OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00691/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Construction of a new garden-room and associated driveway alterations

Location: The Stables 68A Main Street Hartford

Applicant: Mr William Taylor

Grid Ref: 525767 272840

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is occupied by a part single and part two-storey detached dwellinghouse located in Hartford. The site falls within the Hartford Conservation Area and there are a number of heritage assets in the vicinity including Grade II Listed Building No 70 Main Street located to the south-east and Grade II* Listed Building No 66 Main Street located to the south-west. The site is in Flood Zone 1.

The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a new garden-room and associated driveway alterations. It is noted that this is a revision of a previously approved application (24/00917/HHFUL) for a detached garage, driveway, brick piers, gates and fencing. The garden room is in the same position as the garage but is of a smaller footprint with all other associated works, including the driveway, brick piers, gates and fencing remaining the same as the approved application (24/00917/HHFUL). It is noted that this application could be implemented and is the fall-back position for the site. Where relevant, this fall-back position needs to be taken into account in the consideration of the application.

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;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed 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)

LP 11: Design Context
LP 12: Design Implementation
LP 14: Amenity
LP 17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP 31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP 34: Heritage Assets and their settings

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

0101610FUL - Change of use and alterations to outbuilding to form separate dwelling. Erection of workshop for 68 Main Street – permission granted 14.11.2001
1106935PDE - Part conversion of property for B & B use – planning permission not required 11.11.2011
21/01055/HHFUL - Construction of a sun-room – permission granted 13.09.2021
24/00917/HHFUL - Construction of detached garage, driveway, brick piers, gates and fencing – permission granted 04.09.2024

CONSULTATIONS

Huntingdon Town Council – no comment.

HDC's Conservation Officer – No objections, minimal development that will not impact the Conservation Area or setting to listed buildings any more than the previously approved scheme.

HDC's Arboricultural Officer – no objections. It is noted that the previous Arboricultural Officer approved a larger scheme in September 2024. The proposal may require some pruning to facilitate access, and there are a number of trees at the front of the site, they are of low quality, life expectation or amenity value. A Tree Preservation Order would not be appropriate due to their size and lack of amenity value at this time.

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways – no objections. It is noted that an internal fence is being erected to create separate driveways to the garage of no.70 and house no.68A, but there appears to be sufficient space for turning for both driveways. Therefore, no significant adverse impact upon the Public Highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of Planning Permission.

Historic England – no advice to give. Suggest that the views of the LPA's Conservation Team are sought.

REPRESENTATIONS

One comment of support received from No 66 Main Street:

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
- Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- Highway Safety

*Design and Visual Amenity

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.
The proposed detached garden room is sited to the east of the application site, positioned 3.5 metres from the side boundary with no.70. It is 5 metres deep, 4 metres wide, 2.84 metres high to the eaves, increasing to 4.2 metres to the ridge with a pitched roof. The garden room is to be constructed of pine cladding potentially stained dark brown and a grey composite shingle roof. The windows and doors are to be wood framed and double glazed.

The application also proposes to erect timber gates and fencing with new brick piers. The proposed fence would be a 1.8 metre close boarded fence with 4 brick piers and timber gates. Gravel would also be added to sections of the driveway. This aspect of the application was previously approved under the previous approval (24/00917/HHFUL) and is therefore accepted.

The proposal and materials are considered acceptable and would not result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area.

Therefore, 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.

*Residential Amenity

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.

The proposed detached garden room is positioned 3.5 metres from the shared boundary with no.70, with a set of double doors facing towards the boundary. A further set of bi-fold doors face out towards the garden of no.68a. Two small windows at first floor level provide light to the storage area and face towards the applicant's garden and neighbouring driveway. It is noted that the western wall of No 70 faces into the application site, however there are no windows in this wall. In addition, the northern wall of No. 66's garage faces into the site. There is one opening in this wall, which is currently boarded up. A garage is not counted as a habitable room therefore the applications does not give rise to any overlooking or overshadow concerns in relation to this opening. It is noted that there have been no objections to the proposal from neighbouring properties. Given the siting, scale and design of the proposed garden room and separation distance to adjacent dwellings, it is not considered that there would be any significant detrimental impact to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties to warrant refusal of the application.

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.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Para. 212 of the NPPF set out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Para. 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification…'

Local Plan policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.

The application site is within the Hartford Conservation Area and is adjacent to the Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse and Grade II* Listed The Manor House.

The main structure of significance is the boundary wall and the contribution of the garden plot to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The status of the wall is important as it may be protected in curtilage to The Manor House which was listed Grade II* on 10th January 1951 prior to the subdivision of the plot. The wall is constructed of an early Gault brick in an irregular bond which matches the outbuildings of the adjacent Manor Farm. The wall is leaning inwards towards its southwest end.

As a group, the listed buildings, outbuildings and garden wall make a considerable contribution to the significance of the conservation area. The existing arrangement reflects the social and economic evolution of Hartford as shown by the contrast between the Manor House and its garden setting with Manor Farmhouse and its associated agricultural buildings.

The proposed garden room would add to the built form between the listed buildings, but the majority of the outbuilding, gates and fencing would be concealed by the existing outbuilding and boundary wall.

The Conservation Team has been consulted on the application and have no objections to the proposal, noting that the minimal development will not impact the Conservation Area or setting of the listed buildings any more than the previously approved scheme. There would be no significant harm to the settings of the Listed Buildings and the proposed scheme is likely to preserve the character and appearance of the Hartford Conservation Area.

Therefore, it is considered that the scale, bulk and design of the development compliment the host building. Officers have given special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the setting of the listed buildings and character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It is considered that harm will not be caused to these designated heritage assets because the development would have a neutral effect. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019), Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development.

It is noted that there are a small number of trees on site close to the proposed garden room, however, these trees are small and of low visual amenity value. The Arboricultural Officer has been consulted on the proposal and has no objections. It is noted that the proposal may require some pruning to facilitate access, and that there are a number of trees at the front of the site, which are of low quality, life expectation or amenity value. As such there is requirement for tree protection measures.

Therefore, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy LP31 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Highway safety

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. Policy LP16 seeks safe physical access from the public highway.

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

It is noted that the garden room is located within the existing driveway for the property, however sufficient space is retained for cars to manoeuvre within the space and there is no loss of off-street parking provision.

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways has been consulted on the proposal and have no objections. It is noted that an internal fence is being erected to create separate driveways to the garage of no.70 and house no.68A, but there appears to be sufficient space for turning for both driveways. Therefore, no significant adverse impact upon the Public Highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of Planning Permission.

Therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policies LP16 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework 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 have a significantly detrimental impact upon trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon highway safety.

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.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388424 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Olivia Manton**