OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00326/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: New single-storey dwellinghouse with private amenity land and parking

Location: Land At 1 Fellowes Drive Ramsey

Applicant: Mr Joseph Mcmenamin

Grid Ref: 528050 284692

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is an area of garden land to the south of 1 Fellowes Drive, Ramsey. It comprises a single storey dwelling with flat roof garage and boundary treatments/planting which is typical of residential development.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and has a very low risk of flooding from all sources as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data. It lies outside of the Ramsey Conservation Area but does border it to the south and west. There are no Listed Buildings or Tree Preservation Orders in the immediate vicinity.

This application seeks permission to subdivide the plot and erect a single storey dwelling with private amenity space and parking. As detailed within the submitted Design, Access and Heritage Statement the submission follows previous engagement with the LPA.

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

During the lifetime of the application and for clarity on highway matters a revised site plan has been received. Given that this makes no material changes to the plans submitted and consulted upon on the balance of fairness only re-consultation with the Highways Authority was considered necessary on this occasion.

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
LP6: Waste Water Management
LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP25: Housing Mix
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings
LP37: Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017)
Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2024)
Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

The National Design Guide (2021)

* C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
* I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
* I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
* B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
*M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
* N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
* H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
* H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
* H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities
Ramsey Conservation Area Character Assessment (December 2005)
Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant

CONSULTATIONS

Ramsey Town Council recommend approval.

HDC Ecology Officer - No representations received at the time of determination.

HDC Arboricultural Officer (informal) - No objections.

HDC Environmental Health Team - No objections.

HDC Operations (Waste) Team - No representations received at the time of determination.

CCC Highways - No objections subject to conditions.

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, however, there is not an adopted neighbourhood plan in place for Ramsey. Therefore, in this case no neighbourhood plans are 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:

o Principle of Development
o Design, Visual Amenity and the Impact upon the Character of the Area and Heritage Assets
o Residential Amenity
o Highway Safety, Parking Provision and Access
o Flood Risk and Surface Water
o Biodiversity
o Impact on Trees
o Other issues

*The principle of the development

The site is located within the built-up area and Spatial Planning Area of Ramsey as defined under Policy LP7 of the Local Plan to 2036. Policy LP7 states that "A proposal for housing development (class 'C3') or for a residential institution use (class 'C2') will be supported." The principle of the

proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other material planning considerations and conditions.

*Design and visual amenity

The application site is an area of residential garden land associated with and to the south of number 1 Fellowes Drive (and so fronting Park Road). It is within a built-up residential area of Ramsey and there is a variety of scale, design and material finishes evident in the vicinity (including development similar to that proposed as part of this application). The site is not within a Conservation Area (CA) but the CA boundary is to the south and west of the site.

This application proposes the demolition of the garage associated with number 1 Fellowes Drive and the subdivision of the plot in order to erect a single storey dwelling with associated parking and amenity space. It utilises the existing established access from Park Road. Parking for the host dwelling will be on plot and transferred to its north.

The dwelling is relatively limited in scale with a footprint of approx. 78m² providing two bedrooms with a gross internal area of 67m². It has an eaves height of approx. 2.25m and overall ridge of approx. 4.71m. The plot is relatively compact, but, as identified in the submitted statement is not uncharacteristic of the surroundings. This will be very much an 'infill development' which clearly draws inspiration from its surroundings (having particular regard to the dwelling to the south - 34 Park Road). Materials proposed are also considered to be consistent with the surroundings (which in any event has a varied palette) and are considered acceptable. Overall, the dwelling will sit comfortably in the plot and not appear as an incongruous development.

In terms of outside space, there is a proposed mixture of typical soft landscaping and hard surfacing providing patio/parking areas. Some of the existing boundary treatments (close-boarded fence) will be retained but softened by hedge planting. The driveway is detailed as permeable. Whilst no specific details have been provided as to materials, given works which could be undertaken to the driveway/garden (in terms of hard surfacing) by exercising permitted development rights available by virtue of Schedule 2, Part 1, Class F of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) it is not considered necessary to ascertain this detail nor condition it. The provision of cycle and bin storage is welcomed and will be secured by condition.

