OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00335/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Partial Demolition of an Office (Use Class E), and Construction of 1no. Detached Dwelling (Use Class C3), Means of Access and Associated Operational Development

Location: Land At 70 High Street Offord Darcy

Applicant: Mr Adams

Grid Ref: 521893 266492

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application seeks approval for the Partial Demolition of an Office (Use Class E), and Construction of 1no. Detached Dwelling (Use Class C3), Means of Access and Associated Operational Development at No. 70 High Street, Offord D'Arcy. The proposed dwelling would be two-storeys in height, with an additional floor in the roofspace. It would be constructed of a gable end design and would be constructed with painted brickwork and slate roof tiles.

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.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, 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
LP10: The Countryside
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
LP33: Rural Buildings

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)
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

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

PLANNING HISTORY

No recent relevant history.

CONSULTATIONS

Offord Cluny and Offord Darcy Parish Council - Recommend approval. The Council has discussed this application at length and is fully supportive of the proposals. Its ethos has always been for sustainable development and the proposals for a shared family dwelling bringing additional young children into the parish is welcomed.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highway Authority - Raised no objections to the proposal, subject to the imposition of conditions.

Environmental Health: No concerns.

Urban Design: No objections in design terms. Condition materials (including window reveal depths and location and colour of meter boxes and vents/extracts/flues) and hard and soft landscaping (including amendments to boundary treatments noted above).

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was advertised by site notice, neighbour letters and on the council website. One letter was received in support which is summarised below:

* Sustainable brownfield site
* Improve the streetscene
* Family home
* Boost spending in the village and the village demographic
* Support the PC

4 letters of objection were received and summarised below:

* Blocked access due to increased on street car parking, impact on parking, additional parking that cannot be accommodated sufficiently, concerns parking and traffic will impact on Millenium Green.
* Smaller dwelling would be more appropriate
* Concerns over hedge and grassland loss for access
* Concerns with flooding and drainage, removing grass verge that acts as a soakaway.
* Concerns over loss of privacy from the proposed windows
* Loss of light to garden and homes and overshadowing
* Concerns there is a lack of demand for this scale of dwelling
* Concerns over wildlife impacts including great crested newts and nesting and foraging animals
* Concerns over the refurbishment of the existing property
* Artificial Light nuisance
* Large scale and nature of the design on the streetscene is out of character and materials out of character
* Rooflights and dormers out of character
* Over-fenstrated elevations
* Access to services

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:

The principle of development
Design and visual amenity
Residential amenity

Highway safety
Flood risk and surface water
Biodiversity
Impact on Trees
Developer Contributions
Accessible and adaptable Homes
Water efficiency

*The Principle of the Development

The proposal seeks approval for the erection of one dwelling on land at No. 70 High Street, Offord D'Arcy. The adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 identifies Offord D'Arcy as a Small Settlement and therefore Policy LP9 is considered relevant.

Policy LP9 states that a proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the (a) level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement; (b) opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport; and (c) effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

Initially, consideration needs to be given as to whether the site is located within a built-up area of Offord D'Arcy. The adopted Local Plan states that a built-up area is considered to be a distinct group of buildings that includes 30 or more homes. Land which relates more to the group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the built-up area.

The site currently forms a commercial unit surrounded by residential dwellings, which is located within a residential area of Offord D'Arcy that is comprised of more than 30 dwellings. As such, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the site is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement.

With regards to criterion (a) and (b) of Policy LP9, the village of Offord D'Arcy has a limited number of daily services and facilities, including a nursery, a primary school, a public house and a church, all of which are within walking distance of the application site. It is therefore considered that there is a suitable level of service provision within the settlement for the level of proposed development and that there are sufficient opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel.

As discussed in the following section of this report, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposed development is considered sustainable in relation to the effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP9 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and as such, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in this instance, subject to all other planning matters being addressed.

*Design, Visual Amenity and Impact Upon the Character of the Area

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 proposed five-bedroom dwelling would be located south of No. 70 and 72 High Street, would be two-storey in height with rooms in the roofspace and would be of a gable end design. The proposal is to have painted brick and slate tiles to match the neighbouring dwelling.

The character of properties along High Street are predominantly of two-storey dwellings of a gable end design finished in either facing brickwork or render. The immediate neighbouring properties are set along the highway edge.

The overall design and appearance of the proposed dwelling is considered to be acceptable and would be reflective of neighbouring properties along High Street. The proposed finishing materials would be similar in appearance to neighbouring properties and therefore are considered acceptable. The proposed dwelling would be sited in a way to follow the building line of the neighbouring properties and would include an area to the side and rear of the property for off-street car parking for No.70 and the new dwelling as well as soft landscaping.

The site is outside the Conservation Area and there are Listed Buildings further along the road, but not near the site to be directly affected by the proposal.

Further details of the red facing brickwork, rainwater goods and roof slates, together with the reveal depth of the sliding sash windows and location and colour of extracts/flues/vents and meter boxes should be agreed by way of condition.

It is not felt that the fenestration is un-characteristic of the area.

