OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/01993/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Demolition of existing cricket pavilion for replacement cricket pavilion and storage unit

Location: King George V Playing Field St Peters Road Huntingdon

Applicant: Carol Rigden

Grid Ref: 523629 272635

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is King George V Playing Field located on St Peters Road, Huntingdon. It lies within the Huntingdon Conservation Area and there are some Grade ll Listed Buildings to the north-west. There are no other constraints associated with the site which is within Flood Zone 1 as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data.

This application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing cricket pavilion and its replacement with a new pavilion and separate storage unit on the site.

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

During the lifetime of the application and to satisfy concerns raised by the Council's Arboricultural and Ecology Officers (further details in the proceeding sections of this report) a revised plan has been provided amending the location of the building. Re-consultation with relevant consultees and neighbours has been completed.

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, 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 May 2019

LP1: Amount of Development
LP2: Strategy for Development
LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
LP5: Flood Risk
LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP22: Local Services and Community Facilities
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP32: Protection of Open Space
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2026 (September 2019)

Policies:

TL2 - Leisure and Community Facilities
NE2 - Open Space and Green Infrastructure
NE3 - Setting of Huntingdon
BE1 - Design and Landscaping
BE2 - Local Distinctiveness and Aesthetics
BE3 - Heritage Assets
TT1 - Sustainable Transport

Huntingdon Conservation Area Character Assessment (March 2007)

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

*Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
*Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
*Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
*Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
*Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

CONSULTATIONS

Huntingdon Town Council - supports the application stating that "members expressed their support for this application, which was submitted by HTC. It was noted that the application would provide much needed facilities for cricket in Huntingdon and would encourage youth participation in the sport. Members felt the application was supported by Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan Policies TL2 and TL3. A Clerks note accompanies the comments which notes that TL3 does not apply as this relates to facilities outside of the built-up area.

Officer comments: The above comments are noted but are given limited weight in this determination as the Town Council are the applicants.

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Team - No objections.

Sport England - No objections.

Cadent - No objections - informative note required.

HDC Ecology Officer - No objections based upon revised plans.

HDC Arboricultural Officer - No objections based upon revised plans.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 48 of the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of a number of adopted neighbourhood plans. As detailed above, Huntingdon has an adopted neighbourhood plan and the relevant Policies have been given weight in the determination of this application.

The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

The main issues to consider are:

*The principle of development
*Design, visual amenity, impact upon heritage assets
*Residential amenity
*Highway considerations
*Flood risk
*Impact on trees
*Biodiversity

*The principle of the development

It should be noted that the Design, Access and Heritage Statement references Policy LP23 (Tourism and Recreation) of the Local Plan and it is likely that this is due to previous advice provided by the LPA. However, LP23 deals with such proposals in the countryside and the guidance of the Policy refers the user to other Policies of the Local Plan for assessment of such development which is not in a countryside setting. As such, LP23 has not been used to establish the principle of this development.

As this is a replacement building (albeit of a slightly increased footprint) and separate storage building, the principle of the siting of such a building is already established. Further, Policy LP22 of the Local Plan supports local services and community facilities where (amongst other matters) it retains or enhances an existing service or facility. The existing building is clearly in a state of disrepair and part of it was protected by Heras fencing at the time of the site visit. Therefore, notwithstanding aesthetics (discussed in further detail below) the proposal is considered to meet these objectives whilst also achieving the aims of Policy TL2 of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan.

Meanwhile, Policy LP32 of the Local Plan and NE2 of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect open space of community value. In this case, only a minor section of the land will be lost (by virtue of the increased footprint and addition of storage building). The building is located in a similar location to the existing building and so it does not encroach on the main sports field. (Aesthetics are discussed in further detail in the proceeding sections of this report). It therefore cannot reasonably be considered that the proposals would result in the loss of land of significant value and the benefits of this enhanced facility far outweigh the harm. Sport England have also been consulted and raise no objections and point out that the proposals are consistent with Para 103 (104 in the amended version) of the NPPF (2024).

Overall, having regard to the above assessment the development is considered to be acceptable in principle and can be supported subject to compliance with all material planning considerations and conditions.

