OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/01094/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Single storey rear extension & outbuilding to rear

Location: 27 Lucks Lane Buckden St Neots

Applicant: Ms Nick McMorran

Grid Ref: 519233 267448

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The dwelling is a two storey mid terrace brick house located within a residential area of the Buckden Conservation Area. It is opposite two Listed Buildings to the north-east and south-east of the application site. It is in flood zone 1.

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

The application is for a single storey rear extension and an outbuilding to the rear.

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 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)
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles - Part 3.7 Building Form

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

PLANNING HISTORY

None

CONSULTATIONS

Buckden Parish Council - no response received at time of determination.

HDC Conservation Team have no comment to make on the proposal.

HDC Arboricultural Officer – no comments received at time of determination.

REPRESENTATIONS

One neighbour comment has been received from the neighbouring property, no.25 Lucks Lane. There are no objections to the proposal, but wanted to point out that they have smooth newts in their garden pond.

Officer comment – the comment is noted and following this an Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been received from the applicant, which is discussed in the main body of the report below.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Design and Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential amenity
- Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity

*Design and Visual Amenity and Impact on 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 property is within the Buckden Conservation Area and opposite two Grade II Listed Buildings.

Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

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. 212 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. 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.

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.

The proposal is for a single storey rear extension and outbuilding to the rear. The single storey rear extension will replace an existing rear entrance and timber shed. The proposed rear extension will have a flat roof with flat roof light and will provide an open plan kitchen/living area. It is to be constructed of matching materials, helping the addition to blend in with existing main dwelling.

The outbuilding is to be constructed of timber boarding with one set of bi-fold doors out to the rear garden. It is set in by approximately half metre from the rear boundary. The materials and design are considered appropriate for this type of structure.

The Conservation Officer has considered the proposal and has no comment to make.

Officers have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed buildings and their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Officers have given special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It is considered that harm will not be caused to either of these designated heritage assets because the works are not visible from the public highway and will have a neutral impact on the significance of the conservation area and causes no harm to the significance of the listed building.

The proposal, therefore, accords with ss. 16, 66 & 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, paragraphs 202-221 of the NPPF (2024), Policies 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.

The rear extension replaces existing structures and aligns with the neighbouring rear extension to the north, mitigating any detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. One set of glazed doors open out to the rear garden and a large fixed glazed window is proposed to the side elevation facing the southern side boundary of close boarded fencing, mitigating any overlooking impact.

The outbuilding is to the rear of a long garden. It is set in from the rear boundary by approximately half a metre, with a height of 2.5 metres. As such it accords with Permitted Development Rights, where planning permission would not be required. It will be visible to no.13 Mayfield, to the rear of the application site and to the rear garden of the adjoining property to the

north, however due to its limited height, it is considered unlikely to result in any significant detrimental impact to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal will not result in any significant detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties to warrant a refusal of the application. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

*Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036 states 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.

It is noted that one small tree will be removed from the rear garden to make way for the construction of the outbuilding. The HDC Arboricultural Officer has been consulted on the proposal, but no comments have been received. It is acknowledged that the property is within the Buckden Conservation Area and therefore trees are protected. Whilst it is regrettable that a tree will be removed from the application site, it is noted that it is a small specimen of low amenity value and therefore, in this instance, its removal is accepted.

Therefore, due to the minor nature of the development, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy LP31 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development.

In addition, there is now a statutory requirement for sites to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Exemptions to this legislative requirement includes development to an existing house, including development within the curtilage of a house. Therefore, this application is exempt from this legislative requirement.

The adjoining neighbours to the north, no.25, reported that smooth newts were present in their garden pond and therefore an Ecological Impact Assessment was submitted in support of the application. The report notes the anecdotal evidence of Great Crested Newts in the neighbouring property to the north; however, it concluded that the pond is not likely to be a breading pond. In addition, it is noted that the pond is outside of the application site boundary and therefore no further recommendations are made in this regard. Recommendations have been proposed as general construction safeguards for the protection of wildlife within the site, and these will be secured by condition.

Therefore, notwithstanding the required condition, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's 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 designated heritage assets;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon biodiversity and geodiversity.

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 **Olivia Manton**