Overall, having regard to the above assessment, the scheme is considered acceptable in relation to design and visual amenity and would not have an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the area. It therefore accords with Policies LP2, LP11 and LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036.

As detailed above, whilst not within the setting of a Listed Building nor within the Conservation Area (CA) the site has a tight boundary with the CA to the south and 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.

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.

Whilst in this case, no consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Conservation Team it should be acknowledged that they were consulted on the previous enquiry made on the site (as referenced in the statement). They raised no objections to this stating that "the development will not harm the setting of the conservation area or views into or out of the conservation area. No harm will be caused. No objection".

Aside from some minor alterations, the scale and siting of the dwelling is the same as that assessed under that enquiry. As such, there is no reason to consider that the view of the Conservation Officer will have altered and the LPA are satisfied that the development as proposed will be consistent with the surrounding development and not be harmful to the setting of the Conservation Area.

As such, taking all of the above into account alongside the earlier assessment, the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on the designated heritage assets and accords with Policy LP34 of the Local Plan, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the provisions of the NPPF (2024).

*Residential amenity

The dwelling is set slightly back in its plot in relation to number 34 Park Road to the south and forward of number 1 Fellowes Drive. There is approx. 5m separation between the north elevation of 34 and the side of the new dwelling. Plans for 34 (under 17/00649/FUL) show that there are no windows in the north elevation which would be affected by the development and this was confirmed during a site visit. The northern elevation does not fully obscure the southern elevation of 1 Fellowes Drive (the rear of the new dwelling is roughly level with the ridge of the gable of number 1) and there is approx. 5.5m between the two. There is a window in the southern elevation of number 1 and the new property will be opposite this. However, given the degree of separation and limited height of the new dwelling there will be no compromise of the 25-degree test detailed within the Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017). There is adequate separation to all other boundaries and so it is concluded that there will be no harm to the occupants of adjacent dwellings or land in terms of overshadowing, overbearing impacts or loss of light.

In terms of overlooking and loss of privacy, the scale of development (all windows at ground level) separation from boundaries and boundary treatments in place/to be provided will ensure that there are no issues arising. Equally, given the fact that the surrounding dwellings are single storey there will be no impacts on the future occupants of the dwelling.

However, notwithstanding the above, given the limited scale of the plot it is considered prudent to limit permitted development rights within the meaning of Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) which would allow for extensions to be added (including roof extensions/dormers) which could have a detrimental impact were the LPA not to control this.

In terms of amenity on future occupants, there is considered to be an adequate degree of defensible space proposed to ensure a high degree of amenity, especially given the sustainable location of the development with access to leisure and recreational facilities. The scale of the dwelling and room sizes also accord with recognised space standards. HDC's Environmental Health Team have also been consulted and raise no objections in terms of noise, odour or contamination risks.

Overall, having regard to the above assessment it is concluded that on balance, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenity impacts and broadly accords with Policies LP14 and LP37 of the Local Plan.

*Highway safety and parking

The development utilises the existing access from Park Road serving the garage and driveway area of 1 Fellowes Drive. Parking for two vehicles is provided within the site. Whilst the restrictions of the plot means that this arrangement is not ideal (one vehicle may obstruct another), given the scale of the development and the surroundings this is not considered harmful. Parking for the host dwelling will be re-located to the north. This provision (given it is within the blue line) shall be secured by condition.

Cambridgeshire County Council as the Local Highways Authority have been consulted, initially they sought further clarity on the visibility splays and also made comments on the provision for the host dwelling and awkwardness of the parking on the proposed site (as discussed above). As such, a revised plan has been provided showing the required detail and clarity has been provided on the re-provision of the parking and the LPA view on the parking for the proposed dwelling. CCC have made revised comments and raise no objections subject to conditions.

