OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00831/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Demolition of single storey extension and erection of 1.5 storey and single storey extension. Internal alterations and changes to fenestration

Location: Primrose Cottage 28 Church Lane Leighton Bromswold

Applicant: Mrs Nicki Bourlet

Grid Ref: 511622 275160

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Primrose Cottage is a Grade II Listed Building located in the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area and within Flood Zone 1. It is a timber framed two-bay dwelling built in the 18th Century built with a fashionable two storey double fronted design but in a nearly obsolete material for domestic dwellings of this period. The building was substantially rebuilt in the 1980s and the surviving framing is the most significant part of the building. It is within close proximity to several listed buildings, with the Grade II* Listed Castle House and earthworks opposite the application site and the Church of St Mary, Grade 1 Listed, Manor Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) and the Hundred stone (Grade II Listed) further west of the site.

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

The application is for the demolition of single storey extension and erection of 1.5 storey and single storey extension. Internal alterations and changes to fenestration.

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
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
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

8301723FUL – Extension and garage – permission granted 10.04.1984
8700479FUL - Alteration and extension to garage - permission granted 18.05.1987
89/00155/FUL - Erect a double garage - permission granted 14.031989
99/11561/LBC – Extension to dwelling – consent granted 22.12.1999
9901560FUL – Extension to dwelling - permission granted 16.12.1999
0600635FUL - Extension to dwelling and erection of entrance gate – permission granted 12.04.2006
0600636LBC – Extension to dwelling – consent granted 12.04.2006
0701693PDE - Conversion of garage to dining room and cloak room – planning permission not required 11.06.2007
25/70002/PREAPP - Demolition of existing single storey extension and erection of 1.5 storey and single storey extension. Internal alterations and changes to fenestration – Amber response
25/00832/LBC - Demolition of single storey extension and erection of 1.5 storey and single storey extension. Internal alterations and changes to fenestration – pending consideration

CONSULTATIONS

Leighton Bromswold Parish Council recommends approval. The Parish Council recommends approval of this application because the plans are proportionate to the existing property. The plans have been sympathetically drawn up and the will not detrimentally affect the character of the building or its environs.

HDC Conservation Team have no objections to the proposals. It is noted that the proposed reworking of the rear extensions is unlikely to cause harm to the significance of the listed building or impact the character or appearance of the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area. Full joinery details are submitted and are acceptable. One condition for the submission of material samples of brick and roof covering is recommended.

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 and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential amenity
- Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- 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 property is a Grade II Listed Building located within the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area.

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 proposal is for demolition of single storey extension and erection of 1.5 storey and single storey extension. Internal alterations and changes to fenestration. It is noted that the cottage has been heavily modified and extended over time, including the construction of a double garage and single storey extensions to both the southern gable and the northern end of the property. The works include the removal of the single storey extension to the western (rear) elevation and its replacement with a 1.5 dual pitched extension with single storey providing a infill extension to form a utility area and boot room.

The Conservation Officer has considered the proposal and noted that the building was substantially rebuilt in the 1980s and the surviving framing is the most significant part of the building. The extensions were constructed from the 1980s to 2006 and are dated in appearance; they have no historic or architectural interest.

The proposed rear extension is of a size and massing that will remain subordinate to the historic part of the listed building. It will only be visible as a roof slope from Church Lane and as such this will not harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The design of the main rear extension is contemporary, but the use of oak framing acknowledges the historic significance of the main building while being a welcome visual relief from the heavy appearance of the other brick extensions.

The principal impact of the proposals will be to the historic framing to allow access to the rear roof space. One stud will be relocated to enable access to the roof space of the extension which will be used for storage or as a dressing area. This is acceptable. The principal areas of alteration are within the modern extensions which have no historical or architectural significance. Full joinery details are submitted and are acceptable. Conditions will be secured for the submission of mate rial samples of brick and roof covering.

It is considered that the proposed reworking of the rear extensions is unlikely to cause harm to the significance of the listed building or impact the character or appearance of the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area.

Officers have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Officers have given special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. 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 have a neutral impact on the significance of the conservation area and causes no harm to the significance of the listed building. 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 ss. 16, 66 & 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, paragraphs 202-221 of the NPPF (2024), Policies LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) 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 property is located at the edge of Leighton Bromswold village, within a generous plot and some distance from neighbouring properties. The proposed rear extension is set in within the plot and shielded by an existing rear projection. As such it is unlikely to result in any significant detrimental impact to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Therefore, it is considered that there will be 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.

*Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development.

It is noted that whilst there are trees within the site, these are set further back within the application site and separated from the dwelling by a significant area of hardstanding. The closest tree is approximately 11.50 metres from the proposed development. The proposed site layout plan identifies an appropriate construction exclusion zone and in addition a materials and machinery storage area within the area of hard standing to the rear and a smaller area at the front of the property. Therefore, it is considered that appropriate measures will be secured to protect the existing trees within the site. These measures will be secured with a compliance condition.

Therefore, notwithstanding the required condition, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy LP31 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*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 and Preliminary Roost Assessment was submitted in support of the application. The report concludes that there will be no detrimental impact upon protected species. Mitigation and Enhancement measures recommended in the report will be secured by condition. However historical bat droppings were found and therefore a Bat Mitigation Report was also commissioned. This concludes that the bat droppings were highly likely to pre-date 2006 and not representative of an active roost. As a precaution a Bat Mitigation Plan has been prepared and submitted to cover the unlikely eventuality of bats being found during the construction process. This will be secured by condition.

Therefore, notwithstanding the required conditions, 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 trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows;
* 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**