OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00918/HHFUL **Householder (Full)**

Proposal: **The building of a heated sunken/below ground swimming pool and wooden, single storey pool house.**

Location: **Wornditch Farm Tilbrook Road Kimbolton**

Applicant: **Mrs Sophie Buckman**

Grid Ref: **509370 268470**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The site comprises Wornditch Farm, a collection of buildings accessed from a relatively long drive from Tilbrook Road with the River Kym running to the to the south of the site.

Although not in a designated conservation area, the farmhouse itself and a separate building to the north (a granary) are Grade II listed buildings. A conservatory and hall sited approximately 3 metres west of the granary is not heritage listed.

The dwelling is set on substantial grounds with garden land to the west. To the east is Brittens Farm, another Grade II listed building. This neighbouring heritage asset is approximately 54 metres south west of the proposed development. To the south and west is open land while buildings associated with Aragon House Stud sit immediately to the north.

According to Environment Agency Flood Mapping data and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024), parts of the site are in Flood Zones 2 and 3, although the proposed development is in flood zone 1.

Over the course of the application an associated Listed Building Consent application was withdrawn following the Huntingdonshire Conservation Officers advice that the proposed works are not attached to the nearly listed buildings.

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;
* achieving well-designed places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
* conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2019 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
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedge and Hedgerows
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Planning Practice Guidance is also relevant and a material consideration.

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Placemaking Principles - Parts 3.7 Building Form and 3.8 Building Detailing.

Kimbolton Conservation Area Character Statement (2003).

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Although these is planning history on the site, none are relevant to this application.

CONSULTATIONS

Kimbolton Parish Council - No comments received on the application at the time of determination.

Huntingdonshire District Councils Conservation Officer: No objection. Full comments:

“Building and Site

The proposal site lies within the settings of Listed Buildings - Wornditch Farmhouse, Station Road, Kimbolton (Grade II); Granary at Wornditch Farm (Grade II); Brittens Farmhouse, Station Road (Grade II). The proposal site lies outside the Conservation Area.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to install a swimming pool and build a pool house building.

Assessment

Wornditch Farmhouse is described in its listing as dating from the 17th century or earlier, on an L plan with adjoining 1819 garden range to the south. The main house of two storeys is mainly timber framed on plinth and freestone, rendered with a tiled gabled roof and end stacks. The 1819 range is of three storeys in gault brick with shallow, hipped slate roof. Also with surviving historic decorative features.

The Granary at Wornditch Farm is listed as dating from the late 17th century and of red brick with a plain tiled gabled roof and dentil eaves cornice and central entry.

Brittens Farmhouse is described in the listing as a timber framed, roughcast rendered 17th century cottage of two unit plan and one storey and attics, with a corrugated iron roof and red brick chimney stack.

The proposed swimming pool is to be built in the rear garden of Wornditch Farmhouse. The dimensions of the pool are 10m length x 5m width x 1.5m depth and it is to have a surround of natural stone paving slabs. The submitted information states that the pool is a minimum of 1m from the boundary and a minimum of 5m from any building. Also proposed is landscaping and hedging. The proposal does not include the removal of any existing building, structures or trees.

The applicant also proposes to build a related pool house, dimensions 10m length x 6.7m width x height. This building is intended to stand beyond the swimming pool from Wornditch Farmhouse. The building is to be constructed of featheredge boarding and oak posts with an unstained natural wood finish and roof covering of mock roof slates. The pool building is to stand on a concrete base and with wooden and metal framed windows and black matt plastic rainwater goods.
Conclusion

The 1990 Act gives local planning authorities a general duty to preserve Listed Buildings and to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas (s.66 and s.72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). The National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 states that Local planning authorities need to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets (Para 210). The NPPF 2024 also states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset (Para 212)

The proposed swimming pool and pool building will stand within the garden of Wornditch Farm, adjacent to the Farmhouse and the Listed Granary building. The pool is some distance from the buildings and will be clearly visible from the two Listed Buildings but because it sits below ground it will not be seen as an intrusive upstanding feature and will not be seen as an element within views of the buildings. The natural stone paving is a traditional material, sympathetic to the existing style and materials of the historic buildings and landscaping and hedging is also proposed to provide a screen for the pool area.

The pool building is of a timber construction and simulated slate roof of a similar appearance to real slate (reflecting the slate roof of Wornditch Farmhouse) and in a design which follows a traditional style. It is proposed to stand in the far corner of the garden from the Farmhouse and the Listed Granary. The pool building will be visible in views of the Farmhouse and Listed Granary from Station Road to the south but it will be seen as distant and small in scale in comparison to these Listed Buildings. Because of the proposed location, scale, design and construction materials of the pool building it is not considered harmful to the setting of the Listed Farmhouse and Listed Granary.

Views of the proposed pool and pool building are not visible from Brittens Farmhouse as they are located beyond the Listed Farmhouse and Listed Granary which intervene and block views of and from Brittens Farmhouse so they do not intrude into its setting.

For these above reasons the proposal is not considered harmful to the settings of Wornditch Farmhouse, the Granary at Wornditch Farm, nor Brittens Farmhouse and so recommendation is to support this proposal."

