HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

25/00605/FUL

OFFICER REPORT

Case No: **25/00605/FUL** **Full Planning Application**

Proposal: **Erection of single storey rear extension**

Location: **The Memorial Hall School Lane Alconbury**

Applicant: **Mrs Jan Sutherland**

Grid Ref: **518671 276297**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is Alconbury Memorial Hall a community facility located on School Lane, Alconbury used for such events as Parish Council meetings, exercise classes and private community hire. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and has a low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data. There are no other constraints associated with the site.

This application seeks permission to extend the building by virtue of a single storey extension (5m x 5m and a ridge of 4.3m) to the rear elevation of the building for additional storage space.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (20th July 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

LP2: Strategy for Development
LP9: Small Settlements

LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP22: Local Services and Community Facilities
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):

* Place Making Principles parts 3.5 Parking and Servicing 3.7 Building Form and 3.8 Building Detailing

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
* N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
* H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY
98/01677/OUT for Erection of village hall,
GRANTED dated 24.02.1999

0001530FUL for Erection of village hall,
GRANTED dated 08.11.2000

0200017FUL for Erection of village hall,
GRANTED dated 06.03.2002

0906737PDE for Outdoor play area,
REQUIRED CONSENT dated 24.11.2009

1000515FUL for Construction of a garage/storage building for the safe storage of scout group equipment and 2 small trailers,
GRANTED dated 11.08.2010

CONSULTATIONS

*Alconbury Town/Parish Council are neither for or against the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was advertised by:
- Site notice
- And on the council website

No responses received at the time of determination.

ASSESSMENT

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 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".

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 The principle of development
o Design, visual amenity and impact upon heritage assets
o Residential amenity
o Highway safety
o Biodiversity

*The Principle of the Development

The application site is located within a small settlement as defined by Policy LP9 of the Local Plan to 2036. LP9 states that a proposal for a non-residential institutional use (Class D1 at the time of the Local Plan but now Class F2(b)), will be supported where it is appropriately located within the built-up area. In this case, the principle of the building (in accordance with LP9) is already established.

A proposal will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement; opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport; effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

Given the small scale nature of the proposal on the rear of an existing community building it is felt to be a sustainable extension to the existing use and would be in accordance with policy LP9's aims.

Meanwhile, Policy LP22 (Local Services and Community Facilities) states that a proposal for a new local service or community facility within a built-up area, or the extension of and existing local service or community facility on land immediately adjoining the built-up area, will be supported where it:

a) is of a scale to serve local needs;
b) comprises up to a maximum of 600m² for a main town centre use; and
c) provides a new service or facility or it retains or enhances an existing service or facility, including through the provision of premises suitable for mixed use or multiple community functions.

In this case the proposal relates to a relatively minor extension on an existing community facility and the benefits of the enhanced facilities to this community facility are clear. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant policies and considerations.

*Design, Visual Amenity and Impact Upon Heritage Assets

As established above, the application site lies within the small settlement of Alconbury, though outside of the Town Centre. It is a relatively modern building finished in red brick and concrete tile. The surroundings are varied with a mixture of commercial and residential development with a GP surgery to the side and two storey and single storey dwellings opposite in a mix of render and brick, all forming the streetscene.

The proposed extension, added to the rear elevation, will not be harmful to the surrounding character or appearance of the area. It has a much reduced ridge height in comparison with the host building, is set back from the road and proposes the use of matching materials which further support its integration and reduce its prominence.

Overall, taking the above factors into consideration, subject to condition, the development is considered to acceptable with regard to its impact upon the character or appearance of the area and would not be detrimental to the wider countryside. It therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

The proposal by virtue of its scale, design and location would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity. There is good separation to the boundaries and no immediately adjacent residential property or land which would be affected due to overbearing impacts, loss of light, overlooking or loss of privacy. And, whilst this will increase the capacity of the building it is not considered that it would give rise to its use for any activities which are not already undertaken within it and is proposed for storage.

Overall, taking the above into account, the development is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenity impacts and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Parking Provision and Highway Safety

The proposal is for storage, to the rear of the building, does not affect any parking space layouts, and is small scale (5m x 5m) thus will not increase the need for more on site parking or impact significantly on highway safety.

Therefore, Officers are satisfied that the development would not be detrimental to highway safety in the locality and therefore accords with Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 states that a development should ensure no net loss in biodiversity and achieve a net gain where possible. Whilst the proposals do not include any measures such to provide a net gain, it is important to note that the host building already exists and is in use as a community facility. The land which the development will utilise is a paved area often used for purposes related to the building (outdoor play for example). Its value in terms if biodiversity is therefore considered to be low. Therefore it is not felt that any loss would occur, the proposal is de-minimis in scale and does not require BNG improvement.

No trees are affected by the proposal either.

Overall, the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its approach to biodiversity and broadly accords with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Community Infrastructure Levy (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 has been received as part of the application and is therefore in accordance with Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it is:

*Acceptable in principle

And it:

* Would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
*Would not be detrimental to highway safety in the locality;
*Is acceptable with regards to the impact on biodiversity;
*There are no other material planning considerations which lead to the conclusion that the proposal is unacceptable.

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 **Hannah Hodges**