HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

25/00132/HHFUL

OFFICER REPORT

Case No: **25/00132/HHFUL** **Householder (Full)**

Proposal: **Demolition of existing porch and modern rear extension. Erection of 1.5-storey rear extension. Alterations to fenestration. Internal alterations to utility room to form ground floor shower room. Alterations to first floor to form en-suite bathrooms.**

Location: **Holme Cottage Huntingdon Road Wyton**

Applicant: **Mr David Pinnington**

Grid Ref: **528007 272339**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site at Holme Cottage is occupied by a Grade II Listed two-storey detached dwellinghouse located within a residential area in Wyton. The site falls within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area and is in Flood Zone 3 on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning. There is also a Tree Protection Order (TPO) to the east of the dwelling at the site boundary, and a 6-month interim TPO on the prominent Horse Chestnut to the rear of the dwelling.

This application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing porch and modern rear extension, with the erection of a 1.5-storey rear extension, alterations to fenestration, internal alterations to utility room to form ground floor shower room and alterations to first floor to form en-suite bathrooms.

This application is also accompanied by an application for Listed Building Consent (25/00133/LBC) which has the same description.

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

Throughout the lifetime of the application, revised plans have been received to address comments and concerns received by HDC's Conservation Team, who had asked for additional information. In this instance, on the balance of fairness, further consultation on this matter was not considered to be necessary.

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)

LP5: Flood Risk
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
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

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document (2022)

Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Character Assessment (2012)

Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)

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 1991 onwards is available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. The most recent, relevant planning history is detailed below:

01/02167/FUL - Extension and alterations to dwelling (Permission)

01/02168/LBC - Extension and alterations to dwelling (Consent)

23/02406/TRCA - T1 - Horse Chestnut - crown lift to 6m and reduce crown by 3m G1 - Line of Sycamore & Horse Chestnut - crown lift to 5m over Huntingdon Road, reduce laterally by 3m to clear neighbouring Old Farm Court building by 3m T2 - Lawsons Cypress - fell to ground level G2 - 2 x Pine - crown lift to 4m over drive, reduce 2m laterally to clear garage by 2.5m (Consent)

24/00379/LBC - Installation of 2 x wood burners to existing downstairs fireplaces including lining of chimneys (Consent)

24/01546/TRCA - T1 Sycamore -Fell - Tree decayed at base after previous stem removal. T2 Silver Birch - Fell - Tree has poor form, adds little value to garden. (Deemed Acceptance for TRCA)

24/01283/TRCA - G1- 2 x Sycamore - Fell - Both trees are decayed at the base. G2- 2 x Hawthorn - Reduce height by 1.2-1.5m and prune to shape. (Consent)

24/02003/HHFUL - Renovation and partial re-building of the southern and eastern boundary walls, including new pedestrian gated access and re-instatement of gated vehicular access. (Permission)

24/02004/LBC - Renovation and partial re-building of the southern and eastern boundary walls, including new pedestrian gated access and re-instatement of gated vehicular access. (Permission)

25/00164/LBC - Render repairs and replacement, alterations to window openings and replacement joinery, timber frame repairs and installation of insulation. (Consent)

25/00132/HHFUL - Demolition of existing porch and modern rear extension. Erection of 1.5-storey rear extension. Alterations to fenestration. Internal alterations to utility room to form ground floor shower room. Alterations to first floor to form en-suite bathrooms. (Pending Consideration)

CONSULTATIONS

Houghton and Wyton Parish Council - Recommend approval, make the following comments:
- Important and visible building in the street scene, currently in a bad state of repair.
- Work and materials to be used are appropriate and acceptable.
- The work to the rear of the property is to replace a recent extension and will be mainly out of sight.
- The work will make the property suitable for modern living while respecting the heritage of the property and area.

HDC Conservation Team - Support the application after submission of revised plans and additional information.

HDC Arboricultural Officer - Recommend refusal, further comments in subsequent sections of this report.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

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

- Design and Visual Amenity
- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity
- Flood Risk
- Impact on Trees

* Design and Visual Amenity

Holme Cottage is a detached Grade II Listed Building located within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area. The surrounding area depicts the character of a typical rural town, and there are a number of additional Listed Buildings along Huntingdon Road on which the application site is located. Alongside this, several established trees within the application site which are prominent from the street and contribute largely to the green character of the Conservation Area. The works which require Listed Building Consent involve the demolition of existing structures, a 1.5 storey rear extension and internal alterations.

