OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/01893/HHFUL **Householder (Full)**

Proposal: **Proposed single storey extension to the side / rear and new driveway following demolition of the existing garage**

Location: **11 St Anselm Place St Neots PE19 1AP**

Applicant: **Mr and Mrs Ian Richardson**

Grid Ref: **518184 260451**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is occupied by a two-storey semi-detached 3-bedroom dwelling constructed of brick and located in an established residential area to the west of New Street, St Neots.

The host dwelling benefits from a detached garage and a driveway from St Anselm Place.

The site lies within Flood Zone 2 as shown on the Environment Agency flood zone maps. It is located within St Neots Conservation Area; however, the host property is not a listed building and there are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of the application site. A public footpath (reference 194/15) runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of the application site which is marked by a brick wall.

The proposal seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing detached garage to facilitate a single storey side and rear extension. The existing driveway at the front of the house will be extended in size (using block paving) to allow space for 2 parked cars.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (19 December 2023) (NPPF 2023) 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 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- achieving well-designed places;
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2019 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 11: Design Context
LP 12: Design Implementation
LP 14: Amenity

St Neots Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2016)

A3: Design
PT2: Vehicle parking standards for residential development

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

Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (2022):
* Chapter 6 St Neots SPA: St Neots

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

7401105FUL - Pair of Semi-Detached Houses. Granted 31.01.1975

CONSULTATIONS

St Neots Town Council: Support. Makes efficient use of its site.

HDC Heritage Officer: No comment.

REPRESENTATIONS

1 neighbour comment has been received which supports the proposal.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Design and Visual Amenity
- Heritage Impact
- Parking
- Residential Amenity
- Flood risk

Design and Visual Amenity

Policy LP 11 of the adopted Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and has regard for the guidance contained within the Design SPD (2017). Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan states that design should be guided by the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials, detailing, roof orientation, relationship to back of pavement, wall to window ratios, proportion of windows, plan depth, plot width and access, the site and its surroundings including considerations of flood risk management.

Officers have reviewed the plans accompanying the application and note that the proposed single storey extension comprises of two intersecting gable-end extensions – with one gable extending from the rear elevation and one gable extending from the side elevation of the existing dwelling. The rear extension measures approximately 3.1m in depth by 5.8m whilst the side extension measures approximately 4.3m in width and 5.4m in depth. The eaves height of the proposal is approximately 2.6m whilst the ridge height is approximately 3.4m, with the roof containing a total of 3 no. velux windows. As viewed from St Anslem Place, the street facing elevation of the extension will contain a door and two small windows. The application form states that the materials will match the existing, with concrete roof tiles, uPVC windows and facing brick. The bi-fold doors on the rear elevation of the rear extension are proposed to be aluminium.

The existing detached garage is not considered to make a significant positive contribution to the street scene and therefore its demolition is acceptable.

The single storey nature of the proposed extension means that it appears subservient to the existing dwelling house and will not appear dominant or out of character within the street scene, following the demolition of the existing garage.

The brick wall forming the boundary with the adjacent public footpath (reference 194/15) will be remain and therefore views of the application site from the public footpath will remain largely unchanged.

To the front of the proposed extension will be a driveway large enough for 2 parked cars constructed from block paving. This will reflect the scale and appearance of the existing driveway of the attached neighbouring property (no. 12 St Anselm Place).

Overall, it is considered the proposed development is acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy A3 (Design) of St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029, Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (2022) and Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017).

Heritage Impact

Policy LP34 of the adopted Local Plan to 2036 states that great weight and importance is given to the conservation of heritage assets and their settings. The statutory presumption of the avoidance of harm can only be outweighed if there are public benefits that are powerful enough to do so. A proposal within 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 located within St Neots Conservation Area. The host dwelling is not a listed building and the nearest listed building is Grade II listed The Maltings, Priory Lane, located circa 75 metres to the south west of the application site. Owing to intervening existing development and landscaping (trees), there are no direct views between the application site and The Maltings.

St Neots Conservation Area Character Assessment (October 2006) identifies the area within which the application site is located as the 'Medieval Core Settlement Area' (neighbourhood 1c) where the facades located along the Market Square and High Street are of particular significance. The application site is located within an area of more modern development located to the north of Priory Lane and outside of the remaining historic street pattern. Owing to intervening development there are no views between the application site and Market Square or the High Street.

The Council's Heritage Officer was consulted on this application and offered no comment.

Having regard to the single storey nature of the proposed development and the very limited intervisibility between the application site, the nearest listed building, St Neots Market Square and High Street, it is not considered that the proposal results in any harm to the significance or setting of St Neots Conservation Area or any listed buildings.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable against the aims of Local Plan Policy LP34 and the National Planning Policy Framework with regards to protecting heritage assets and their setting.

Parking

Policy PT2 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan states that all development proposals which include an element of residential development, including change of use to residential, must provide adequate space for vehicle parking to meet the expected needs of residents and visitors.

The application property benefits from a detached garage and driveway accessed from St Anselm Place, however, it is understood that the current garage is not used for parking, due to its size and the driveway is not long enough to accommodate a parked car without overhanging the public pavement. As existing, the host property does not therefore benefit from any on-site parking spaces.

As a result of the proposals the existing driveway will be widened, to allow space for two parked cars. During the course of the application the applicant provided a copy of an email from Cambridgeshire County Council which confirms approval of an application for a dropped kerb and vehicular access over the footway from St Anselm Place.

There will be no increase in bedroom numbers as a result of the proposal and a net increase of 2 no. off-road parking spaces.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable against the aims of Neighbourhood Plan Policy PT2.

Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 states that 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 in terms of light, outlook, privacy and noise.

The closest neighbours are no 12. St Anselm Place which is attached to the host dwelling, and no.19 St Anslem Place which shares a rear garden boundary with the host dwelling.

The proposal is single storey and would not therefore result in any unacceptable overshadowing, overbearing impact, overlooking, loss of privacy or loss of light for the neighbouring properties. Whilst the proposal will reduce the size of the side/rear garden of the host property, it is not considered that this will adversely affect the residential amenity of the existing or future occupiers of the host property.

On this basis the development would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Flood risk

The land that the application site forms part of is liable to flood. The proposed development is considered 'minor development' and therefore is not subject to the Sequential or Exception Tests as detailed in the NPPF. The application should however still meet the requirements for site specific flood risk assessments.

The application includes the Environment Agency's flood risk assessment matrix which confirms that floor levels within the proposed development will be no lower than the existing levels. It is noted the submitted plans include a drainage channel which is to be installed between the proposed new block paved driveway and the back edge of the footpath.

The measures proposed are considered appropriate and reasonable for the scale of development proposed and can be secured by condition.

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 result in any adverse impacts upon heritage assets and their setting
- Would provide adequate space for vehicle parking
- Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours or the occupiers of the host dwelling
- Would not adversely affect flood risk in the locality.

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 **Hollie Renney Senior Development Management Officer**