OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00021/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Replacement of existing garden fence with new garden fence.

Location: 4 The Maltings Godmanchester Huntingdon

Applicant: Mr Roderick Mackenzie

Grid Ref: 524557 270340

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The property is a detached two storey house built in the late 1970s within a small development. It is located within a residential area of Godmanchester and is adjacent to the Causeway Godmanchester Conservation Area and several listed buildings. The site is situated in flood zone 1

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

The application is for the replacement of existing garden fencing with new garden fencing. It is noted that the fence height is 2.4 metres, which is above the 2 metres allowed under Permitted Development Rights, where planning permission would not be required and forms a shared boundary with a number of Listed Buildings.

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 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 15th May 2019)
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation

LP14: Amenity
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

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

Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2036
* 5 Heritage and the Built Environment
GMC11: Ensuring development maintains and enhances the character of the Town and reflects its heritage and history
GMC13: Residential Development

Godmanchester (Post Street) Conservation Area Character Statement (October 2002)

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

PLANNING HISTORY

24/00731/HHFUL – Single storey rear extension – permission granted 26.07.2024

CONSULTATIONS

Godmanchester Town Council recommends approval.

REPRESENTATIONS

No objections received at time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential amenity

*Design and Visual Amenity and 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.

Policy LP34 states that 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.

The application site is adjacent to the Godmanchester Causeway Conservation Area, and several listed buildings are to the rear of the property.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard 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 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 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. 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.

The Council will consider the significance of a designated heritage asset and where there is less than substantial harm, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Where there is deemed to be substantial harm, then the proposal would need to achieve substantial public benefits to outweigh that harm.

The proposed work is for the replacement of existing garden fencing with new garden fencing along the rear southern boundary and side west facing boundary. The existing timber fencing will be replaced with similar timber close boarded fence panels in either grey or brown with concrete posts and gravel boards with trellis to the top, resulting in a total height of 2.4 metres. It is noted that this is a similar design to that already existing and therefore the replacement is accepted. There are a number of listed buildings to the rear of the property, however as the replacement fencing is similar to that already existing, it is considered that the proposal will not cause any additional harm to the setting of the listed buildings or the conservation area such to warrant a refusal of the application.

Therefore, it is considered that the scale, bulk and design of the development compliment the host building. Officers have given special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and the settings of the listed buildings. It is considered that harm will not be caused to this designated heritage asset because the development would have a neutral effect. The proposal, therefore, accords with policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019), the NPPF (2024) and the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) 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.

The proposed replacement fencing is to the side west facing and southern rear boundary of the rear garden. It is replacing fencing of a similar design. It is noted that the height of the trellis is 45 centimetres which brings the fencing above the 2 metres allowed under Permitted Development Rights, where planning permission would not be required. It is considered that the open design of the trellis is less obtrusive than the area of close boarded fencing, reducing the impact of the fencing and allowing light through the gaps. The additional height as a result of the trellis is therefore considered acceptable. It is further noted that the design replaces a similar design and fence height already existing in the same position and therefore the replacement fencing will not significantly impact the existing residential amenity of neighbouring properties such to warrant refusal of the application.

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.

*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 upon the designated heritage asset;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours.

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.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Olivia Manton**