The proposal includes the removal of the single storey porch to the east elevation, alongside the infilling of the existing pedestrian access door, and the removal of the single storey extension to the rear of the property, which was originally approved under applications 0102168LBC and 0102167FUL. The works then involve the erection of a rear extension over the footprint of the demolished structure, increasing the overall footprint of the dwelling by 27m². The proposed extension is to measure 5.1 metres in width, and extend out from the rear of the property by a maximum of 6 metres. The extension consists of a gable-ended pitched roof, with a maximum height set down lower than that of the host dwelling at 6.1 metres, with eaves at 2.5 metres, thus acting subservient to the dwelling. Its integration within the application site is supported by the use of materials which match and complement the host dwelling, and is acceptable in terms of its design and does not significantly impact the character or appearance of the street scene, with its location to the rear of the application site and not prominent within views from the street.

The works also include some alterations to the existing dwellinghouse, including the replacement of the first-floor window on the east elevation along with the replacement and enlargement of the ground floor window, with materials and decorative features to match the existing. Alongside this, a replacement window is proposed on the first floor to replace a modern window on the north elevation. Additional internal alterations are also proposed, including the strip-out of an existing dressing room to become an en-suite for the master bedroom on the first floor, alongside the formation of an en-suite serving the first-floor bedroom. Further, the existing utility and plant room are to be converted into a combined utility and plant room, alongside a ground floor shower room. When considering these proposals, they are considered acceptable and do not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the dwelling or 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.

*Impact on Heritage Assets

As detailed in the previous sections of this report, the application site lies within the Hemingfords Conservation Area, and with the host dwelling being Grade II Listed, it is necessary to consider the impact of the development on its designated heritage assets.

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 and makes the following comments which are summarised below:

HDC's Conservation Officer begins by outlining that the demolition of the single storey porch, the infilling of the doorway and removal of the rear extension will not be harmful to the Listed Building as they are modern features with no historical value. When considering the replacement of the first-floor window on the east elevation, along with the replacement and enlargement of the ground floor window, the Conservation Officer raises no objection, with the window details acceptable. The Conservation Officer goes on to state that both the removal of the dressing room fittings and works to include the formation of an en-suite in the master bedroom and bedroom 3 are acceptable and will not result in any harm through the loss of historic fabric. Concerning the replacement window on the first-floor to replace the modern window on the northern elevation, HDC's Conservation Officer raises no objections with the constructional details acceptable, subject to a condition regarding the location of the window in relation to the frame and any infill panels.

HDC's Conservation Officer raised concerns regarding the alteration of the utility and plant room, specifically concerning the details of the works and the taking, with potential to cause harm to the structure of that part of the building. This is due to the proposed tanking being limited to below ground area, with any moisture likely to be pushed higher up the walls resulting in the failure of brickwork. Alongside this, the retained access door will also penetrate the tanking zone and undermine the waterproofing. As a result, revised plans have been received, which address these concerns and removes the installation of tanking, and as such is acceptable. Concerns were also raised by the Conservation Officer regarding the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), with the proposed location not in an acceptable location, alongside no details submitted regarding its connection to the building. As a part of the revised plans, the proposed ASHP has been removed from the proposals, and therefore is now acceptable in this regard.

The Conservation Officer supports the design of the extension, and requested a section through the area of roof of the existing outbuilding and how this is to be retained within the roof of the new extension. As part of the revised plans submitted, a section drawing was included which presents this, and is acceptable to address the Conservation Officer's concerns in this instance.

Taking into account the level of detail provided with the application, the above assessment and the comments received from HDC's Conservation Officer presented above, it is considered that, with the submission of revised plans, the proposed development is acceptable with regards to its impact on the designated heritage assets, subject to conditions. The proposals preserve the Listed Building and its setting, as well as having regard to the preservation of the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area. 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

Given the type and scale of development proposed, with the extension located to the rear of the existing dwelling, alongside having regard to the proximity and separation to the adjacent dwellings, it is not considered that there would be any unacceptable material impacts in terms of loss of privacy or overlooking, nor would there be any overbearing or loss of light impact.

