OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/01974/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Conversion of existing brick built barn into garage, workshop and hobby space, including re-pitching the roof.

Location: 20 High Street Spaldwick Huntingdon

Applicant: Mr Tony Britten

Grid Ref: 512983 272723

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The building is a barn and is protected within the curtilage of Beech House, 20 High Street, a Grade II listed building located within the Spaldwick Conservation Area and close to several other grade II listed dwellings along the High Street. It has a prominent roadside location and is constructed of soft red brick, dating from the 18th Century. The application site is within flood zone 1.

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

The application is for the conversion of the existing brick-built barn into a garage, workshop and hobby space, including re-pitching the roof.

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 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
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

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

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

PLANNING HISTORY

18/01479/HHFUL & 18/01480/LBC - Proposed garage/carport and associated landscaping and hardstanding – refused 21.02.2020
18/02616/HHFUL - Retrospective replacement and relocation of vehicular access gates. Erection of picket fence – permission granted 31.01.2019
24/01975/LBC - Conversion of existing brick built barn into garage, workshop and hobby space, including re-pitching the roof – pending consideration

CONSULTATIONS

Spaldwick Parish Council recommends approval.

HDC Conservation Team recommends approval. It is considered that the proposed works are sympathetic to the curtilage listed building and will help to give it a viable use consistent with its long term preservation. Sufficient details have been included in the application that conditions are not considered necessary in this instance.

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
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity

*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 within the Spaldwick Conservation Area and within the curtilage of a listed building.

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.

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.

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 application is for the conversion of the existing brick built barn into a garage, workshop and hobby space, including re-pitching the roof. The Conservation Team has been consulted on the proposals. It is noted that the barn is currently semi-derelict. It is considered that the proposed works will not unduly impact the historic fabric or alter the agricultural appearance of the building. The works will include rebuilding the gables with a combination of new and reclaimed brick and instal a bespoke Gault pantile roof which reflects the local palette of historic materials for ancillary agricultural buildings. An internal steel framework will support a mezzanine floor so that no additional loading is placed on the historic walls. A row of rooflights is proposed for the roof slope facing the farmyard and two facing the High Street. It is noted that, following concerns from the Conservation Officer revised plans have been received removing cladding from the east and west elevations.

The principal of conversion is supported as it should bring a long-term viable use for the building which is currently semi-derelict and requires a new lease of life. The proposed alterations will improve the visual appearance of the building and will enhance its contribution to the significance of the listed building. It is considered that the proposals will improve the character and appearance of the Spaldwick Conservation Area.

Officers have given special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Building. It is considered that harm will not be caused to either of these designated heritage assets because the works are sympathetic to the curtilage listed building and will help to give it a viable use consistent with its long-term preservation. The proposal will preserve the special interest of the listed building and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. 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 proposal is for the conversion of an existing brick-built barn into a garage, workshop and hobby space, including re-pitching the roof. The building is located to east of the main dwelling house fronting the high street. Velux windows are proposed at first floor level, which will have

views into the private residential amenity space of the main dwelling. It is noted that the neighbouring property to the east of the building is set back within its plot, 10 metres away from the barn and that any potential overlooking views are of the driveway. Therefore it is considered that there is no significant detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties to warrant a refusal of the application. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

*Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development.

In addition, there is now a statutory requirement for sites to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Exemptions to this legislative requirement includes development to an existing house, including development within the curtilage of a house. Therefore, this application is exempt from this legislative requirement.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was conducted of the site and has reported that the proposed work will have no direct impact upon any wider habitats within the application site. It is noted that the barn supports nesting birds and has the potential to provide roosting/hibernation features for bats. No further surveys are required, but appropriate mitigation compensation and enhancement measures are recommended, and these will be secured by condition.

Therefore, notwithstanding the required condition, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy LP30 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 of an appropriate scale and design;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the designated heritage assets;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon biodiversity and geodiversity.

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**