HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

25/00525/HHFUL

OFFICER REPORT

Case No: **25/00525/HHFUL** **Householder (Full)**

Proposal: **Demolish and rebuild side extension**

Location: **Starcross Daintree Road Ramsey St Marys**

Applicant: **Mr Jeff Chu**

Grid Ref: **525385 289563**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Starcross is a two-storey semi-detached dwellinghouse located on the south side of Daintree Road, Ramsey. The existing property includes a two-storey side extension of a gable-end design. The existing property is constructed with a render finish.

The application property is situated on land within Flood Zone 3.

This application seeks permission for the demolition and rebuild of the existing two-storey side extension at Starcross, Daintree Road, Ramsey.

This application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

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.

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)

LP5: Flood Risk
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)

The National Design Guide (2021)

C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
C2- Value heritage, local history and culture
I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
I3 - Create character and identity

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

20/00643/HHFUL - Erection of a timber pre-fabricated single storey granny annexe for ancillary use to the main dwelling - Approved.

20/00644/CLPD - Use of the land for siting a mobile home for use ancillary to the main dwelling - Withdrawn.

CONSULTATIONS

Ramsey Town Council - no objections

REPRESENTATIONS

No third-party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

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

- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Flood Risk
- Biodiversity

* Design and Visual Amenity

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining

buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This application seeks approval for the erection of a replacement two-storey side extension at Starcross, Daintree Road, Ramsey. The proposal would be of a gable-end design, would be constructed with a rendered finish and would measure approximately 5.2m by 5.5m with an eaves height of approximately 5m a ridge height of 6.6m. It would provide a replacement kitchen at the ground floor with a bedroom above.

The proposed two-storey side extension would match that of the existing in terms of its scale, design, siting and appearance. As such, the scale, design and appearance is considered to be acceptable and the proposal would not result in any visual harm to the existing property, the streetscene of Daintree Road or the surrounding area over and above the existing arrangement.

The proposal is therefore deemed to be in accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) 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.

Given the proposal seeks approval for the erection of a replacement two storey side extension on a like-for-like basis with the existing, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposal would not result in any detrimental impacts on any neighbouring residential properties amenities over and above the existing arrangement.

As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Flood Risk

The application site lies in Flood Zone 3 in accordance with Environment Agency mapping and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024), and thus is liable to flood. It is noted that as the proposal would be considered 'minor development' as per the NPPF (2024), it is therefore not subject to Sequential or Exception Tests. The NPPF however does state that a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment should accompany applications for development within Flood Zone 3.

A Flood Risk Report has been submitted as part of this application which states that there are no official Environment Agency records of past flooding on or in close proximity to the property. However, the application has not been accompanied by the Environment Agency's flood risk assessment matrix and does not provide details of the measures which would be incorporated to prevent flooding.

Whilst this is the case, officers are satisfied that, based on the submitted plans, the floor levels for the proposed development will be set no lower than the existing levels, with the extension relacing an existing extension. As such, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in terms of flood risk. Officers have also taken into consideration the scale of the development and that as a like for like replacement is proposed this would not result in significant issues in terms of surface water or altering flood risk when taking into account the surrounding area.

Therefore, taking the above into account the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its approach to flooding and will not (given its scale and use) result in an increased risk of flooding in the locality. It therefore accords with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Biodiversity

Paragraph 187 of 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 and 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.

The application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which concludes that there are two areas which could potentially support roosting bats and therefore a full Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and bat nocturnal emergence surveys are also required in line with guidance before works commence. It states that as the structure provides moderate potential to support roosting bats a minimum of two surveys will be required. Nocturnal emergence surveys can only be carried out during the active bat season (May-September). The required reports have not been provided during the course of the application.

As a rule Huntingdonshire District Council do not allow Bat Surveys (or similar) to be conditioned, as this impacts a protected species and it is not possible to know what the impact or possible mitigation would be. Accordingly, the required PRA and bat emergence surveys must be carried out and submitted prior to determination rather than as a pre-commencement condition. Without the submission of the additional surveys it is not possible to successfully demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity have been fully investigated.

It is noted that while the application has been accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, given the proposal seeks approval for a householder extension/alteration, it is exempt from having to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain.

Overall, due to a lack of required bat surveys, the Local Planning Authority are not able to satisfy themselves that the proposal would be acceptable in relation to biodiversity. As such, the proposal is deemed to be contrary to Policy LP30 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

*Conclusion

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Due to a lack of information, the Local Planning Authority are not able to satisfy themselves that the proposed development is acceptable in relation to biodiversity matters. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy LP30 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development is contrary to policy and not acceptable. The proposed development is considered to be in conflict with the Development Plan when taken as a whole and is not acceptable. There are no overriding material considerations that indicate that permission should be granted in this instance. Therefore, it is recommended that the application be refused.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Jennifer Wallis**