Overall, taking these factors into account the development, subject to condition, is considered acceptable in terms of overshadowing, overbearing impact, overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of

light and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of HDC's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Biodiversity

It is noted in the supporting Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey submitted as part of the application that there is presence of bats on the site. As the works may impact a protected species, it is considered necessary to assess this. Concerns were raised over the positioning of the proposed bat boxes on site, and as such a revised Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey has been submitted with revised locations, and are now considered to be in an acceptable location, with the submitted documents putting forward recommendations which are sufficient to mitigate any impacts upon the protected species.

Therefore, having taken into account the above, the proposal is acceptable with regards to its impact on biodiversity and protected species, subject to ensuring that development is followed in accordance with the submitted recommendations and enhancements within the Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey. As such, it therefore accords with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Flood Risk

The application site lies in Flood Zone 3, 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, which in this case has been provided. This details the mitigation measures that will be used to limit the risk of flood in the locality, which are considered acceptable in this instance. Officers have also taken into consideration the scale of the rear extension, alongside the alterations to the existing dwelling, and it is considered that the proposals 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.

*Impact on Trees

As mentioned in preceding sections of this report, the application site contains a TPO to the east of the dwelling on the site boundary, alongside a mature horse chestnut tree located to the rear of the dwelling, which has been afforded protection by a 6-month interim TPO within the lifetime of the application. As such, HDC's Arboricultural Officer has been consulted, and strongly objects to the proposals, with their comments summarised below and available to view in full on HDC's Public Access Site.

HDC's Arboricultural Officer begins by highlighting how the mature horse chestnut tree is considered to be one of the most prominent visual features of the village and has been a significant contributor to the Arboricultural Landscape for many decades. As such, they have classified the tree as a Veteran tree, defined by a number of significant characteristics which contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value. In this case, the horse chestnut tree in question displays a number of these characteristics, including major trunk cavities, decay holes and a high aesthetic interest. The full list of highlighted features defining the horse chestnut as a veteran tree are available to view in full on HDC's Public Access Site as a part of the Arboricultural Officer's formal comments.

With the tree classified as veteran and with a diameter of 1.5m, the Root Protection Area and Buffer Zone would preclude any construction near the rear of the property, as the Root Protection Area (RPA) would reach 25 metres from the stem, using guidance from the NPPF (2024) on

Veteran Trees. The Arboricultural Officer also highlights that as root development would not be extensive under the existing property, the RPA should be amended to reflect this, therefore extending it further across the rear of the building. A site visit undertaken by the Arboricultural Officer also highlighted excavations already carried out within the RPA, which has meant that the area affected could not be included in the calculations for the RPA, extending the protected area even further to compensate for the loss.

They have also noted that whilst the Arboricultural Method Statement tries to make provision for preventing damage to the tree's rooting environment, veteran trees require more careful treatment, and any works or incursions into the RPA that could result in the loss or deterioration of veteran trees should be avoided unless absolutely essential, highlighted within paragraph 193 c) of the NPPF (2024). As no suitable methods have been received for completing the development without severely damaging the tree and its rooting environment, HDC's Arboricultural Officer concludes by stating that they cannot support the application, and state it is not possible for the construction to take place without compromising the health and integrity of the tree.

Additional informal advice has also been received by HDC's Arboricultural Officer following queries from the planning agent and an external Arboricultural consultant on the classification of the tree as veteran, alongside a greater assessment of the tree and their perceived impact of development upon it. From these queries and additional comments, HDC's Arboricultural Officer emphasises that the qualification as a veteran tree is beyond question, with a number of veteran features being present and noted in the submitted reports. They reiterate that the tree is irreplaceable and any applications which affect the health or viability of the tree must be avoided. In this case, works proposed are to take place within the RPA, and even with using the least impactful construction method, much of the RPA will be covered and the impact on the development cannot be reduced any further. As these works are not considered as essential, this must be avoided to prevent any harm to the veteran tree.

Therefore, taking into account the above assessment, the proposed siting of the extension, alongside the value of the tree and the detailed comments from HDC's Arboricultural Officer, the proposed development is not considered acceptable in its current form, due to the significant risk of harm to a veteran tree which makes a valuable contribution to its surroundings and as such fails to accord with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the provisions of the NPPF (2024).

*Conclusion

The proposed development is not considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as:

*The rear extension, by virtue of its scale and siting, would cause significant harm to a veteran tree and it is not considered that this could be mitigated. As such, the proposal fails to accord with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the provisions of the NPPF (2024).

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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