HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

24/02134/LBC

OFFICER REPORT

Case No: **24/02134/LBC** **Listed Building Consent**

Proposal: **The proposals comprise a programme of internal and external works in association to the Listed Building's Change of Use from a public house into a single dwelling**

Location: **Public House Chequers Inn St Marys Street**

Applicant: **Mr and Mrs Rodley**

Grid Ref: **518421 260006**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The Chequers Inn is a Grade II Listed Building which stands within the Eynesbury Conservation Area and near to a number of Listed Buildings in St Mary's Street, both adjacent to the property to the north-east and opposite the building to the west and south-west. The property dates from the 17th Century with 18th Century and later additions. The existing building is of timber frame construction with a tiled roof.

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

The application is for a programme of internal and external works in association to the Listed Building's Change of Use from a public house into a single dwelling. It is noted that revised plans have been received during the lifetime of the application, removing the previous proposals in respect of the first floor and addressing Officer concerns. The Conservation Officer was reconsulted on the revised plans.

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)

LP12: Design Implementation
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles - Part 3.8 Building Detailing

St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 (2016)
* Policy A3 – Design
* Policy SS2 – Utilising Historic Buildings

St Neots Conservation Area Character Assessment (October 2006)
* Section 2 - Eynesbury

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

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

PLANNING HISTORY

7700671POTHER - Extension for keg store – consent granted 15.08.1977
7700672POTHER - Fire escape and exit – consent granted 08.08.1977
99/00591/FUL - Temporary siting of marquee - permission granted 25.06.1999
00/01050/S73 - Renewal of consent 99/0591 for temporary siting of marquee – permission granted 21.08.2000
0201847S73 - Renewal of consent 00/01050 for temporary siting of marquee – permission granted 27.08.2002
0503319FUL - Retention of marquee - permission granted 12.12.2005
21/01594/PIP for Permission in principle application for the conversion of restaurant/public house to a minimum of no. 1 and maximum of no. 1 dwelling houses – Refused 11.10.2021
23/00936/FUL for change of use and conversion of the Existing Public House (Sui Generis) to Residential Use (C3), with Associated Landscaping and Parking – Withdrawn 22.11.2023
23/00937/LBC for Works relating to change of use and conversion of the Existing Public House (Sui Generis) to Residential Use (C3), with Associated Landscaping and Parking – Withdrawn 22.11.2023
24/02137/FUL for Change of use and conversion of the existing Public House (Sui Generis) into residential use (Class C3) – pending consideration

CONSULTATIONS

St Neots Town Council – supports the change of use and the planning application, subject to approval from the Conservation/Heritage Officer.

HDC Conservation Team – following revisions, recommendation is to support the proposal, subject to conditions.

REPRESENTATIONS

No objections received at time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
o Impact on Heritage Assets

* Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy 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 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.

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 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 application is for a programme of internal and external works in association to the Listed Building's Change of Use from a public house into a single dwelling. It is noted that works to the first floor of the building have now been removed from the application.

The Conservation Team has been consulted on the proposals and provided comprehensive comments, with the main areas of work summarised below. Full Conservation comments are available to view on Public Access and are supported by full plans which are listed within the Decision Notice.

- Car park works include addition of wall buttresses.
- Amends proposed works to kitchen/breakfast diner no longer proposing the removal of the modern ceiling to expose original vaulted roof and install new ridge beam; now proposes removal of modern ceiling and replacement with modern lining and insulated finishes.
- One flue proposed at the southwest elevation as previously proposed but removes the second flue originally proposed to be installed within the existing chimney.
- Repair works proposed to the existing historic brick boundary wall at north boundary instead of demolition of the wall as originally proposed.
- Retain the existing first floor windows and install secondary glazing.
- Remove existing door at the bottom of the existing staircase. Described as 20th century and removal proposed to accommodate the conversion to a domestic dwelling.
- Replacement of existing ground floor windows and existing external and internal doors.
- Reinstatement of a former ground floor window in the front (street) elevation (WG11) and in the side elevation of the rear extension (WG09).
- The existing modern fire escape doorway on the first floor is to be infilled (DF05), details are included in the Schedule of Works.
- Rooflights (WG15 to 18) are proposed in the new roof of the rear extension.

Works proposed to the ground floor remove or alter only modern fabric and features, or are considered to preserve the character and sustain the significance of the Listed Building. Conditions will secure the detail and methods of carrying out the work.

Details of the proposed windows, doors, rooflights and proposed related works have been included in the submitted Schedule of Works and are in principle supported subject to conditions securing further details.

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.

The Chequers Inn is recorded as a public house on the earliest 1880 Ordnance Survey maps. It is a historic public house and as such its use forms part of its historic interest and the historic and evidential values which contribute to its significance as a heritage asset. For that reason, the proposal to change this historic use of the building is not considered to preserve its character as a Listed Building but is considered to be harmful to its significance. It is also considered harmful to the building which as a public house is as an element which contributes positively to the significance, character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed change of use of the building from a public house is considered to be of less than substantial harm to the heritage assets but such harm is required to be weighed against any public benefit from the proposal which must be sufficient to outweigh the statutory duty of the local planning authority to have special regard to their preservation. Such public benefit includes the securing of the optimum viable use of the heritage asset.

These further amended proposed alterations to the Listed Building are considered to preserve its historic and architectural interest and to sustain its significance in principle, subject to conditions. The proposals are also considered to preserve the character of the building and the positive contribution which it makes to the character and appearance, as well as the significance, of the Conservation Area.

Therefore, it is considered that harm will not be caused to either of these designated heritage assets because the works are considered to preserve the character of the Listed Building and the positive contribution it makes to the significance and character 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) and Policies A3 and SS2 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 (2016) in this regard.

*Conclusion
The proposed works are considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as they:

* Would not have a harmful impact upon the designated heritage asset;

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that listed building consent be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Olivia Manton**