Cambridgeshire Archaeology - No objection subject to a pre-commencment condition and informative. Summary comments:

"Our records indicate that the development lies in an area of high archaeological potential, to the adjacent east of the deserted medieval village of Werkwell (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference. MCB26598). The deserted medieval village stretches some 755m either side of the River Kym. The village consisted of a series of earthworks including enclosures, house

platforms, linear banks and pits, however these have largely been ploughed flat in the post-war period. To the north and east of Wornditch Farm however medieval earthworks do survive as well preserved ridge and furrow (CHER ref. 10858). Further ridge and furrow cultivation has been identified during archaeological investigations at Kym View close to the east.

Due to the archaeological potential of the site a further programme of investigation and recording is required in order to provide more information regarding the presence or absence, and condition, of surviving archaeological remains within the development area, and to establish the need for archaeological mitigation of the development as necessary which can be secured by a pre-commencement condition and informative.

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 and Impact upon the Designated Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity
- Flooding
- Trees

*Design and Visual Amenity and Impact upon the Designated 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 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 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states 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. 205 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. 206 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.

Officers have given special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the nearby Listed Buildings.

The proposal seeks to build a sunken / below ground swimming pool and a wooden, single storey pool house. This structure would be located at an angle to the north western part of the western garden of the site approximately 14 metres west of the existing conservatory. Elevational plans show the timber pool house to be rectangular shaped with a ridge height of 3.843 metres with additional 2.4 metre tower and weathervane. The footprint of this pool house would be 60 sqm (10mx6m) with a projecting front porch and portico to the front. A pump room will be located to the rear of the pool house and a sunken swimming pool (10mx5m) will be sited to the front of the pool house. The proposed layout plans also propose landscaping which does not require planning permission. Full details of design and materials can be found in the accompanying documentation.

Given the proposal would be approximately 200 metres from the public realm and would likely be obscured from view due to vegetation and trees, it is accepted that the proposed pool house and associated works would not be unduly visible or have a significant detriment to the surrounding countryside. It is also considered that the scale, massing, materials and separation represents a subordinate addition to the grounds and other buildings which would be in keeping with the site and its environs.

In terms of heritage impact to the host dwelling, the separate granary to the north and Brittens Farm which are all Grade II listed buildings, officers consider that a neutral level of harm would be caused should the proposal be implemented. Huntingdonshire District Council's Conservation Officer has reviewed the proposals and noting that the proposal would be viewable from the two listed buildings at Worndtich Farm (dwelling and granary) but as the pool house is in traditional style using appropriate materials in a scale and location sympathetic to these heritage assets and the swimming pool would not be an intrusive feature has confirmed that the proposals would not be harmful to the settings of any nearby listed buildings. Officers recommend a materials condition to safeguard the potential impact to the identified heritage assets alternative materials may have on the proposal.

In terms of the heritage impact to archaeological potential, Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeology team have assessed the proposals and highlight that the site is of high archaeological potential, being on or close to a medieval village. Subsequently, the Archaeology team have requested a pre-commencement condition and informative be appended to any consent given to the application for archaeological investigation and recording, and to safeguard any findings therein, known as a Written Scheme of Investigation. Given the archaeological potential of the site, the application of this condition and informative is supported by officers and shall be secured to any consent given to the application.

This pre-commencement condition has been agreed with the applicant prior to determination.

Therefore, subject to conditions and informative, it is considered that the siting, scale, bulk and design of the development would not harm the nearby heritage assets, the host dwelling and would preserves the character and appearance of the setting of the identified listed building. The proposal, therefore, accords with section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, Section 16 of the NPPF (2024), and Policies LP11, 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.

Due to the location, scale and nature of the proposed swimming pool and pool house, away from the nearest residential dwelling at Britten House, approximately 60 metres to the east, it is considered that there will be no significant detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties to warrant refusal of the application.

Therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of overshadowing, overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light or noise and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

*Flood Risk

According to Environment Agency Flood Mapping data and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024), parts of the site are in Flood Zones 2 and 3, although the proposed development is in flood zone 1.

Local Plan Policy LP5 as well as national policy requires proposals to consider flood risks to users on and off the site. Given the scale of the development and that the proposal is for non-habitable space located in Flood Zone 1, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on flood risk for users of the site and neighbouring development and therefore accords with Policies LP5 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Trees

Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated and that 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.
Officers note that there is a Birch Tree sited close to the south eastern corner of the proposed swimming pool which given its proximity to the root protection area of this tree, may detrimentally impact its health should the swimming pool be built.

The proposal has not been accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment or Tree Protection Plan which would safeguard the health and future of this tree. However, given that the site is not within a conservation area, nor legally protected by a Tree Protection Order but does provide screening from the nearby listed buildings, it is considered that this Birch Tree could be protected by condition to replace it should it die as a result of the works.

Accordingly, subject to the imposition of a condition regarding tree protection, the proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy LP31 and LP34 of the 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 character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the setting of the nearby listed buildings;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours
* Would not result in any detrimental impacts to flood risk
and;
* Would not result in any detrimental impacts to on-site trees.

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 **Marie Roseaman**