Sections of 1.8m CBF are proposed to the rear of both groups of parking spaces, given the prominence of the site and views from the adjacent green spaces, these boundaries should form robust brick wall. The treatment of these boundaries together with the detail of the 0.9m brick walls (piers and copings) along the site frontage should be agreed by way of condition. Permitted development rights will be removed to ensure this visible corner plot has carefully planned boundary treatment to not be out of character with the area.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be of an acceptable scale, appearance and design and would not result in any detrimental impacts to the streetscene of High Street, the surrounding area or the settlement as a whole. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies LP9, LP11, and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, , the National Design Guide and the National Planning Policy Framework 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. A site visit was carried out by the case officer during the consultation period of the application.

Concerns in regard to the loss of privacy, light and increased overlooking have been received. However, the proposed dwelling is over 21m from neighbouring dwellings windows and 10m to neighbouring gardens. This exceeds best practice separation and is not felt to create significant harm to neighbouring amenity. The proposal is in line with No70 and thus not felt to cause substantial harm to their amenity. It is not felt that a dwelling in this location would cause significantly harmful artificial lighting being in an existing residential area.

Therefore, 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 in this regard.

*Highway Safety

The proposed dwelling would be located on the west side of High Street, Offord D'Arcy - a classified B road, subject to a 30mph speed limit and would be accessed following the proposal to drop kerbs. The Local Planning Authority have no objections to the proposed access as it would be similar to other accesses along High Street and would be able to provide appropriate vehicular and pedestrian visibility splays. A condition would be imposed on any planning permission to ensure that the proposed access is constructed in accordance with County Council requirements.

Urban design stated 'The proposals include includes 2 parking spaces for the proposed dwelling, and 2 new parking spaces for No 70. which is considered appropriate given the size of the dwelling and rural village location'.

The proposal involves the provision of four off-street car parking spaces to the side and rear of the property. These would be for the remaining no.70 and the proposed new dwelling. The level of off-street car parking provision is considered to be acceptable and a condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to secure cycle storage. Highways have not raised any concerns in regard to on street parking if this is required for visitors or additional parking for the property and there are limited restrictions on the neighbour roads. Although residents have raised concerns with the provision of parking and impact on the highways it is not felt that this would be to a significant degree to cause significant highway safety concerns to warrant a refusal.

Therefore, subject to appropriate conditions 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 in this regard.

*Flood Risk

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 which is appropriate for all forms of development and is not at a high risk of surface or ground water flooding, based on the SFRA (2024). The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Planning Authorities to steer development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding. The site is not in a flood risk area and it is less than 1.0 hectares in size. Accordingly, a flood risk assessment is not required for the application. Officers are also satisfied that full details of the surface and foul water drainage can be secured as part of building regulations and other relevant legislative requirements in this instance.

The development would not have an adverse impact in terms of flood risk and therefore complies with Policies LP5 and LP15 of the Local Plan, the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.

*Biodiversity

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. 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.

It is acknowledged that the site is currently developed land (sealed surface) and vegetated garden with native hedgerow around the site, it has been used for a commercial use for some time with a significant amount of hardstanding.

Although there is not a formal response on the file, the biodiversity team have assessed the BNG metric and assessment and feel it represents the site and provides adequate offsetting on the site. A large area of garden will replace the sealed surfacing and will host new hedgerow.

The metric results demonstrate a positive gain of 10.63% on hedgerow units. This meets the 10% biodiversity net gain that is required.

The metric results demonstrate a positive of 118.06% on area units. This meets the 10% biodiversity net gain that is required.

Thus, the project is considered to meet the legal obligation to achieve a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in England. A condition is imposed to ensure a BNG Plan is in place and this includes maintenance and management over the 30 year period.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been considered by the HDC ecologist and agrees with the outcomes and mitigation of the assessment on this site. It is felt that the mitigation can be secured by condition.

Therefore, subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of ecology and biodiversity and therefore in accordance with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

*Impact on 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.

The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Plan (including tree protection plan) which states that the proposed vehicular access to parking bays from The Haycroft involves hard landscaping within the RPAs of field maples T1 and T2. Reduced dig construction is recommended and detailed in the report. The trees and hedges to be retained can be protected by suitable tree protective fencing. The report notes that the proposed planting scheme will compensate for the removals by providing 3 new trees and 16.4m of native hedgerow.

Accordingly, subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the tree protecting, planting, reduced dig construction, and landscaping plan the proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Developer Contributions

Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A Unilateral Undertaking Form in respect of wheeled bins has been received by the Local Planning Authority dated 3rd March 2023. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the Developers Contributions SPD (2011).

*Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

Policy LP25 of the Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that all housing developments in the district offers a genuine choice of Accessible and adaptable dwellings that meet the requirements of residents:
f. ensuring 100% of new dwellings, across all tenures provided, meet Building Regulation requirement M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' (or replacement standards).

To ensure that the development can meet these standards a condition would be imposed on any outline permission that may be granted in this regard in accordance with Policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Water Efficiency

Policy LP12 (j) of the Local Plan to 2036 states that new dwellings must comply with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations. A condition will be attached to any consent to ensure compliance with the above, in accordance with Policy LP12 (j) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Other Issues

*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.

CONCLUSION

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

*Acceptable in principle

And it:

* Is of an appropriate scale and design;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would not be significantly detrimental to highway safety in the locality;
* Would not result in an increased risk of flooding in the locality;
* Is acceptable with regards to the impact on biodiversity;
* Is acceptable with regard to its impact on trees.
* 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**