# OFFICER REPORT

**Case No:** 25/00846/HHFUL Householder (Full)

**Proposal:** Conversion of roof space into bedroom.

**Location:** Old Inn House Back Lane Holywell

**Applicant:** Mr and Mrs Stocker

**Grid Ref:** 534034 270779

## DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site at Old Inn House, Back Lane is occupied by a one and a half-storey detached dwellinghouse located within a residential area in Holywell. The application site falls within the Holywell Conservation Area, with the dwelling classed as a Grade II Listed Building alongside a number of Grade II Listed Buildings along Back Lane. The application site falls within Flood Zone 1 of the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning.

This application seeks permission for the conversion of roof space into a bedroom.

This application is also accompanied by an application for Listed Building Consent (25/00847/LBC).

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

## 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, 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)

LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Neighbourhood Plan and relevant policies where applicable

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):

* Place Making Principles parts 3.7 Building Form and 3.8 Building Detailing

Holywell Conservation Area Character Statement (1994)

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (2022)

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

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

Given the historic nature of the property there is an extensive planning history associated with it. The history from 1974 onwards is available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. The most recent, relevant planning history is detailed below:

75/01359/FUL - EXTENSION THE OLD INN HOUSE HOLYWELL (Permission)

25/00847/LBC- Conversion of roof space into bedroom. (Pending Consideration)

**CONSULTATIONS**

Needingworth Parish Council - No objections

HDC Conservation Team - Support the application, further details in preceding sections of this report.

**REPRESENTATIONS**

East Croft Cottage, Back Lane, Holywell - Support the application, state the design is sympathetic with a new window only on the side facing into the Old Inn House garden, with no anticipation on it having any impact on them.

**SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

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

- Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity

* Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets

The application site at Old Inn House is occupied by a detached, Grade II Listed dwellinghouse located within a residential area in Holywell. The surrounding area depicts the character of a typical rural village, and there are a number of additional Listed Buildings along Back Lane, of which the application site is located along. The proposed works involve the conversion of roof space into a bedroom, with the installation of a window on the eastern elevation to serve the ground floor annexe accommodation.

As the works are primarily internal to the dwelling, these would have no detrimental harm on the character or appearance of the area. When considering the proposed window, its location on the eastern elevation, alongside being set back from the street, it is considered acceptable in terms of design and appearance within the surrounding area.

Overall, taking the above factors into consideration, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the character or appearance of the area. It therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

As detailed in the previous sections of this report, the application site lies within the Holywell Conservation Area, and the works are to a Listed Building. As such, it should be regarded that:

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 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 (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. 212 of the NPPF sets 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.

As this is the case, HDC's Conservation team have been consulted and having reviewed the documents supports the application as a result of revised plans submitted, with their comments summarised below.

HDC's Conservation Officer states how the gable for the proposed changes is largely concealed from public highways, and historic mapping indicates that the section of the dwelling proposed for the conversion is a modern addition. The Conservation Officer notes that previous planning applications document this in 1975 under reference 75/01359/FUL, and was completed before the property was formally listed in 1982. They state that the proposal to make changes to the modern extension annexe would cause minimal impact to the significance of the Listed Building and its setting, and therefore is acceptable in this regard.

Concerning the Holywell Conservation Area, the proposals, in particular the window, is determined to have a minimal impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The property is well-screened from public view due to its orientation and the existing tree cover along Back Lane and the village perimeter, meaning that the key views and the significance of the neighbouring Briar Cottage remains unaffected.

Therefore, given the supporting comments from HDC's Conservation Officer alongside the above assessment, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable with regards to its impact on the designated heritage assets. It therefore accords with Policy LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036, the provisions of the NPPF (2024) and the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990.

*Residential Amenity

The only exterior alteration to the existing building on site is the insertion of the proposed first floor bedroom window on the eastern elevation of the property. This will look out onto the bottom of the rear garden of Briar's Cottage, but due to the large separation distance from the window to the side boundary with this neighbouring property, alongside the relationship between the two sites, any reduction in privacy of this neighbouring garden is not considered to be significant or unacceptable in planning terms. The ground floor accommodation is already used as annexe accommodation, so the expansion of this accommodation is not considered to be harmful to neighbouring residential amenity. A condition ensuring the accommodation remains as an annexe ancillary to the main house will be imposed.

Overall, taking these factors into account, the development is considered acceptable in terms of loss of privacy and would not have a significant or unacceptable impact upon residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 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 character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the designated heritage assets;
* 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 **Josh France**