OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/01882/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Erection of garage/outbuilding

Location: 25 St Neots Road Abbotsley St Neots

Applicant: Robert & Stephanie Watkins

Grid Ref: 522430 256737

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

No. 25 St Neots Road is a two-storey semi-detached dwellinghouse located in a residential area in Abbotsley.

This application seeks permission for the erection of a detached garage/outbuilding to the rear of the dwelling. The proposal would be of a gable end design, measure 11.5m by 6.7m with an eaves height of 2.2m and ridge height of 4m. The proposal would be constructed with cladded walls to match the main dwelling with roof tiles and UPVC windows and doors. Vehicular access to the garage would be via Field Close to the rear, where there is currently gated access to the rear garden.

The site is situated in flood zone 1 and there are no designated heritage assets in the vicinity.

This application has been accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (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
LP30: Biodiversity

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):

3.1 Place Making Principles
3.7 Building Form

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)

The National Design Guide (2021)

C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
C2- Value heritage, local history and culture
I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
I3 - Create character and identity

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

23/00841/HHFUL - Single storey extension to front, side and rear, with white render finish to the first floor - Approved.

22/00970/HHFUL - Single storey extension to front, side and rear - Approved.

22/00337/HHFUL - Vehicular access crossing - Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Abbotsley Parish Council - Recommend approval. Councillors considered that it was not clear from the drawings that there was an existing access to the rear of the site but this was evident from a site visit. It was noted that this proposal would result in no overlooking nor would there be a lack of privacy which could affect the adjacent dwelling. There were no parking/traffic or highway safety issues. The proposal was visually acceptable from a design perspective.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third-party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity

o Highway Safety

* Design and Visual Amenity

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This application seeks permission for the erection of a detached garage/outbuilding at No. 25 St Neots Road, Abbotsley. The proposal would be of a gable end design, measure 11.5m by 6.7m with an eaves height of 2.2m and ridge height of 4m. The proposed garage would be constructed with cladded walls, roof tiles and UPVC windows and doors. The submitted plans show that the building would contain a garage/gym area with roller shutter doors and an adjacent summer room and wc.

The proposed outbuilding would be located at the bottom of the garden along the south-west boundary where it would be readily visible from public vantage points along Field Close but would not be visible from the public highway of St Neots Road. It replaces an existing small timber shed.

The proposed outbuilding is considered to be of an acceptable scale that would be commensurate to the size of the residential curtilage. While the proposed gable end design would not reflect the main dwellinghouse's half-hipped roof design, given the varying designs in the immediate area - including a number of gable-end properties and outbuildings on both St Neots Road and Field Close, it is considered to be acceptable in this instance. Furthermore, the proposed outbuilding would be constructed using cladding and materials that would match those of the main dwellinghouse.

The rear garden currently has a close boarded fence and gated access from the existing cul-de-sac of Field Close. This application proposes to utilise this access and replace the gates with a roller shutter door enabling direct access into the garage.

As such, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the character or appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore deemed to be in accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*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 closest neighbouring properties that are most likely to be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development are Nos. 23 and 27 St Neots Road and No. 1 Field Close.

The proposed outbuilding would be approximately 1.3m from the shared boundaries with both Nos. 23 and 27 St Neots Road, and would have an eaves height of 2.2m and ridge height of 4m with the gables addressing the shared boundaries. While it is recognised that the proposal would result in some overbearing and overshadowing impacts on the private rear amenity space of the neighbouring properties, given the retention of the existing close-boarded boundary fence (eaves height) screening the majority of the proposal, and the location and depth of the outbuilding in

comparison to the length of the gardens, the impacts are not considered to be significantly detrimental and would not warrant refusal of planning permission in this instance.

Furthermore, the proposed development would not result in any detrimental impacts on No. 1 Field Close as the majority of the outbuilding would be screened by the existing boundary treatments, the roof would slope away from the boundary, and it would be located forward of the neighbouring properties principal elevation.

Overall, taking these factors into account 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 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Biodiversity

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

This application has been accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal. The report concludes that the site and existing buildings provides negligible potential for badger, Great Crested Newt and reptiles, bat roosting and other protected species. In order to protect species, recommendations are provided within the report, including development taking place outside of bird nesting season and advice being sought if any protected species are found on site.

The Local Planning Authority support the proposed recommendations and a condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure development is carried out in strict accordance with the submitted Ecological Appraisal. Furthermore, a condition would be imposed to secure specific details of the proposed biodiversity enhancements measures detailed within the Ecological Appraisal.

As such, the proposal is considered to broadly be in accordance with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Highway Safety

Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.
The proposal involves a garage/outbuilding accessible via existing access gates into the rear garden. The property also has access and parking to the frontage of the dwelling on St Neots Road.

The proposed garage is considered to meet the dimensions in accordance with the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD with a minimum garage door width of 2.4m, a minimum internal width of 3m and length of 6m.

Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (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 harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours.

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 **Jennifer Wallis**