*Design, visual amenity, impact upon heritage assets

The surroundings of the application site are a mix of residential and commercial/leisure uses. It is south-west of the industrial area of Huntingdon and, in the immediate vicinity there are dwellings, a Leisure Centre, Secondary School and Bowls Club.

The site is bounded to the west by a relatively low hedgerow and the sports field and associated buildings are visible from St Peters Road and the surrounding sites. The existing building is set back from the boundary and is a single storey building with style and materials consistent with its age. It is set at a slight angle as opposed to parallel to the road.

The proposed building has a slightly increased footprint but is parallel to the road. The rear of the building will face towards the road, and, whilst this does not allow passers by to appreciate the design it is accepted that the frontage (with glazing) must face the field. That said, the rear is not absent of design features with a door and window which 'breaks' the elevation and a projecting clock tower central to the roof plane and so there is some visual interest. It is single storey and typical of a modern pavilion design as are the proposed materials which are considered to be consistent with development of this nature and the surroundings. A small storage building will be provided to the north-east of the building. This is of much reduced scale and is a typical storage shed. It appears subservient to the main building and its addition will not be harmful.

In terms of outside space it is proposed to add additional planting with a bound gravel path leading across the grass to the building from the car park and to add some cycle storage (which is welcomed) to the south-west elevation.

Officers note the placement of 'signage zones' on the building. It should be acknowledged that the approval of these plans does not absolve the applicant of the requirement to consider requirements for advertising consent (where required) before displaying any advertisements/signage in this location.

Overall, it is considered that for the reasons given above, the proposal will not result in a prominent or incongruous structure in this location, will be an improvement to the current situation and will be assimilated with the surrounding buildings and development. It therefore accords with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP32 of the Local Plan to 2036 and Policies NE3, BE1 and BE2 of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (2019).

As detailed in the preceding sections of this report, the building lies within the Huntingdon Conservation Area and there are some Grade II Listed Buildings (27, 28 and 29 St Peters Road) approx. 80 metres (closest point) to the north-west.

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 sets 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.

In this case, a Design, Access and Heritage Statement accompanies the application and this considers the impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings referring to the design details considered in the earlier parts of this assessment. Having regard to this and the assessment, the LPA are satisfied that the proposals will not have a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area or (especially given the level of separation and intervening development) the setting of the Listed Buildings. It therefore complies with Policy LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036, Policy BE3 of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (2019), the provisions of the NPPF (2024) and the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990.

*Residential amenity

Given the scale and siting of the building there are considered to be no concerns with regard to overbearing impacts, overshadowing or loss of light. Nor will there be any concerns with overlooking or loss of privacy. Officers note the provision of the Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) to the north-west of the building. However, this is approx. 48m away from the nearest residential dwelling opposite what is a relatively heavily used road. Therefore, it is not considered that this addition would be detrimental in terms of noise generated. It should also be acknowledged that the development does not result in a change of use of the land nor a significant difference in the events provided within the site or building (which would not be controlled a present). Therefore, it cannot be reasonably considered that the provision of the replacement pavilion is unlikely to result

in increased noise or disturbance from events/vehicle movements when compared against the existing situation.

Overall, the proposals are acceptable in terms of residential amenity and accord with Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Highway safety and parking

There is no change to the way that vehicles enter or leave the site nor any loss of parking (there is a separate established parking area) as a result of the development. The cycle storage is welcomed and increases the opportunities for sustainable travel methods, however, notwithstanding this, the location is considered to be sustainable and easily accessible.

Cambridgeshire County Council as the Local Highways Authority have also been consulted and raise no objections observing that the proposals would have a negligible impact on the local highways network.

Therefore, having regard to the above assessment and advice of specialists, the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to highway safety and therefore accords with Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Flood risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data where development of this nature is acceptable. As per the NPPF (2024) there is no requirement for the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment nor the application of the Sequential or Exception Tests.

The proposed building is largely upon the footprint of the existing building and located in an area with a large degree of permeability (a large expanse of grass surrounds the site) with an overall low risk of flooding.

