OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00519/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Conversion of existing annex and store outbuilding into a 1 bedroom dwelling

Location: Land Rear Of 19 North Street Stilton

Applicant: Mr A McCaffrey

Grid Ref: 516219 289415

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application comprises a residential annex and storage building to the rear of No.19 North Street, Stilton. No. 19 is a residential dwelling which abuts the pedestrian footpath of the public highway of North Street. The building subject of this application is detached from the host dwelling, is two stories with a single integral garage, and has an attached single garage. The attached single garage is not associated with this application. Within No.19 ownership control is a storage outbuilding, this application also relates to this building. This application site is located in the centre of the village of Stilton.

No.19 is located in Stilton's Conservation Area and within Flood Zone 1 according to the latest Environment Agency Mapping and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024). The site is not at risk from ground water flooding but is however, at 1 in 30-year risk from surface water flooding. The annex and storage buildings are located to the north of several grade II listed buildings at the crossroad junction in the centre of the village. A Grade II Listed building known as the 'Stilton Cheese Inn' is located to the northeast of the application site by approximately 52m. No other statutory historical or ecological designations are located within or in proximity to the application site.

The application seeks to convert the residential annex into a one-bedroom residential dwelling which would include alterations to the fenestration at the front of the building. The integral garage door would be replaced with brickwork and window at ground floor. At first floor an additional window would also be installed. No other external alterations are sought as part of the proposal. The application also seeks to split the storage outbuilding for partial ownership of the occupants of No.19 and the proposed converted dwelling.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (12th 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 10).'

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.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES
Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019
*LP1: Amount of Development
*LP2: Strategy for Development
*LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
*LP5: Flood Risk
*LP6: Waste Water Management
*LP8: Key Service Centres
*LP11: Design Context
*LP12: Design Implementation
*LP14: Amenity
*LP15: Surface Water
*LP16: Sustainable Travel
*LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
*LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
*LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

There is no 'made' or emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Stilton.

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

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017
Developer Contributions SPD 2011
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)

PLANNING HISTORY
No relevant planning history associated with the application site.

CONSULTATIONS
Highways Officer- No objection. The application seeks to install an aco slot drain which would discharge into the existing surface water drain and hard surface the driveway for the first 5m. The proposed access arrangement is considered acceptable.

Stilton Parish Council - Neither support or object to the planning application. The parish do however raise concerns the access is narrow, there is limited outdoor amenity space, limited parking may result in overspill parking along North Street. The parish also raised concerns regarding the location plan submitted and the demarcation of the existing property and proposed property. The parish do, however, note that if permitted the development would provide a starter home with parking for one vehicle.

Conservation Officer- No objection. The conversion has a neutral impact on the Stilton conservation area. The dwelling, set back from the road, is not adjacent to any listed buildings and results in only minor intensification of the entranceway due to the increase in parking spaces. While a busier character is anticipated for the side road of number 19, this change is localised.

REPRESENTATIONS
No third-party representations in support or objection to the development proposal have been received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

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

- Principle of development
- Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on the Conservation Area
- Highways and Parking
- Residential amenity
- Biodiversity

*Principle of Development

The application site is located within the built-up area of the village of Stilton, which is defined by the Local Plan as a 'Small Settlement'.

Local Plan Policy LP9 supports development proposals located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the:
a. level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement;
b. opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport;
c. effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

In regard to criteria (a) and (b), the settlement of Stilton offers a range of day-to-day facilities including a primary school, a local shop, a public house, chemist and church. Furthermore, the site is located approximately 30m southwest of two bus stops which provide regular services to Huntingdon and the City of Peterborough which offer a wider range of facilities and services. As such, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied the proposed change of use to a residential dwelling, in this location is sustainable given the level of existing services and infrastructure to serve future occupants and these can be accessed with sustainable modes of travel.

In regard to criterion (c), the effect of the development proposal on the character of the immediate locality is discussed below and is considered to be acceptable.

Given the above, the proposed change of use accords with Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable subject to the following material planning considerations.

*Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on the Conservation Area

This application seeks to change the use of the residential annex to the rear of No.19 North Street in the Stilton Conservation Area, whereby special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area as per Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. NPPF advice and Local Plan Policy LP 34 aligns with this statutory duty. Additionally, the building is located in proximity to several Listed Buildings whereby special regard shall be paid to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, as per Section 16(2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended).

Additionally, development proposals will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context (Local Plan Policy LP 11), is well designed and demonstrates that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape (Local Plan Policy LP 12).

The Conservation Officer was also consulted on the application and considered the proposed conversion to have a neutral impact on the Stilton conservation area, as the building is set back from the main road and is not adjacent to any listed building. The Officer also noted that the intensification of the access may form a busier character, but it is anticipated this would only form a localised change. The Conservation Officer raised no objection to the proposed change of use.

External alterations are sought by this application, including the blocking up of the integral garage and the installation of two windows on the front elevation of the building. Officers consider the alterations to the building minor and therefore not considered to harm the setting of the adjacent listed buildings and the character of the conservation area.

A condition is recommended to be imposed on any consent to ensure that the materials used in the fenestration alterations match the existing building.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34, Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the NPPF.