In terms of cycle storage, provision for the new and host dwelling is provided in the rear gardens. This provides one space per bedroom (for the new dwelling) and will be secure, covered storage in accordance with Policy LP17 of the Local Plan and the Design Guide. It is noted that the provision for the host dwelling provides only 2 spaces (and it appears that number 1 is a 3-bed dwelling). However, as this is an established site already of some age and the LPA have no current control over the level pf cycle parking provided it is concluded that this is a reasonable compromise and there is no justification to pursue this further.

Overall, having regard to the above, subject to conditions, the development is acceptable in terms of highway safety and sustainable travel and therefore broadly accords with Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Flood risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and has an overall very low risk of flooding from all sources now and in the future. Development of this nature is appropriate in Flood Zone 1 and does not require the application of the Sequential or Exception Tests as per the NPPF (2024). The scale of the site also does not require the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment.

In terms of surface water, it is not considered that given the existing condition of the site (a building with hard surfacing and domestic landscaping) alongside the minor scale of development and very low risk of flooding that there would be significant surface water run off impacts. Further, the intricacies of disposal of surface water will be dealt with in more detail at the building regulations stages. The same applies to waste water disposal but the quantum of development is unlikely to place undue pressure on the network (especially having regard to the extant permission).

Overall, having regard to all of the above matters it is not considered that the development will result in increased risk of flooding nor the displacement of surface water. It therefore broadly accords with Policies LP5 and LP15 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan requires a development to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and achieve a net gain where possible.

As well as the above (and separate from the requirements of LP30) qualifying new development is subject to Biodiversity Net Gain legislation pursuant to the Environment Act 2021. This means that a 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) 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 unless it can be demonstrated that the development would be exempt.

In this case the application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment dated February 2025. This concludes that the site does not present with any ecological constraints for development and no protected or important species would be impacted by it. The assessment makes some recommendations for mitigation and enhancement (including the provision of a Precautionary Working Method Statement in relation to bats). These measures are considered acceptable and will be secured by condition.

In terms of BNG, a metric and BNG statement has been provided and this details that in excess of the required 10% BNG can be achieved on site. Appendix three of the BNG Statement shows the plan but the text is unfortunately illegible. However, a comparison with the submitted site plan reflects the same level of planting. Matters regarding how the proposed BNG will be achieved, monitoring and a contingency plan in the event that this cannot be realised will all be secured by condition.

Overall, having regard to the above matters, the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to biodiversity impacts and broadly accords with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Impact on Trees

Trees within the site amount to nothing further that minor domestic planting. There are no trees within the immediate vicinity which are protected by Preservation Orders nor within the Conservation Area. It is noted that there are some trees in an adjacent garden (east of the site) and that the development could be within the root protection area of these trees. As such, HDC's Arboricultural Officer has been informally consulted and has reviewed the submitted details (including earlier applications which considered the tree(s). This, alongside the photographs obtained during the site visit has been sufficient for the Officer to assess and confirm that there should be no impact as a result of the introduction of the dwelling or hard surfacing and therefore no objections in terms of the impact on trees.

Overall, having regard to the separation of the tree(s) the technical details provided and the advice of specialists (as above) the LPA are satisfied that the development can proceed with no impact on trees and therefore in accordance with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Policy LP25 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals that include housing to meet the optional Building Regulation requirement M4(2)" Accessible and adaptable dwellings" unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this unachievable.

*Water Efficiency Policy

LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals that include housing to comply with the optional building regulation for water efficiency, as set out in Approved Document G. The Design and Access Statement and site plan details that the scheme will accord with this and this shall be secured by condition.

*Other matters

Developer contributions (Wheeled Bins)

A signed Unilateral Undertaking to secure the provision of wheeled bins has been submitted as part of the application process. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard. The proposal 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.

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. CIL forms have been provided as part of the application and this will be pursued by the Council's Implementation Team.

The proposal is 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 development is acceptable in principle, and there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the area, the Conservation Area, on residential amenity, highway safety, increased flood risk, trees or biodiversity and it can therefore be supported.

Having regard to all relevant material considerations the proposed development is considered to comply with Policies LP2, LP4, LP5, LP6, LP7 LP11, LP12, LP14, LP15, LP16, LP17, LP25, LP30, LP31 and LP37 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and 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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