OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00466/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Retention of wrap around extension and external staircase

Location: 47 Maryland Avenue Hartford Huntingdon

Applicant: Mr M Zakria

Grid Ref: 524980 273580

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The proposal is for the retention of wrap around extension and external staircase. The proposal amends a previously approved application 19/02539/HHFUL and adds an external staircase.

The dwelling is a two storey detached brick dwelling house with gable roof. It is located within a residential area of Hartford. Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

The site is situated in flood zone 1 and there are no designated heritage assets or protected trees in the vicinity.

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.

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

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (NP)
Policy NE3 - Setting of Huntingdon
Policy BE2 - Local Distinctiveness and Aesthetics

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan (LP) to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity

LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles - Parts 3.5 Parking and Servicing and 3.7 Building Form

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

PLANNING HISTORY

0402318PDE for Remove door and replace with window,
PERMISSION NOT REQUIRED. dated 26.07.2004

0600503PDE for Erection of garage,
REQUIRED dated 16.03.2006

0800588FUL for Extension to dwelling,
PER dated 08.04.2008

1200110FUL for Construction of two storey rear and side extensions,
REFUSED dated 26.03.2012

1300040FUL for Erection of two storey rear and side extensions (revised),
REFUSED dated 04.03.2013

15/01385/HHFUL for Double storey side extension,
REFUSED dated 26.10.2015

15/02274/HHFUL for 2 storey side extension,
GRANTED dated 17.02.2016

16/01311/HHFUL for 2 storey side extension,
GRANTED dated 03.08.2016

16/02223/HHFUL for Wrap around extension of already approved side and rear extensions.,
GRANTED dated 21.12.2016

19/02539/HHFUL for Wrap around extension of already approved side and rear extensions.,
GRANTED dated 17.02.2020

CONSULTATIONS

Cadent gas: no objection subject to informative.
Parish Council: Recommend refuse.
-scale is not suitable or in keeping with character of the area
-highway safety concerns due to increased parking, particularly on pavements
- not compliant with neighbourhood plan policies BE1, BE2 and NE3 and Local Plan policy LP17.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was advertised by :
- Site notice,
- Neighbour letters
- And on the council's website

3 objections were received in regard to:
- Parking concerns with on street parking due to increase in cars

- Privacy concerns
- Neighbours using flat roof for balcony causing harmful overlooking
- External staircase creating overlooking
- Staircase is out of keeping
- Why is the external staircase needed for one household
- Concerns house in multiple occupation with 6 bedrooms.
- Roof tiles, brickwork and windows do not match
- Impact on house values (officer comment: not a material planning consideration)
- Residential pond nearby and concerns over impact on wildlife.

ASSESSMENT

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- o Design and Visual Amenity
- o Residential amenity
- o Highways and parking
- o Landscaping and wildlife

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 NE3 of the NP states that development within and on the edge of Huntingdon will only be permitted where it responds positively to the area's character and identity. New development will be supported provided that it does not adversely affect or devalue the structure, diversity or views of the streetscene and landscape. New development, where supported by other planning policies, must be integrated into the streetscene and landscape through design and the incorporation of suitable green buffers and planting including trees.

Policy BE2 states all development must be designed to a high quality that reinforces local distinctiveness, including in relation to materials, built form and settlement patterns. Design should be guided by the:
1. Overall scale & density;
2. Massing & height;
3. Landscape and
4. Access to the site and its surroundings including considerations of flood risk management.

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 principle of the wrap around extension was approved in application: 19/02539/HHFUL and the footprint, scale and massing remain the same. This will not have any greater impact than the approved, on the character and appearance of the area or neighbouring amenity from overshadowing, loss of outlook or overdominance.
However, some changes have occurred to the fenestration, internal arrangements and a new external staircase which will be considered below.

Comments have raised that the materials do not match. However the brick and tile is felt to be a close match, and the windows are white UPVc to match but do not have the same glazing or subdivisions. This glazing and subdivision does differ from the host property but does not significant harm the character of the building or surrounding area and thus is not felt to be to a degree to warrant substantial harm or a refuse. These windows and doorway are a significant distance from neighbours to not cause any harm to amenity from overlooking.

To the front a second doorway has been created and a first floor doorway at the side. The internals on the 2019 lacked some annotation of rooms, but it is clear on the new permission that there are more bedrooms proposed. Although, representations have concerns that this is not a dwelling house, the application is applied for as one dwelling and households can have multiple family members living as one house. The applicant was asked about the house being one dwelling house as it had separate accesses and some of the internals were detached from the rest of the house. The applicant amended the error on the plans so that the whole house links internally. They also explained the family living situation:

'The 2 doors: The family who live in the house have adult children, and their culture call for Males to be separated from females. So when I am welcomed as a male, After removing my shoes I expect to be welcomed into a room used by males; if there are females in the room they will leave to their own quarters
The adult children expect to respect their culture
Interior design: The revised drawings show the link into the main house from the first floor room entered via the external stairs.
With the structure and balance of our society changing rapidly changing, this will impact upon the traditional "British way of life"'

Thus, it is not felt that the house would become separate apartments and is one household living together. Furthermore, the fallback position would be that internal alterations can be made to a dwelling without the need for planning permission. Therefore, the internal work could have been achieved without further consideration.

The side elevation changes include fenestration changes and an external staircase. The 2019 permission approved 5 side elevation windows. The ground floor openings remain (albeit two are slightly larger) and the biggest changes are to the first floor. A new first floor window is proposed and a doorway with external staircase.

The openings are a significant distance away from neighbouring dwellings to not cause harm to amenity from overlooking. There is an amenity area to the side, however the original house had a window at first floor. To ensure some privacy to the occupiers and neighbouring land a condition will be imposed for obscure glazing as these windows are a secondary bedroom window and doorway.

The external staircase is out of character with other properties in the area, however, the site is unique given its location at the end of the row and adjacent to the open area of land. It is set away from neighbouring dwellings and has been kept to a minimum size as it does not have a large platform at first floor that could cause significant overlooking from long periods of use. This is an access stairway and not a balcony and thus if it is used as a balcony would be subject to enforcement action. The limited time of use and the utilitarian functionality of the staircase structure is not felt to be overly imposing or harmful to the character of the area in this unique situation and thus is recommended for approval.

To the rear the window openings have reduced in size and although they differ in subdivision it is not felt that they cause significant harm to the character of the building. There is less glazing and thus less overlooking to neighbouring amenity.

The flat roof has been raised as a concern by neighbours. This was previously approved. But the concern is that it is being used as a balcony. The plans do not show a balcony and if it is being used in this way a neighbour can report this to the enforcement team to be investigated.

Policy within the local plan to 2036 (LP 17 Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement) seeks to incorporate appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilities and accessibility for service and emergency vehicles.

Although neighbours have raised concerns over parking, the 2019 permission granted the same scale development that could have been altered internally to create the same amount of bedrooms without the benefit of planning permission. Thus it is not felt that the proposal would cause greater impact to highways than what could already be achieved. Therefore it does not significantly harm the highway to a greater degree to warrant the applications refusal.

It is not felt that the proposal has any greater impact ion wildlife than the permission approved in 2019 and thus the principle has been approved.

Policy BE1 of the NP refers to landscaping and planting, however it is not felt that it would be reasonable or meet the tests to impose a condition on this permission for landscaping when the footprint and form of the building could be achieved under the 2019 permission.

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 significantly harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours.
* Would not significantly harm highway safety
* Would not significantly harm wildlife.

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.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388424 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Hannah Hodges**