*Highways and Parking
Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

The building located to the rear of No.19 North Street is accessed off a gravelled private drive which services two dwellings. Minor alterations to the private drive are sought to include a metaled surface for the first 5m and the installation of a slot drain for surface water drainage. The proposed conversion is considered to result in the minor intensification of the private access; however, the Local Highways Authority consider this not to pose any unacceptable highway safety risks.

The host dwelling at present benefits from one on-plot parking space for No.19 located to the rear of the dwelling and unrestricted on-street parking along north street. During the course of the application, concerns were raised by Officers that the proposed vehicle parking was inadequately sized and in close proximity to the principle elevation of the building subject to this application. As a result, an amended proposed block plan was submitted.

The amended block plan delineated that the new 1-bed dwelling would be provided with one on-plot parking space to the front of the property and the host dwellings parking would be relocated to the side of the host dwellings rear garden, parallel with the access road.

It is acknowledged the Parish raised concerns regarding the delineation of vehicle parking allocation and the use of North Street for overspill parking. Whilst the Council acknowledge these concerns, on street parking along North Street is outside the applications control. On plot vehicle parking is to be provided for the new dwelling and on plot parking for the host dwelling is to be retained, so it is not considered that future residents would add to the pressure of on street parking in the vicinity of the site. Additionally, HDC does not have a parking policy to impose the provision of vehicle parking to the number of bedrooms proposed, therefore Officers consider one on-street parking space sufficient for a one-bedroom dwelling. In addition, the Local Highways Authority did not raise any concerns that the proposal would cause any unacceptable highway safety risks as a result of on street vehicle parking along North Street.

It is noted the submitted block plan (dwg non. 002 rev C) delineates space for secure cycle storage to the side/rear garden of the proposed dwelling. Details of the secure cycle storage can be secured by condition, should the development be permitted.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposal can safely be accessed, provides sufficient parking for the future occupants, would retain the existing vehicle parking for the host dwelling and would not cause significant safety issues to the surrounding highway network. Therefore, the proposal is considered compliant with Local Plan Policies LP16 and LP17 and paragraph 116 of the NPPF 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.

Residential amenity for adjacent dwellings
The proposal seeks to install one ground floor and one first floor window on the northern elevation of the building. The northern elevation of the building overlooks the courtyard area/private drive area and is separated from the rear amenity space of No. 16 North Street by 10m. The first-floor window proposed would service a non-habitable room. No other external alterations are sought as part of the development proposal. It is therefore considered the proposed dwelling would not result in any unacceptable detrimental overlooking impacts for adjacent neighbours.

Residential amenity for future occupants
In regard to the residential amenity for future occupants, all proposed habitable rooms of the property would be served with windows which offer acceptable levels of daylight and sunlight. It is also considered the proposed dwelling would provide a high standard of amenity for future residents in regard to internal and external residential amenity space for the following reasoning.

It is noted that the Parish raised concerns regarding the extent of residential amenity space provided for the occupants of the new dwelling. It is acknowledged by Officers that the new dwelling would have a shallow rear/side garden of 2.1m in width. Whilst the council does not have minimum standards for rear amenity space, page 237 of the HDC design guide raises questions to consider when designing single dwellings including 'has an adequate amount of amenity space been provided for each residential unit and is it of a shape, size and location to allow effective and practical use by residents'. The submitted site plan (dwg non 002 rev A) demonstrates that there remains sufficient space for bin and cycle storage to accommodate the needs of future occupants of the proposed one-bedroom dwelling. In addition to the bin and cycle storage the side/rear garden would also provide some space, albeit limited, for wall mounted clothes dryers and outdoor seating (e,g bistro set). Furthermore, the proposed conversion would be a 1-bedroom dwelling meaning the number of occupants using the outdoor space would be limited. Officers are therefore satisficed sufficient outdoor amenity space would be provided for and would accord with LP12 and LP17 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

The proposal would have a gross internal area (GIA) of 41.3m². It is acknowledged by Officers that the proposal falls short of the GIA requirement for a 1-bedroom, 2-storey, 2-person dwelling as prescribed by the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). However, it is important to note that this application relates to the conversion of an existing building, rather than the construction of a new dwelling. In this context, and given the constraints of converting an existing structure, the internal space proposed is acceptable.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbours or the future occupants of the dwellinghouse and therefore accords with Local Plan Policy LP14.

*Biodiversity
Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan dovetails this and requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible.

Given the application site primarily comprises of amenity garden grassland and unsealed and sealed hard surfaces, the site is considered to be of low ecological value. The application does not seek to extend the existing annex or create additional hardstanding areas. The proposal would therefore not result in adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity and accord with the objectives of Policy LP30.

As of the 2nd April 2024 mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was imposed on small sites. As the application does not seek to extend the existing annex or create additional hardstanding areas, the Council are satisfied the development would not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, and 5 metres of linear habitats and is therefore BNG exempt per the de minimums threshold.

*Other matters
There are no other material planning considerations which have a significant bearing on the determination of this application.

Conclusion
The proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policy as:
-The principle of the proposed change of use to residential accommodation is acceptable.
-The proposal would not result in an unsustainable form of development.
-The proposed development would have no significant adverse impact on the overall appearance and character of the conservation area or upon residential amenity.
-The proposal includes acceptable arrangements for access and parking to ensure there are no significant impacts to highway safety.
-There are no other material planning considerations which have a significant bearing on the determination of this application

Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is therefore recommended that planning permission should be granted subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Charlotte Dew**

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