OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00690/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Single storey annexe located to the rear of an existing property

Location: 26 Main Street Yaxley Peterborough

Applicant: Mr Alan Minns

Grid Ref: 518898 292256

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

No. 26 Main Street is a two-storey end-of-terrace property located in a residential area in the settlement of Yaxley. The existing property is of a gable-end design and constructed with a facing brick finish. The site is located within the Yaxley Conservation Area.

There is an existing vehicular access and gravel driveway serving the host dwelling and the application site which is currently a large rear garden area. This part of the site features several trees and shrubs as well as domestic paraphernalia such as sheds, polytunnel and children's play equipment.

To the north of the site are residential dwellings on Badgers Close. To the east are residential dwellings and garages. The west elevation of the two-storey dwelling at No.24 Main Street adjoins the red line application boundary enclosing the access driveway. To the west are the other properties within the terrace and the Duck and Drake Public House and car park. Main Street is to the south with an agricultural field beyond.

This application seeks permission for the erection of a single-storey annexe to the rear of the property. The proposed annexe would serve a member of the existing household due to the existing property being unfit for the applicant's medical requirements.

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk from flooding from rivers or the sea) as classified by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024 and the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning and is not susceptible to surface water flooding.

This application has been accompanied by a Planning, Design and Access Statement and tree constraints plan.

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.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, 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
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

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)
Yaxley Conservation Area Character Statement 1995

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

22/01247/FUL - Erection of dwelling with new site access, new parking provision for existing dwelling - Refused and later dismissed at appeal.

0604045FUL - Erection of dwelling and garage and erection of garage for 26 Main Street - Refused and later dismissed at appeal.

CONSULTATIONS

Yaxley Parish Council - The Parish Council supports this well-designed application given the shortage of adapted accommodation in the area.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Conservation Officer - do not wish to comment but defer to the arboricultural officer as the trees contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Arboricultural Officer - Provisionally support the application, subject to an acceptable Tree Protection Plan being provided.

REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of support was received during the course of the application.

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
- Parking Provision and Highway Safety
- Impact on Trees

* Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets

The Local Planning Authority is required to ensure that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at Section 72. This is also reflected in Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 single storey annexe to the rear of No. 26 Main Street, Yaxley. The proposal would be of a gable-end design, constructed with buff brick and timber cladding walls, single ply roofing membrane and uPVC windows and doors. The proposed annexe would measure a total length of 15.7m, a width of 9.2m with an eaves height of 3m and a ridge height of 4.6m. The site is located within the Yaxley Conservation Area.

The appearance of the proposed annexe is considered to be acceptable as the gable-end design and use of facing brick would match that of the main dwellinghouse and the use of timber cladding would complement the number of existing trees within the site.

However, in order for an annexe to be considered acceptable, it must be ancillary to the main dwellinghouse, having a functional and physical link to it as opposed to being an independent dwelling.

The proposed annexe would be approximately 24m to the rear of the main dwellinghouse and would be accessible via the existing gravel drive which currently extends to an existing outbuilding that is adjacent to the proposed annexe. Whilst the dwelling would be within the extensive garden area of the main dwellinghouse and would be accessed from the dwelling via a new footpath, due to the separation distance, the annexe is considered physically detached from the main dwellinghouse and could easily be severed. Based on the submitted floor plans and the annexe's siting, it is considered to be able to function without any shared facilities with the main dwellinghouse. Furthermore, the footprint of the proposed annexe (approximately 116sqm) is large and would exceed that of the main dwellinghouse (approximately 67sqm). The 'Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard' document requires a single storey 1 person 1 bedroom dwelling requires only 39m² with a 2 person one bedroom dwelling requiring 50m² and a

3 person two bedroom dwelling requiring 61m2 . Therefore, in this case the proposed development would greatly exceed the requirements of a single storey, standalone dwelling.

Whilst the personal circumstances underpinning the need for an annexe are acknowledged, the Local Planning Authority consider that in this instance, the proposed annexe is not ancillary to the main dwellinghouse and could easily be severed from the main dwellinghouse due to its size, and the physical separation involved.

It is worth noting that two applications (0604045FUL and 22/01247/FUL) proposing the erection of a single storey dwelling and garage on land to the rear of No.26 were refused by the Council and both dismissed at appeal due to the proposed development failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Yaxley Conservation Area.

The character of the conservation area has not notably changed since the appeal decisions. The Inspector in the most recent appeal decision in 2024 noted, "The appeal site is located to the rear of the existing property on Main Street, on a notably higher ground level….The significance of the CA in this location relates primarily to the linear settlement pattern along Main Street that Yaxley follows and the relationship of this part of it to Yaxley Fen, which forms the open land immediately opposite the appeal site to the south." He goes on to state that "For the most part, the settlement pattern and arrangement of the primary buildings close to the appeal site follow this linear arrangement… The proposed development would therefore sit as a notable exception to the prevailing linear form of the settlement, in particular in terms of the positioning of dwellings."

