OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02002/HHFUL **Householder (Full)**

Proposal: **Erection of one and a half storey side extension with dormers and rooflights. Relocation of entrance and gable frontage to side elevation with external insulated cladding to all facades and new windows and doors throughout. Conversion of existing storage barn and renovation into guest suite. Erection of greenhouse. Alteration to existing summer house with re-cladding and re-roofing and associated soft and hard landscaping works and drainage to site.**

Location: **Arkady Thicket Road Houghton**

Applicant: **Chris Johnson**

Grid Ref: **528421 272223**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is occupied by a detached 1.5 storey dwelling situated on Thicket Road which a residential area within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area.

The site is in Flood Zone 3 according to Environment Agency Flood mapping data and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The application seeks planning permission for the following elements:

*Erection of one and a half storey side extension with dormers and rooflights.

*Relocation of entrance and gable frontage to side elevation with external insulated cladding to all facades and new windows and doors throughout.

*Conversion of existing storage barn and renovation into guest suite.

*Erection of greenhouse.

*Alteration to existing summer house with re-cladding and re-roofing and associated soft and hard landscaping works and drainage to site.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (12 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;

* achieving well-designed places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
* conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2019 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 5: Flood Risk
LP 11: Design Context
LP 12: Design Implementation
LP 14: Amenity
LP 34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

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

21/02515/HHFUL for Removal of the existing roof of bungalow. First floor extension to whole property. Ground floor single storey extension to north-east corner of house. Conversion of existing storage barn and renovation into a guest suite. Alteration to an existing summer house with re-cladding and re-roofing. New timber frame car port structure. Associated soft and hard landscaping works and drainage to the site. Removal of existing trees & replanting of replacement trees. Change of name from 'Arkady' to 'Thicket Hollow'., PERMITTED 06.06.2022

23/80355/COND for Discharge of Condition 4 (Materials) of 21/02515/HHFUL., APPROVED 19.04.2024

CONSULTATIONS

Houghton and Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be approved as it is more appropriate and in keeping with the property than the previously application approved by HDC. The Parish Council is pleased that there are also no objections from neighbours to this application. A neighbour is concerned about the entrance gate which will be situated near their house. They would like assurance that the operation of this will not be a nuisance to them.

HDC Conservation Team – No objections. Full comments: This scheme has less of an impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area than the previously approved scheme which was supported, there is therefore no objection to this proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

No comments received at time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

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

- Design, Visual Amenity and the impact upon the Character of the Area including Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential amenity
- Heritage Assets and their settings
- Flood Risk
- Ecology
- Ipact to trees

*Design, Visual Amenity and the impact upon the Character of the Area including Impact on Heritage Assets

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 National Planning Policy Framework 2024 states 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 (Para 212) and 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 (Para 213). The NPPF 2024 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (Para 215).

Policy LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036 outlines that "Great weight and importance is given to the conservation of heritage assets and their settings. The statutory presumption of the avoidance of harm can only be outweighed if there are public benefits that are powerful enough to do so.

With regard to Conservation Areas, policy LP 34 states:

A proposal within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents. A proposal should:

•minimise negative impact on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape through retention of buildings/groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and land form;
•retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, scale, massing, form, materials and the character and appearance of the conservation area; and
•where relevant and practical, remove features that are incompatible with or detract significantly from the conservation area.

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.

It is acknowledged that this proposal is similar to a planning application approved on the site in 2022. The planning statement refers to the current scheme as an alteration on that already approved.

Submitted plans show the following changes to the existing dwelling and site:

Erection of a one and a half storey side extension with dormers and rooflights. This element would be to the north of the existing dwelling with a maximum ridge height of 6.069 metres, width of 6.876

metres and depth of 9.894 metres and would introduce dormer windows to the western and eastern elevations. Also included in this element is the relocation of the front door to the southern elevation Materials would include timber cladding, slate tile roof, uPVC rainwater goods, black aluminium window and doors and Velux roof lights.

It is acknowledged that there is an extant permission for a side extension on this property. The current proposal is less complex, simpler in design and is set lower than the extant permission. This element is therefore considered acceptable in this instance.

Given in the main the proposed works are a resubmission of the 2022 approval on the site (21/02515/HHFUL), that the proposed works are more traditional in materials and design that already approved and that Huntingdonshire District Council's Conservation Officer raises no objection to the proposals, it is considered overall that the proposed development is acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and therefore accords with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 as well as section 72 of the LBCA and the NPPF 2024.

*Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 states that 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 in terms of light, outlook, privacy and noise.