As such, the development is considered acceptable with regard to flood risk and surface water and broadly accords withs Policies LP5 and LP15 of the Local Plan to 2036 and Policy BE2 of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (2019).

*Impact on trees

Whilst there are no trees subject to Preservation Orders within the site it does lie within the Huntingdon Conservation Area and as such, any trees within it are afforded protection. The application is accompanied by a Tree Survey and Constraints Plan and Tree Protection Plan. The originally submitted site plan indicated that two trees would be removed in order to facilitate the development (shown as T001 and T002 on the superseded plan). This differs from the advice within the Tree Survey and Constraints and Tree Protection Plan. HDC's Arboricultural Officer has been consulted and whilst he did not raise any in principle objections, he did note that the scheme would require the complete removal of one tree and pruning of another (based upon the Arboricultural information submitted). It was also considered that there may be future pressure to remove the pruned tree due to the proximity of the building. In order to overcome this, it was suggested (in agreement with the Council's Ecology Officer) that the relocation of the building approx. 5m further east would prevent the need for removal/works to said trees.

Officers have discussed this with the agent and this is what is shown on the revised plans. The storage unit has been relocated slightly further west but given its limited scale and lightweight structure this is not considered to be harmful. It is noted that the Arboricultural Officer also advised that the proposed protection measures shown on the submitted plans were acceptable.

Overall, having regard to the amendments made which are in keeping with the advice of specialists, and matters which can be controlled by condition, the LPA are satisfied that the development can proceed with the trees retained and protected and therefore in accordance with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036 and Policy NE3 of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (2019).

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan requires that a development should ensure no net loss in terms of biodiversity and achieve a net gain where possible. Pursuant to the Environment Act 2021, 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain would be required with any future application, following the hierarchy of onsite provision; mixture of on-site and off-site provision; and the last resort of statutory biodiversity credits.

The application is accompanied by a BNG Metric and revise details have been provided throughout the lifetime of the application following advice from the Council's Ecology Officer. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has also been provided.

HDC's Ecology Officer has reviewed the submitted details and raises no objection to the details surrounding the findings of the surveys and recommendations within the PEA. There were some minor errors in the submission which required correction. As alluded to in the preceding sections of this report, one of the main issues was the loss of/works to the trees which would impact the biodiversity value of the site. The Ecology Officer strongly supported the re-location of the building (now undertaken on the revised plan). He also queried the plotting of some of the trees and identified that a hedgerow had been omitted from the assessment. Overall, his view was that by re-locating the building and avoiding the felling of the tree the proposal would:

o Resolve the distinctiveness trading error. A completed metric free of error messages is a statutory requirement.

o Follow industry best practice guidelines by acting at the first stage of the mitigation hierarchy, and avoiding loss of habitat.

o Save the cost of felling T001 and may reduce to cost of mitigation action relating to T002's root protection zone, though I defer to the Arboricultural Officer on this point.

Upon receipt of the revised plans the Ecology Officer was informally consulted and advised that they were broadly satisfied with the revised scheme with the only further amendment being the provision of native planting along the western boundary. This has been rectified on the most recent (and approved) plans.

Overall, having regard to the details now provided alongside the advice from specialists, the LPA are satisfied that the development is acceptable with regard to biodiversity impacts and that a 10% net gain can be achieved in accordance with the legislation. Matters relating to mitigation, enhancement and longer-term monitoring shall be dealt with by condition. The development is therefore considered to be compliant with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan in this regard.

*Other matters

Developer contributions (CIL)

The development will be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education. A completed CIL form dated 19th November 2024 accompanies the application and this shall be dealt with by the Council's Implementation Team. The development is

therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Policy LP4 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contribution SPD in this regard.

*Conclusion

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposed building is acceptable in principle, and there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the area, heritage assets, residential amenity, highway safety, trees, biodiversity or increased flood risk and it can therefore be supported.

Having regard to all relevant material considerations the proposed development is considered to comply with Policies LP5, LP11, LP12, LP14, LP15, LP17, LP22, LP30, LP31, LP32 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Policies TL2, NE2, NE3, BE1, BE2 and BE3 of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2026 (September 2019). Consequently, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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