OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00930/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Conversion of outbuilding to residential

Location: Hall Farm Warboys Road Bury

Applicant: Mr Peter Horsford

Grid Ref: 528870 283549

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application concerns the stable and hayloft located at the eastern end of the rear wing of Hall Farmhouse. Hall Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building situated off Warboys Road and to the south of the built-up area of Bury. While the property lies outside the designated Ramsey Conservation Area, it is positioned close to its southern boundary.

The main dwelling, Hall Farmhouse, is set back from Warboys Road and the eastern portion of the rear wing has been subdivided to create a separate residential unit known as No. 1 Hall Farm. The subject of this application is the attached outbuilding at the far end of the rear wing, currently in use as a stable block. The building subject of this application is accessed off Warboys Road.

As detailed above, Hall Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, and the property is adjacent to the Ramsey Conservation Area. The site is within Flood Zone 1 according to the latest Environment Agency Mapping and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024) and not at risk from ground and surface water flooding. No other statutory historical or ecological designations are located within or in proximity to the application site.

The application proposes the conversion of the existing outbuilding into a single market dwelling. The works would involve both internal and external alterations, including the infilling of three garage door openings with timber-framed windows, the replacement of one garage door with a domestic entrance door, and the installation of glazing within the existing first-floor openings.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (12th 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 10).'

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.

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

PLANNING POLICIES
Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
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
*LP6: Waste Water Management
*LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
*LP10: The Countryside
*LP11: Design Context
*LP12: Design Implementation
*LP14: Amenity
*LP15: Surface Water
*LP16: Sustainable Travel
*LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
*LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
*LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

Bury Village Neighbourhood Plan made 19 May 2021:
*Policy G1 - Definition of 'Built-up Area'
*Policy G4 - Local Housing Needs
*Policy ISF1 - Sustainable Transport
*Policy ISF2 - Highway Impact
*Policy ISF4 - Infrastructure Provision
*Policy ISF5 - Protection of Community Assets
*Policy NE2 - Protected Settlement Break

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

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
LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)

PLANNING HISTORY
25/00931/LBC- Conversion of outbuilding to residential-Pending consideration

24/01783/FUL-Conversion of outbuilding to residential- Withdrawn 10.02.2025

24/01784/LBC- Conversion of outbuilding to residential-Withdrawn 10.02.2025

Other relevant planning history associated with the wider Hall Farm site:
24/01683/FUL-Proposed agricultural access-Permitted 27.11.2024

24/00509/HHFUL- Erection of domestic garage.- Permitted 06.08.2024

24/00740/AGDET-Erection of a Grain store- No details required. 21.06.2024

CONSULTATIONS
Highways Officer- No objection. Following a review of the submitted documentation, the Highway Authority has noted that Drawing 02e (Proposed Elevations, Plans & Sections) indicates an access width of 6.9 metres and demonstrates that visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m can be achieved. As such,

the impact of the proposed development on the public highway is considered to be acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions.

Parish Council - No comment at the time of determination.

Conservation Officer- No objection. The Conservation Officer notes that the stables, hayloft, and carriage house have previously been altered with large openings in the north and east elevations, and are of simple construction with exposed brick and rafters. The current proposal largely retains the building's external appearance, internal layout, and historic stable partition, and is therefore considered to preserve the character and sustain the significance of the Listed Building in principle, subject to specific conditions.

Environmental Health Officer- No objection to this proposal with regard to Environmental Health matters

REPRESENTATIONS
No third-party representations in support or objection to the development proposal have been received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES
The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Principle of development
- Impact on Designated Heritage Assets
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Highways and Parking
- Residential amenity
- Biodiversity

*Principle of Development
Local Plan Policy LP2 states 'all other settlements with a single built up area of 30 dwellings or more are defined as Small Settlements as set out in 'Definition of Small Settlements'.' The built-up area of Bury has more than 30 dwellings and so would fall within this definition.

Local Plan Policy LP 7 states a proposal for housing development (class 'C3') or for a residential institution use (class 'C2') will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement. In this case, the application site is located within the Hall Farm farmstead whereby farmyards and agricultural buildings which extend into the countryside and isolated and fragmented buildings are not considered to be in the built-up area, as per paragraph 4.85 of the Local Plan. In addition, map 3 detailed in Bury Neighbourhood Plan (Policy G1 - Definition of 'Built-up Area') also indicates that the application site is located outside the built-up area of the village.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy G1 states "proposals outside the settlement boundary will only be supported for development where it meets the requirements of other policies in the Development Plan or National Planning Policy; such as that which requires a countryside location, agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or are related to community, leisure or recreation." As such Development Plan policies relevant to this application include Local Plan Policy LP 10.

