HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

24/02087/HHFUL

OFFICER REPORT

Case No: **24/02087/HHFUL** **Householder (Full)**

Proposal: **Front Single storey extension including new lean-too roof over new extension and over existing flat roof. Rear first floor extension over existing single storey. Monocouche render to existing house.**

Location: **14 Spinney Lane Alconbury Huntingdon**

Applicant: **Mr Michael Peters**

Grid Ref: **518711 276012**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The property is a detached two storey dwelling, located in a residential area of Alconbury. The properties have large front gardens and projecting flat roof projection to the front. To the rear there is a flat roof single storey extension.
It is located on land at flood zone 1.

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

The application is to Erect a front single storey extension including new lean-too roof over new extension and over existing flat roof. A rear first floor extension over existing single storey and monocouche render to existing house.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (19th 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;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 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)
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation

LP14: Amenity
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles - Parts 3.5 Parking and Servicing and 3.7 Building Form

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

PLANNING HISTORY

No recent relevant planning history.

CONSULTATIONS

Alconbury Parish Council were consulted. No observations either in favour or against the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

No objections received at time of determination.

ASSESSMENT

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential amenity
- Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement

Design and Visual Amenity
The NPPF states in para '135. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments…
(c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
(d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;'

Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

LP11 states '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, including natural, historic and built environment, to help create distinctive, high quality and well designed places. In order to achieve this a proposal will need to have applied the guidance contained in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017) Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007) area character statements, the Huntingdonshire or successor documents and applicable conservation. A proposal should also have had regard to relevant advice or guidance that promotes high quality design, details the quality or character of the area or describes how the area should develop in the future.'

LP12 states 'New development and advertisements will be expected to be well designed based upon a thorough understanding of constraints and appraisal of the site's context, delivering attractive, usable and long lasting buildings and spaces. A proposal will be supported, therefore, where it can be demonstrated that it:
a. contributes positively to the area's character and identity;

b. successfully integrates with adjoining buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape…'

These policies seek to manage development that responds positively and sympathetically to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics and history of its surroundings, including natural, historic, and built environment, to help create distinctive, high quality and well-designed places.

The proposal is for a front single storey extension, render and cladding to the entire property and first floor rear extension. Each element will be assessed below:

* Front extension
The proposal includes a mono-pitched front extension that extends the roof across the existing flat roof front projection. There is a flat roofed front projection on each of the properties in this row, creating a characteristic of the row. However, the adjacent neighbour at No.12 has been altered and amended to a pitched roof front projection and had numerous other alterations, breaking up this characteristic.

This proposal projects out 2.345m from the front of the house to align with the garage. Although, this will differ in design, it will be in keeping with the pitched roof of the house and around the bend there are front projections across the entire frontages of similar house types. Therefore, it is not felt that this change to the front elevation will cause significant harm and on balance would be viewed as an acceptable change.

* Render
The plans do not annotate the materials on them but it can be presumed from the drawings what is a smooth surface of render and what is cladding or brick.
The proposal seeks to retain the cladding on the front at first floor and mimic this on the first floor rear extension. This is in keeping with the character of the area and felt to be acceptable.

This property sits among a number of similarly designed dwellings, utilising brick facing with areas of alternative materials as panels surrounding first floor windows, predominantly in the form of cladding or hanging tile, although limited render panels and stonework are visible. This dwelling in particular forms a group with nos. 12, 16, 18 and 20, which have all retain the dominant brickwork and only vary in the panel material. These are a particularly strong feature of the area as relatively uniform design, and while there are some front extensions that have altered the form of the properties the materials still provide a characteristic level of uniformity. The proposed alteration would result in all reference to the brick material being lost, and result in the dwelling appearing as a notable departure from the prevalent character of these house types in the streetscene. Particularly given the position in the middle of a row of similar dwellings, and located opposite an area of open space that is more likely to result in the view being experienced, this will appear as a discordant interruption in the streetscene to the detriment of the character of the area. The proposals is considered to represent an alien and out of character design, contrary to Policies LP11 and LP12.
It is considered that significant weight should be afforded to the harm that will be caused and the proposal is therefore contrary to policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) and para 135 of the NPPF (2024).

* First Floor Rear Extension
The first floor rear extension is to project out over the existing single storey projection to a distance of 2.78m. It will be subservient with the ridgeline lower than the host dwelling and pitched to be in keeping with the property, and as it is unlikely to be visible from any public viewpoints it would not materially alter the character of the area.

