OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00194/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Erection of side and rear extension to dwelling (retrospective)

Location: Whympers The Green Houghton

Applicant: Mr Ian Ratcliffe

Grid Ref: 528149 272183

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The site comprises of a two-storey detached dwellinghouse located on The Green in Houghton. The is within the Houghton & Whyton Conservation Area and there are a number of Listed Buildings in the vicinity. The site is situated in Flood Zones 2 & 3.

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the erection of a side and rear extension to dwelling.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). .'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* achieving well-designed places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
* conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2019 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

LP 5: Flood Risk
LP 11: Design Context
LP 12: Design Implementation
LP 14: Amenity

LP 34: Heritage Assets and their settings

Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (2018-2036)

Policy HWNP17 – Design of new development

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles - Part 3.7 Building Form

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

79/00154/FUL - ERECTION OF A GARAGE – Permission

83/01683/FUL – Alterations to form granny annexe – Permission

19/02562/HHFUL – Remodelling and alterations to dwelling, widening and replacing vehicular access gate and partial rebuilding boundary wall – Permission

CONSULTATIONS

Houghton and Whyton Parish Council state they cannot make a decision as there is insufficient information and detail that we would normally expect in an application of this size and importance. Some of the information provided is inaccurate eg start date was listed as 01/01/2025 on the application form when the work was already in progress in November 2024. There is no information about the changes to the first-floor window over the orangery, there is no mention of the removal of the external walls to create the internal space of the orangery, there is no site specific flood report or mitigation measures mentioned, as required by the Flood Risk sheet (HWNP Policy LP14).
The building has listing potential due to its iconic status within the village and its history and relevance to the local culture and architecture. It is sited in the Conservation Area and a Neighbourhood Plan Character Area is part of the street scene that includes several listed buildings. The extension is visible from at least two streets and the materials used differ from the existing materials (HWNP Policy LP17).
The building work was started in November 2024 without consultation or permission from the local planning authority. HDC enforcement confirmed in December 2024, that the work did not meet permitted development criteria, and a retrospective application was requested. The work continued on the building and the application was received in February 2025.

Officer comment:
The comments made above are noted. However, officers considered there to be sufficient information submitted with the application for a decision to be made. It is noted that the start date was incorrect on the application form, the agent has acknowledged this error and states the works started in November 2024.
The plans do not appear to show changes to the first-floor windows and a site visit was carried out which confirmed that there were no changes to the first-floor windows.
The site falls within Flood Zones 2 & 3 and the applicant has submitted the required household checklist which confirms that: the floor levels with the proposed development are set no lower than existing levels. Given the scale of the proposal, the submitted information is considered acceptable in this instance.
The statutory listing of historic buildings in England is the responsibility of Historic England, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Local planning authorities do not have the power to list buildings themselves.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential amenity
- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Flood Risk

Design and Visual Amenity

Policy LP 11 of the adopted Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and has regard for the guidance contained within the Design SPD (2017).

The application site, Whympers, is sited on a corner plot on The Green in Houghton. Whympers is a large two-storey detached dwellinghouse characterised by a traditional palette of materials, including brick, render and hanging tiles with black timber painted soffits and fascias.

This application seeks retrospective planning permission for a single storey side and rear extension to create an orangery. The proposed extension measures approx. 7.35 metres in depth, 5.38 metres in width with an overall height of approx. 3.895 metres. The materials are brickwork to match the existing chimney stack, mendip grey timber with a flat grey rubber coating roof with leadwork to the parapets. The materials differ from what is existing, however, due to the limited visibility from public vantage points and the sympathetic choice of brickwork to match an existing feature, the proposed materials are not considered harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area.

The proposal by virtue of its siting, scale, size and design would not cause any detrimental impact to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area.

Overall, it is considered the proposed development is acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and HWNP17 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 states that a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings in terms of light, outlook, privacy and noise.

In terms of neighbouring amenity, the site is heavily screened by existing boundary treatments and the proposed extension sits in from the boundary between the site and neighbouring site to the west by approx. 11 metres. Given its siting, and single storey nature, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and does not case significant detrimental harm to any neighbouring site.

Overall, the development is considered acceptable in terms of overshadowing, overbearing impact, overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Impact on Heritage Assets

Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

The 1990 Act gives local planning authorities a general duty to preserve Listed Buildings and to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas (s.66 and s.72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). The National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 states that Local planning authorities need to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets (Para 203). The NPPF 2024 also states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset.

The application site is within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area and is in close proximity to several Grade II Listed Buildings with the closest being No's 1,2 and 3 Chapel Lane, approx. 7.5 metres to the north and Glebe Cottage, approx. 50 metres to the south. The development comprises a single storey side and rear extension, positioned to the west of the host dwelling. The siting and scale of the extension ensure that is has minimal, if any, visibility from adjacent Listed Buildings and limited visibility from the public realm within the Conservation Area. Whilst the materials used differ from the existing, they do not appear incongruous in context. As such it is not considered that the proposal causes harm to the settings of the nearby Listed Buildings, or to the character and appearance of the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area.

It is therefore considered that the proposals accord with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, NPPF and Local Plan Policy LP34.

Flood Risk

The application site is in Flood Zone 3 as identified by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017), which means it has a high probability of flooding. The applicant has submitted the required household checklist which confirms that: the floor levels with the proposed development are set no lower than existing levels.

Given the scale of the proposal, the submitted information is considered acceptable in this instance. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable and complies with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF 2024 in this regard.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it:

* Is of an appropriate scale and design
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would not have a harmful impact on designated heritage assets;
* Would not result in an increased risk of flooding in the locality.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Robyn Kerrigan**