Local Plan Policy LP10 states development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan. All development in the countryside must:
a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;

b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

In regard to Policy LP10 part a, Local Authority mapping denotes the application site is situated on grade 3 agricultural land with a lower agricultural value. In addition to this, the site as existing occupies the outbuilding and hard surfacing and therefore the land on which they occupy is not used for cattle or arable farming. Officers consider that development on the site would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and therefore, the proposed development is considered compliant with Local Plan Policy LP10 part a.

In regard to criteria b of LP10, the proposed development is considered to have a positive contribution to the character of the countryside given the proposal involves relatively minor external alterations to the building. As discussed in a following section of this report, the proposal is considered to accord with Local Plan Policy LP10 criteria b.

In relation to part (c) of Policy LP10, whilst it is acknowledged that introducing residential development in this location may give rise to some impacts, the scale of the proposal is such that any effects are unlikely to be significantly harmful. Potential issues, such as external lighting, could be appropriately managed through planning conditions, and it is noted that the Environmental Health Team has not raised any objections. Given the existing surrounding land uses, former land use and the presence of other dwellings nearby, it is considered that a refusal based solely on these grounds would not be justified.

It should be considered that Local Plan Policy LP10 restricts development in the countryside to the limited and specific opportunities provided in other policies of the Local Plan. Opportunities in the countryside are limited under Policies LP19 Rural Economy, LP22 Local Services and Community Facilities, LP23 Tourism and Recreation, LP28 Rural Exceptions Housing and LP38 Water Related Development for which these are not applicable to this application. However, Local Plan Policy LP33 Rural Buildings, which provides specific opportunities for development in the countryside, is applicable to this application.

Local Plan Policy LP33 (Rural Buildings) states a proposal for the conversion of a building in the countryside that would not be dealt with through 'Prior Approval/ Notification' will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
a. the building is:
i. redundant or disused;
ii. of permanent and substantial construction;
iii. not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required; and
iv. structurally capable of being converted for the proposed use; and

As detailed in the accompanying condition report and confirmed by an Officer site visit, the outbuilding subject of this application is currently used for residential storage and as a stable. As such the building is considered to conflict with Policy LP33 part a(i). Subsequently, the application is also considered to not accord with Neighbourhood Plan Policy G1.

The accompanying condition report, prepared by a Chartered Quantity Surveyor, supports the application and confirms the building is structurally sound and suitable for conversion. The report describes the building as being of substantial brick construction with tiled roofs, with the lower section effectively forming two storeys due to the natural slope of the land.

It notes the building is in good condition, with no evidence of wall cracking or roof displacement. The majority of the works required for conversion are internal and comprise repairs, installation of partitions, floor improvements, dry lining, and insulation. The report concludes that the building is sound and capable of conversion with the outlined repairs, which is consistent with expectations

given its age. In light of this report, Officers are satisfied the proposal accords with Policy LP 33(a) parts ii, iii and iv.

Whilst some conflict with Local Plan Policy LP 33 part a(i) and subsequently Neighbourhood Plan Policy G1 has been identified, the Council are unable to demonstrate a 5YHLS and Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of new residential development are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications. As such the proposal shall be considered under the 'tilted balance' as defined in paragraph 11(d) of the national policy (NPPF, 2024).

A balancing exercise shall be undertaken at the end of this report.

*Impact on Designated Heritage Assets.
This application relates to Hall Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building located off Warboys Road, to the south of the built-up area of Bury. Although the property lies outside the Ramsey Conservation Area, it is situated close to its southern boundary. As such the Local Planning Authority have a statutory duty to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (Section 16(2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended)).

Para. 212 of the NPPF 2024 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.

The hayloft and stables subject of this application, are located at the eastern end of the rear wing, are built in matching materials and style as Hall Farmhouse, with a shallow hipped slate roof and historic stable partitions. The existing stables, hayloft, and carriage house are currently used as a stable and for storage, with previous alterations including garage doors and a modern internal wall dividing the bays. Internally, the building features exposed brick walls, brick or rubble floors, and open rafter roofs, with surviving historic elements such as a first-floor plank door, internal plank door, and stable partition.

As Hall Farmhouse is Grade II listed, the Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application. The proposal includes new concrete flooring, the retention of the hayloft floor, the installation of mineral wool insulation between joists, the partial infill of the hayloft doorway, the installation of timber painted windows and doors, and full-height glazing in existing vehicle openings. These proposed alterations are considered acceptable by the Conservation Officer.