Residential Amenity

Para. 135 of the NPPF states:
'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:…
f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'

Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states 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. A proposal will therefore be required to ensure:

a. adequate availability of daylight and sunlight for the proposed use, minimising the effects of overshadowing and the need for artificial light;
b. the physical relationships arising from the design and separation of buildings are not oppressive or overbearing, and in particular will not result in overlooking causing loss of privacy;
c. that predicted adverse noise impacts, including internal and external levels, timing, duration and character, will be acceptable;
d. that predicted adverse impacts from the following sources will be made acceptable:
i. obtrusive light;
ii. contamination;
iii. air pollution;
iv. water pollution;
v. odour;
vi. dust; and
vii. overheating
e. adequate and accessible waste storage is provided, avoiding adverse impacts;
f. the risk and perceived risk of crime is minimised, including through applying relevant guidance from Secured by Design;
g. that all homes, businesses and main town centre uses are capable of being served by super-fast broadband through the integration of appropriate measures such as open access ducting to industry standards; and
h. that there would be no adverse effect on safety near a notifiable installation and no increase in the number of people that would be put at risk in the vicinity of a notifiable installation.

Again, each element of the proposal shall be assessed below in regard to amenity:

* Front extension
The front extension is small scale with a projection of 2.345m to the front. This will not cause a detrimental impact on the neighbours to either side from overshadowing or overbearing.
The front window and door will be a significant distance from neighbouring dwellings to not cause any harm from overlooking.

* Other fenestration changes
To the first floor side elevation two new windows are proposed for en-suites. These windows could be conditioned to be obscured and non-opening to 1.7m from the rooms floor level to protect privacy (of occupiers and neighbours).

To the rear patio doors are proposed to the ground floor. These are at ground floor and would be sufficiently screened by boundary treatments to not cause harmful overlooking.

* First floor rear extension

The first floor extension would not cause detrimental harm to the neighbours to either side as it would not encroach in to their 45 degree angles form nearby windows, but would create a harmful impact on neighbouring amenity to the rear (no.3 Hawthorn End).

Although no objections have been raised by this property the Local Planning authority (LPA) must consider the impact on the occupiers and future occupiers of this property.
The proposal would be 6.7m from the neighbour's boundary, decreasing from the existing 9.5m. This separation distance remaining would be small, and while there is a window to the rear elevation in a similar place, the decreased proximity would create a significantly increased degree of overlooking from the proposed first floor main habitable room window to the main circulation space of the neighbour's garden directly to the rear of their property. The existing property is close to this neighbour, but to reduce this further would create a more oppressive development that would result in the loss of privacy for no. 3 Hawthorn End, particularly given the scale of the fenestration proposed, and as it would not be appropriate to fix it close or obscure glaze it given its need to serve a primary habitable room and as a means of escape. On the whole, the decreased proximity between first floor primary habitable rooms and the primary rear amenity of space of neighbouring property is considered to result in a detrimental impact to residential amenity.

The development therefore is contrary to Local Plan policy LP14 and para 135 of the NPPF by virtue of creating a poor standard of amenity and eroding the neighbours privacy by this oppressive extension that detrimentally overlooks their main circulation space. Therefore this weighs significantly against the application.

Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement

Policy LP17 states that a proposal will be supported where it incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates accessibility for service and emergency vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

The proposal provides sufficient off-street parking for the property with a large front garden and not harmfully impacting on the amount of room for vehicles to parking and leaving the site safely. Therefore, given the scale and siting of the proposal, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highways safety. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

CONCLUSION

It is felt that the proposal would have very limited benefits to economic and social pillars of sustainability, from job creation during construction and improved facilities for the occupiers, that would not outweigh the harm shown above.

The proposed rendering of the property would remove key characteristics of the property and streetscene therefore would not successfully integrate in the streetscene, not draw upon key characteristics of the area and does not positively contribute to the area's character and identity by virtue of removing all of the brick detailing from the design.

The proposal will appear alien and materially out of character contrary to policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) and para 135 of the NPPF (2024).

The first floor extension to the rear of the property is contrary to Local Plan policy LP14 and para 135 of the NPPF by virtue of creating a poor standard of amenity for no.3 Hawthorn End. Eroding this neighbour's privacy by the reduced separation distance created that results in an oppressive extension that detrimentally overlooks their main private amenity space from the proposed first floor window, contrary to policy LP14 and Para 135 of the NPPF.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be REFUSED.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Hannah Hodges**