"Although only single storey in height, the addition of what would be a large building in a location not characteristic of its surroundings and settlement pattern, on an elevated ground level and evident in some views from Main Street would cause harm to the character and appearance of both the area and the CA. The removal of 13 trees from the site would erode its verdant feel, which contributes positively to the surrounding area and provides a green buffer between the houses on Main Street and those on Badger Close. Although it may be possible to secure some replacement tree planting, this would not be likely to be comparable to the number of trees that would be lost."
Although slightly smaller, the proposed annexe is similar in scale and identical in height to that previously refused and is in a very similar location. Within the appeal decision for 0604045FUL the Inspector stated, "I consider that the proposed bulk and scale of the development would be unsympathetic to the character of the area even though it would be of single storey".

Although the proposed annexe is of relatively modest height, the topography of the site along with the scale and bulk of the proposal and proposed tree removal, would result in an incongruous building prominent in views from Main Street. It is therefore considered that the previous upheld reasons for refusal on the grounds of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are still relevant in this case.

The Planning, Design and Access Statement refers to the applicants personal circumstances and states that the proposed annexe would cater for the applicants continuous needs by providing more suitable accommodation tailored to his personal requirements. However, in weighing the personal circumstances of the applicant in the balance, this has to be considered against the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area and the Conservation Area.

Officers consider that the proposal fails to respond positively to the overall context and character of the site by forming living accommodation (ancillary or otherwise) with a significant disconnection from the main house. The scale (in terms of footprint) also appears excessive and it is considered that the resultant development would alter the general character of the residential garden and the wider locality. Ultimately the proposal would amount to backland development at a significant depth which is a further inconsistency with the locality.

Overall, due to the annexe being designed in such a way that it could be severed from the main dwellinghouse, the Local Planning Authority do not consider the proposal to be an ancillary

addition to the main dwellinghouse. It is therefore considered that the previous upheld reasons for refusal on the grounds of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are still relevant in this case. As such, the proposal is therefore deemed to be contrary to Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the National Design Guide, 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.

The closest neighbouring residential properties that are likely to be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development are Nos. 24, 28, 30 and 32 Main Street and those north of the application site on the south-side of Badger Close.

Given the single-storey scale of the proposed annexe, the distance to the closest shared boundary (approximately 3.5m to the neighbouring properties on Badger Close) and screening from existing trees to be retained along with the boundary treatments, the proposal is not considered to result in any detrimental overbearing, overshadowing, overlooking or loss of light impacts on any neighbouring properties amenities.

The access which serves the dwelling and proposed annexe passes between 24 and 26 Main Street and runs directly along the boundary, passing particularly close to the main side elevation of No 24 on which there are two ground floor windows and two first floor windows. The previous appeal decisions considered that the addition of a 3-bedroom dwelling would result in intensification of the existing access driveway, which would lead to increased levels of noise and disturbance. The Inspector for 22/01247/FUL noted "the passing of vehicles and people associated with two dwellings would result in a significant number of movements adjacent to No 24. Given the close proximity to the windows of that property, this would cause harm to the occupants of No 24 from noise and disturbance."

Whilst this application also utilises the same driveway, it is considered that in this instance the proposal seeks permission for an annexe with the floor plans showing two bedrooms, one of which would be for a live-in carer. Accordingly the levels of vehicular movements and comings and goings associated with this proposal is considered to be less than that of a separate 3 -bedroom dwelling. Accordingly, given the scale and nature of the proposal, the proposed annexe is not considered to result in any noise and general disturbance impacts on any neighbouring properties amenities which would warrant a refusal of planning permission in this instance.

Overall, taking these factors into account the development 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 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Parking Provision and Highway Safety

There are no changes proposed to the way that vehicles enter or leave the site and there is ample space within the site for vehicles to park and so it is considered that there will be no highway safety impacts as a result of the development. It is further considered that there would not be significantly increased pressure on the highway network as a result of the addition of the annexe.

The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of parking provision and highway safety and therefore accords with Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 in his regard.

*Impact on Trees

Policy LP31 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impact on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated. 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.

As the site is located within the Yaxley Conservation Area, all trees are protected. The proposed development would result in the loss of a number of trees. However, the Council's Arboricultural Officer has concluded that most of them are of low quality, life expectation or amenity value and as such, most are classified as 'C' trees. As such, no objections have been raised to the removal of the trees to accommodate the proposed development. The inspector in the Appeal Decision for 22/01247/FUL also concluded that the proposal would accord with Policy LP31 of the Local PLan where it seeks to avoid adverse impacts on trees, in terms of those which would be retained.

A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to secure a Tree Protection Plan for those to be retained.

As such, subject to the imposition of a condition, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on trees and would therefore be in accordance with Policy LP30 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

*Conclusion

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

Due to the distance to the main dwellinghouse and no shared facilities, the proposed annexe is considered to be physically and functionally disconnected from the main dwellinghouse and is therefore not considered to be ancillary to the main property. It is also considered that the previous upheld reasons for refusal on the grounds of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are still relevant in this case. As such, the proposal is therefore deemed to be contrary to Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the National Design Guide, and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

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. 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**