The Conservation Officer notes that the stables, hayloft, and carriage house have previously been altered through the insertion of large openings in the north and east elevations. Despite these changes, the building remains of simple design and construction, with exposed brick walls and rafters internally. In light of the above considerations, the Conservation Officer is satisfied that the proposal largely retains the building's external appearance and internal layout, including the historic stable partition. Accordingly, the proposed conversion is considered to preserve the character and sustain the significance of the Listed Building in principle.

The proposal therefore accords with Local Plan Policy LP34, Chapter 16 of the NPPF 2024 and Section 16(2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended)).

* Design and Visual Amenity

Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's 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.

In addition, Policy LP10 (The Countryside) of the Local Plan state that development in the countryside must recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and that the replacement of rural buildings should demonstrate a clear and substantial enhancement of the immediate setting.

The application proposes the conversion of the existing outbuilding into a single market dwelling. The works would involve both internal and external alterations, including the infilling of three garage door openings with timber-framed windows, the replacement of one garage door with a domestic entrance door, and the installation of glazing within the existing first-floor openings.

The proposed external alterations would largely retain the building's existing appearance, although they include the partial infill of the hayloft doorway. Key historic features such as the brick walls and slate roof are to be preserved. The majority of the works required to facilitate the development would be limited to repairs and internal modifications.

The Conservation Officer has been consulted and supports the application. They noted that the proposal largely retains the building's external character and internal layout, including the historic stable partition. As such, the proposed conversion is considered to preserve the character and sustain the significance of the Listed Building. Subsequently, the application recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, in accordance with Policies LP10, LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

*Highways and Parking
Policy 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. Furthermore, Neighbourhood Plan Policy ISF2 (Highways Impact) states proposals will be supported were they would not adversely affect the local highway network.

Cambridgeshire County Council as the Local Highways Authority have been consulted as part of the application. The Highways Authority has noted that Drawing 02e (Proposed Elevations, Plans & Sections) indicates an access width of 6.9 metres and demonstrates that visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m can be achieved. As such, the impact of the proposed development on the public highway is considered to be acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions.

It should also be noted that a new access to the south of Hall Farmhouse, approved under planning reference 24/01683/FUL, is intended to separate agricultural traffic associated with the farming business from residential use. During the Planning Officer's site visit, it was observed that the new agricultural access has been physically established, although it is not currently in active use.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy ISF2 (Highways Impact) also states development should incorporate adequate dedicated on-site provision for parking within the curtilage of properties or in parking courts or similar. In this case, an area of hardstanding to the front of the building, within the application site, would provide at least one designated parking space. For the proposed one-bedroom dwelling, this is considered sufficient by officers, as there is no specific policy within the Local Planning Authority requiring parking provision to be directly linked to the number of bedrooms.

The application does not include details of secure cycle storage for one bicycle, as required by Local Plan Policy LP16, which sets a standard of one cycle space per bedroom. To promote sustainable transport, a condition will be imposed, if the development is permitted, requiring the submission of full details of the proposed cycle storage.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposal can safely be accessed, provides sufficient parking for the future occupants and would not cause significant safety issues to the surrounding highway network, subject to conditions. Therefore, the proposal is considered compliant with Neighbourhood Plan Policies ISF1 and ISF2, Local Plan Policies LP16 and LP17 and paragraph 116 of the NPPF 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.

Residential amenity for adjacent dwellings
The closest residential properties to the application site are the attached dwelling No. 1 Hall Farm and Hall Farmhouse. Further afield, Hall Farm Cottage is located approximately 70 metres northwest of the outbuilding subject to this application.

The proposal seeks to install painted timber windows and doors on the northern and eastern elevations of the building, including full-height glazing within existing vehicle openings. The proposed fenestration is not considered to result in overlooking harm to the occupants of No. 1 Hall Farm and Hall Farmhouse, as these openings are positioned on elevations facing away from these dwellings. Furthermore, given the degree of separation between the application site and Hall Farm Cottage, officers raise no concerns in respect of overlooking.

As the application relates to the conversion of an existing outbuilding, the proposal is not considered to result in any overshadowing or overbearing impacts on adjacent neighbours.

Residential amenity for future occupants
It is considered the proposed development would provide a high standard of amenity for future occupants of the dwelling as it meets the nationally described space standard for a 1-bedroom 2-person dwelling. All habitable rooms of the proposed dwelling are serviced with windows which offers appropriate levels of daylight.

