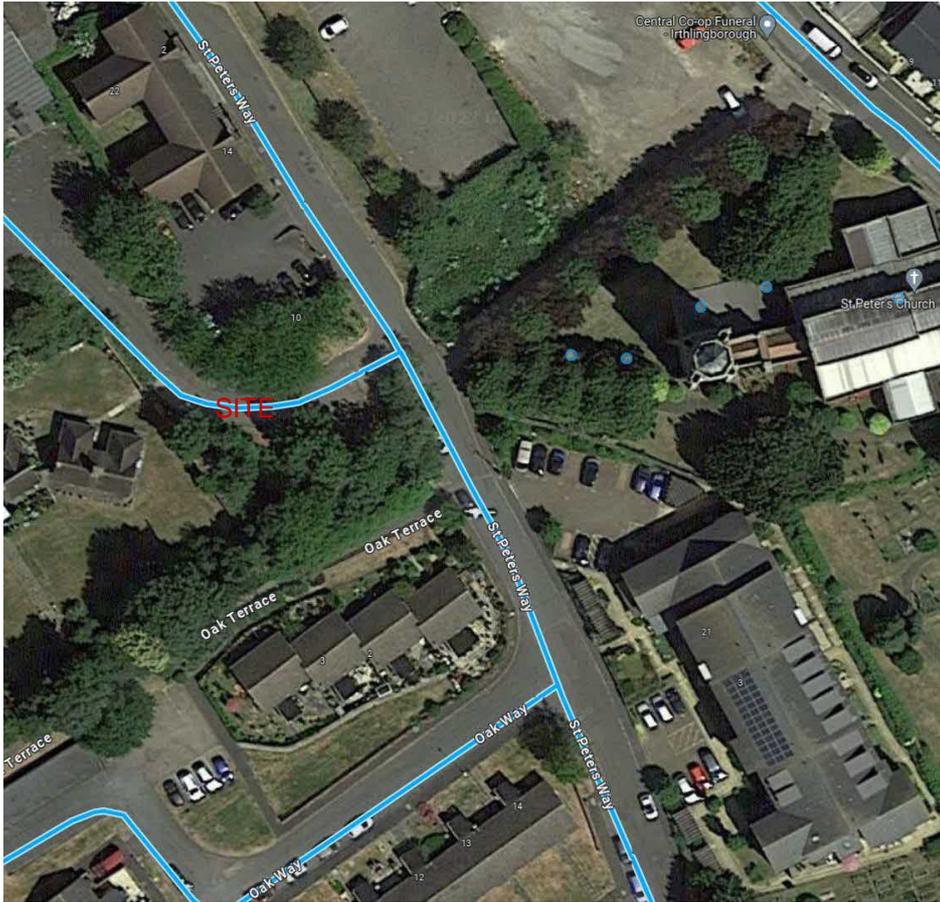


Oak Way



Louisa Lilley  
Almshouses

20. The follow aerial images confirm that the site is therefore surrounded by residential uses and support the view that a residential use of the site is acceptable and appropriate. This predominant residential use will be further consolidated with the planning permissions that have been granted in the private car park to the north west of the site - 20/00997/FUL granted on the 26 May 2022, and in the extension of 13-21 High Street to provide further residential apartments - NE/21/01725/FUL granted on the 30 January 2023.



21. The appropriateness of the site for residential use was also the conclusion of the Inspector who determined appeal APP/G2815/W/17/3181795 on the 12 December 2017 and commented at paragraph 3 that: "High Street lies to the north-west; it has a linear form of development and is home to the main town centre uses. This commercial character is in direct contrast to the predominantly residential uses that are found in the streets and areas behind High Street. Due to the position of the appeal site it currently provides an area of transition between these commercial and residential uses. It is not disputed that the site lies within an accessible location where in principle appropriate residential development can be supported".

22. In summary, residential use of the site is therefore an appropriate land use.

### C. AMOUNT

23. The site is 1,022m<sup>2</sup> in area (0.1022ha). The access road splits the site in two parts which comprise of grassland with overgrown vegetation and trees. There are no designations or features on site that would impact the full use of the site. The site is not located in a conservation area and contains no statutory or locally listed buildings. Normal development management guidelines applied at the technical details consent stage will therefore determine the exact form and layout.

24. For the PiP application the key question to address is whether the site can accommodate a minimum of 4 and a maximum 6 dwellings.

25. Neither the JCS nor the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (October 2023) contain general density policies which might be determinative of development capacity. The exceptions are the specific growth allocations in the JCS. These are not considered a benchmark to apply to a town centre site.

26. Farrar Court (see paragraph 19 above) has a density of 80 dwellings per hectare (source: Committee Report on Application EN/07/01348/FUL – 17 September 2007).

27. A mixed use development at the Former Express Works Factory Site, Church Street was approved with a residential density of approximately 57 dwellings per hectare (source: Design and Access Statement, May 2015 – Application 15/00990/FUL, approved 04 May 2016).

28. With a site area of 0.1022ha, the minimum of 4 dwellings will achieve a density of 39dph and the maximum of 6, a density of 58dph. This density is therefore considered commensurate with the

densities achieved on densities on other approved developments within this area of Irthlingborough and appropriate for a town centre location.

29. Regard must be had in determining the appropriate amount of development that is appropriate for the site to the NPPF and in particular, paragraph 70 which states that "Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly"; and paragraph 123 which states that "Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses,....".
30. NPPF paragraph 124 d) is also relevant in stating that planning policies and decisions should "promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained".
31. NPPF paragraph 130 states:

"In applying paragraphs 129a and b above to existing urban areas, significant uplifts in the average density of residential development may be inappropriate if the resulting built form would be wholly out of character with the existing area. Such circumstances should be evidenced through an authority-wide design code which is adopted or will be adopted as part of the development plan."
32. It is clear that in comparison with the densities achieved on Farrar Court and the former Express Works site, a significant uplift in density is not proposed. Furthermore, there is no adopted authority-wide design code which would determine that the proposed density is inappropriate.
33. The proposed amount of development is therefore considered commensurate with the site's location in the town centre, the imperative of national planning policy to make more effective use of land and density precedents that have been deemed acceptable by the Council on residential developments in the local area.

## CONCLUSION

34. In conclusion, the proposed location, land use and amount of a development comprising a minimum of 4 or maximum of 6 dwellings is considered appropriate and policy compliant and supports the reasonable and legitimate expectation that this application for PiP should be supported and benefit from approval.

35. If further information or clarification on any aspect of the appeal is required, please contact the undersigned.

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16 January 2024  
0840/AGJ