The proposed first floor element of the proposed extension would include first floor windows to the eastern and western elevations which are not within 21 metres of any private amenity areas of any adjoining dwellings. which is considered to be acceptable separation from neighbouring land in terms of overlooking.

Furthermore, given the spacious plot and significant distance from neighbouring properties it is considered that there would be no significant loss of light, overbearing impacts or other environmental impacts that would warrant a refusal of the application.

It is noted that the Parish Council have highlighted that a Parishioner has expressed concern that the proposed gate could become a nuisance to the occupiers of Woodcroft, which is a dwelling sited immediately south to the proposal. Given the proposed gate would be sited on a private road 5.2 metres away from Woodcroft, would be 2.7m wide and 1.8m in height constructed in anthracite metal, it is not considered that the proposal would cause environmental impacts severe enough to warrant a refusal of the application on residential amenity grounds and is on balance acceptable in this instance. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed access would not intensify in use from the proposal being approved given the proposals do not seek to increase a significant amount of habitable space.

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.

The proposal therefore complies with Policy LP34 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

*Flood Risk

The application site is in Flood Zones 3 as identified by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017), which means it has a high probability of flooding. The applicant has submitted the required household checklist which confirms that: the floor levels with the proposed development will be set no lower than existing levels.

Given the scale of the proposal, the submitted information is considered acceptable in this instance. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable and complies with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF 2024 in this regard.

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 also requires development proposals to ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. In accordance with this a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was submitted as part of the application, and it is considered that the proposal would accord with those policy requirements through the use of conditions to secure the recommendations of that PEA. The findings of that report are included for reference:

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) by MKA Ecology dated October 2021, alongside an Ecology Update (EU) (bats) document prepared by Greenwillows Associates Ltd dated 18th September 2024.

This EU acknowledges that the 2021 PEA / PRA noted the presence of bats and important native hedgerow habitat at the site as well as suitable habitat for a variety of nesting bats, birds and hedgehogs and put forward advice with respect to retaining existing hedgerows and trees, avoiding the disturbance of nesting birds and providing for hedgehogs within the development and mitigation measures to safeguard bat habitats. The 2024 EU has been submitted following further ecological surveys on the site noting the presence of bats in the current bungalow roof space and wider site, although no bat presence was observed inside or outside of the storage barn. Otherwise, it is observed within the EU that the site remains unchanged since the 2021 application was approved. Therefore taken together, the ecology reports submitted are overall acceptable, subject to conditions to safeguard the recommendations and mitigation proposals set out within the PEA and PRA documents, as advised by the up to date EU document.

Officers are satisfied that impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. Further details of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures are recommended to be secured by a condition attached to any decision notice to ensure no net loss in biodiversity and to secure a net gain.

Subject to conditions, overall, it is considered the proposed development accords with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan and paragraph 187 d) of the NPPF 2024 and that a net gain in biodiversity will be achieved. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the aims and objectives of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF 2024.

*Impact to trees

Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated and that 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.

A Tree Survey, Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Tree Protection Plan to BS5837:2012 prepared by Cambridge Trees dated October 2024 has been submitted to support the application. It is noted that the proposed tree removals, protection measures and other tree works are the same as that found within the approved 2021 application.

The current and approved tree report notes that there are a number of trees on and adjacent to the site, but confirms that no trees on site have any significant cultural or amenity value and no trees are considered ‘veteran’ or category A. Out of 27 trees on the site, the tree report recommends lifting the crown of an Ash Tree (T1), reduce size of Yew Tree (T16) and the potential removal of

approximately 17 trees (Palm tree (T2),, Cherry Plum Tree (T4), Holly Tree (T5), Apple (T3) Cyress (T10), Laburnum trees (T11, T12). A Leylandii (T13), 4 fruit trees (G1), Thuja (T18), Apple trees (T20, T21) Cypress tree (G2), Silver Birch (T22), Japanese Maple (T24) and Cypress trees (T25, T26)) and protection of root protection areas of a willow tree (T6) Silver Birch (T7), Corkscrew Willows (T8 and T9). The report also proposed a Tree Protection Plan.

Given this tree report has already been deemed acceptable on the 2021 approval, subject to appropriate conditions, Officers are satisfied that the proposed works would not have significant impacts on the root protection areas and as such appropriate mitigation and construction methodologies have been provided compliance with those details can be secured via condition. It would also be possible to deal with the provision of new tree planting as part of a landscape condition.

As such, conditions would enable accordance with Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (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 on designated heritage assets;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would not result in a significant increase in flood risk

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 **Robyn Kerrigan**