OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/01859/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Retrospective Planning Application for Kitchen / Bathroom Showroom Sales Unit Class E(a)

Location: Public House 3 South Street St Neots

Applicant: Mr Chapman

Grid Ref: 518311 260226

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application relates to the 3 South Street, a two-storey public house located in, St Neots town centre. The public house benefits from Grade ll Listing, lies within the St Neots Conservation Area and flood zone 2.

This application seeks planning permission for the retention of a new detached kitchen/bathroom showroom sales unit to the rear and the removal of 2 x existing sheds on site.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) (NPPF 2023) paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives - economic, social, and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2023 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 2023 also sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* making effective use of land
* achieving well-designed, beautiful, and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural 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 15th May 2019)
LP 5 Flood Risk
LP 11 Design Context
LP 12 Design Implementation
LP 14 Amenity
LP 17 Highway safety, Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP34 Heritage Assets and their Settings

St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014- 2029
Policy SS2 Utilising Historic Buildings

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

St Neots Conservation Character Assessment - October 2006

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
3.1 Place Making Principles
3.7 Building Form

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022

PLANNING HISTORY

24/00338/LBC - Retrospective Planning Application for Kitchen / Bathroom Showroom Sales Unit Class E(a) - Consent as LBC not required.

CONSULTATIONS

St Neots Town Council support the application commenting "Makes efficient use of the site"

HDC Conservation Team were consulted on the corresponding listed building consent application 24/00338/LBC and support the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations were received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to be considered are as follows: -
Principle of development
Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on heritage assets and St Neots Conservation Area
Residential Amenity
Flood Risk
Highway Safety and Vehicle Movement

Principle of Development
The sits within St Neots Spatial Planning Area as defined by Policy LP 7 of Huntingdonshires Local Plan to 2036.

LP7 states that 'a proposal for business development (class 'B') will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement. An appropriate location will include an Established Employment Area defined in policy LP 21 'Town Centre Vitality and Viability'.

LP21 defines St Neots as a location that will support development for shopping, working, and service uses which attract a wide range of people throughout the day. And that development 'beyond primary shopping frontage and primary shopping areas' 'a main town centre use will be supported where the scale and type of development reflects the centre's size, role and character.'

It is considered that the location of the proposed development is appropriate for the type of use a kitchen show room where it is not afforded primary shopping frontage but does command a town centre location drawing a wide range of people into the town centre throughout the day.

Therefore, the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to its compliance with other relevant polices within Huntingdonshires Local Plan to 2036 set out below.

Design and Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage assets and conservation 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 proposal is for the retention of a single storey building for use as a showroom

3 South Street is a grade II listed building within the St Neots Conservation Area.
Section 16(2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Para. 205 of the NPPF set 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. 206 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.

HDC Conservation team has been consulted and has commented as follows;

"The proposal seeks the removal of 2 former sheds and the erection of a structure to the rear of the Nawab lounge (formerly the kings head public house) a grade II listed building in the St Neots conservation area. The building is entirely free standing and therefore listed building consent is not required for the development. The building is a single storey flat roof structure to be sited behind an existing boundary wall at the rear of the site, it will not read as part of the listed building rather an adjacent structure. There will therefore be no harm to the significance of the listed building or the character and appearance of the conservation area. The wall to the front of the development should be retained to maintain this degree of screening"

Officers have considered the comments and recommendation made by the HDC Conservation Officer and have assessed the application plans and accompanying documents to the application.

Special attention has been given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Conservation Officers have confirmed that proposed works do not require listed building consent, and they would not result in harm to the heritage asset and St Neots Conservation Area. Officers consider that the scale, design and materials proposed sympathetically contrast with the host building and that of neighbouring buildings and would not detrimentally impact the character and appearance of the area.

Therefore, the proposal is considered to accord with policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (December 2023).

Residential Amenity

Regarding residential amenity, the relevant policy within the local plan to 2036 (LP 14 Amenity), applies.

No objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers. Officers have considered the impact of the proposal on the residential amenity of surrounding properties at 8 - 14 High Street, 3a The stable Yard and 1 - 12 Pavillion Chambers. By virtue of scale, design, location and the proposed use of the site as a kitchen showroom, it is considered unlikely that there will be any significant impact on residential amenity.

Therefore, the development is considered acceptable in terms of overshadowing, overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

Flood Risk

National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 159-169 of the NPPF (2023)).

The land that the application site forms part flood zone 2 and is therefore liable to flood however the proposed development would not result in the introduction of a use classed as 'more vulnerable' development within Annex 3 of the NPPF (December 2023).

The NPPF states whilst a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be provided for small non-residential extensions with a footprint of 250m² or less should not be subject to the Sequential or Exception Tests. Whilst in this case the development does not result in an extension as such (and there is no change to the existing degree of hardstanding which already existed prior to the building being erected) it does result in some degree of 'built development.' However, this cumulatively is substantially below the 250m² threshold and so due to this, a pragmatic approach has been adopted.

This accords with the findings of the submitted FRA and it is concluded that the development will not result in an increased risk of flooding to either uses of the scheme or to occupiers and users of the surrounding land. It therefore accords with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Highway Safety, Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement

Policy LP17 states that a proposal will be supported where it incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates accessibility for service and emergency vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

The site is situated within the town centre with sufficient public car parks and bus services to provide parking for the use. Additional there is a small courtyard area that is able to accommodate a small number of vehicles visiting the site.

Therefore, given the scale and siting of the proposal, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highways safety. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

CONCLUSION

Given the above, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policies, in that it:

* is acceptable in principle;
* Is of an appropriate scale and design;

* Would not have a detrimental impact on the trees on or around the site;
* Would not adversely affect flood risk in the locality;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon highway safety;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the St Neots Conservation Area; and
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;

Taking the above matters into consideration, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Andrea Dollard**