It is acknowledged that the proposal does not include any private outdoor amenity space for future occupants. However, Map 6 of the Bury Neighbourhood Plan identifies several Local Green Spaces within walking distance of the application site, including Ramsey Golf Course, Bury Playing Fields, and the churchyard and cemetery of Bury Holy Cross. Additionally, while the amenity space within the redline boundary is not private, it still offers external space accessible to residents.

It is also important to note that this application concerns the conversion of an existing building rather than the construction of a new dwelling. In this context, and given the physical constraints associated with adapting an existing structure, in this instance the absence of private residential amenity space is considered acceptable.

Taking the above factors into consideration, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

*Biodiversity
Regulation 9 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 imposes a duty to consider relevant Directives and whether there is a reasonable likelihood of Protected Species being present and affected by a proposal. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This statutory provision is reflected in Local Plan Policy LP 30 whereby it is stated that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated.

The application is accompanied with a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) dated September 2024. The PRA was conducted at Hall Farm, Bury, for the proposed conversion of a brick barn (B1) into a single dwelling. The desk study found no protected species on-site but identified seven bat species within 2km, with a nearby EPS mitigation license. The site lies within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone but does not trigger further consultation with Natural England. The PRA found no evidence of bat activity. The building is well-sealed and lacks suitable roosting conditions, though the hayloft offers potential access and shelter. Overall, the building is assessed as having negligible to low bat interest, and no further bat surveys are recommended. Precautionary measures are however recommended in the report, daylight working hours, and sensitive lighting strategies.

As of the 2nd April 2024 mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was imposed on small sites. The submitted application form states that the proposal is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements under the de minimis exemption. As the application does not seek to extend the existing building or create additional hardstanding areas, the Council are satisfied the development would not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, and 5 metres of linear habitats and is therefore BNG exempt per the de minimums threshold.

In light of the above, the proposed works are not considered to pose harm to protected species and accords with Policy LP 30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

*Other matters
There are no other material planning considerations which have a significant bearing on the determination of this application.

The Planning Balance and Conclusion
The presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of- date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

In regard to paragraph 11 (d) part i, it is considered there are no strong reasons for refusal in relation to any habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Green Space, irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75) and areas at risk of flooding. Therefore, the 'tilted balance' is engaged.

A tilted balance approach should be applied in the assessment of the proposed development, and a balancing exercise should be carried out to determine whether the potential any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) part ii.

It should also be noted that paragraph 14 of the NPPF states in situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:
a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

In this instance, the Bury Neighbourhood Plan (made on 19 May 2021) forms part of the development plan and remains within the five-year period of relevance. While Policy G1 of the Neighbourhood

Plan supports small-scale residential development within the built-up areas of the village, it does not include specific site allocations to meet the district's identified housing requirement. This is particularly significant in light of the Council's current five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) position. Given these circumstances, and notwithstanding that the application site lies outside Bury's defined settlement boundary as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, officers must apply the tilted balance as outlined in paragraph 11(d) (ii) of the NPPF.

The site is within Flood Zone 1 where the risk of fluvial flooding is lowest and there is no identified risk from surface or ground water flooding. On this basis, the proposed conversion is considered acceptable in principle with regard to flood risk and drainage.

The proposal would result in the delivery of a single home towards the housing supply. This is afforded moderate weight.

In terms of the economic dimension of sustainable development, the proposal would contribute towards economic growth, including job creation - during the construction phase and in the longer term through the additional population assisting the local economy through spending on local services/facilities. This is afforded moderate weight.

Although the application site lies outside the built-up area of Bury and the proposal presents a minor conflict with Local Plan Policy LP33 part a(i) and Neighbourhood Plan Policy G1, it benefits from good connectivity. A lit pedestrian footpath is accessible via Warboys Road, and the site is located approximately 130 metres southeast of a bus stop providing frequent services to the market towns of Ramsey, Chatteris, Huntingdon, and St Ives, all of which offer a broad range of facilities and services. Furthermore, local amenities, including a village hall, primary school, convenience store, public house, and fuel garage, are all within walking distance of the site. These benefits are afforded significant weight.

In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the conversion of the building offers opportunities for embodied carbon saving and for energy efficiency upgrades such as the retrofitting of modern insulation and windows. This is afforded moderate weight.

The proposal will also secure the continued use and upkeep of a Listed Building. This is afforded moderate weight.

It is concluded that there is no identified harm that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considering all the positives and negatives of the proposal into account.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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