OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02090/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Proposed conversion of existing outbuilding to self contained dwelling

Location: Outbuilding Adjacent 17 The Drive Perry

Applicant: Ms R Balandyte-Smart

Grid Ref: 514716 266294

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is to the east of a collection of dwelling houses that are detached from the main village of Perry, and were once associated with the employees of the prison. The application site is more closely related to the Grade II Listed Building former Stables to Gaynes Hall with Gaynes Hall to the south of the site.

There are no other heritage assets within the area and the site is within flood zone 1 and as such is at low risk of flooding.

This application seeks approval for the proposed conversion of an existing outbuilding to a self-contained dwelling.

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 safe 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.

The National Design Guide (2021)
* C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
* I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
* I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
* B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
*M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
* N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity

* H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
* H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
* H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities

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

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

LP1: Amount of Development
LP2: Strategy for Development
LP5: Flood Risk
LP6: Waste Water Management
LP9: Small Settlements
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP25: Housing Mix
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP33: Rural Buildings
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

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
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)

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

PLANNING HISTORY

None

CONSULTATIONS

Perry Parish Council recommends approval. The application was discussed with applicants at Perry Parish Council public meeting in December 2024. Concerns re vehicular and construction access were discussed and allayed following reassurances given. Agreed positive development for the community.

HDC Environmental Health – no objections.

HDC Conservation Team – support the proposal. It is noted that by maintaining the external appearance of the outbuilding and reinstating openings to the west elevation and adding a roof covering similar to that of the farmhouse, the proposal is considered to maintain the existing contribution which the outbuilding makes to the setting of the Listed Building Gaynes Hall Stables.

The Listed Building Gaynes Hall is some distance away from the outbuilding across the road and within its own grounds so the proposed alterations to the outbuilding and the proposal site are not considered to have an impact on its existing contribution to the setting of this Listed Building. The proposal is considered to preserve the setting of the Listed Building the former Stables to Gaynes Hall, and also sustain its significance.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highway Authority - No objections to the proposed development. It was noted that the site is located on a private development accessed from the B661 East Perry. It is considered that there will be no significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway resulting from the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

No objections received at time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 47 of the NPPF (2023). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of:

o Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
o Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
o St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029
o Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan (2017)
o Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (2018)
o Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (2019)
o Bury Village Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
o Buckden Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
o Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036 (2022)
o Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2021 to 2036 (2023)
o The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036 (2023)
o Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036 (2023)

The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

The main issues to consider are:

o The Principle of Development
o Design and Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets
o Residential Amenity

o Highway Safety
o Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
o Biodiversity
o Flood Risk
o Other Issues

*The Principle of the Development

The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 defines a built-up area as a distinct group of buildings that includes 30 or more homes. Land which relates more to the group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the built-up area. Whilst the site is not located within the main group of dwellings, it is considered that it lies within the immediate area and is closely associated with the development. Therefore, given the site forms part of a distinct group of at least 30 homes, the application site is considered to be within the built-up area.

Policy LP9 of the adopted Local Plan states that a proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to
(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; and
(c) effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

Given the small scale of the proposed development, the proposal is considered to be sustainable in relation to the level of service and infrastructure within the settlement of Perry which comprise a convenience store and a public house. Furthermore, the site is in close proximity to a bus stop which regularly travel to Spaldwick, Huntingdon and other surrounding settlements. As such, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the creation of a single dwelling in this location is considered to be sustainable in terms of the level of existing service and infrastructure within the settlement to serve the dwelling with access to sustainable modes of travel to access everyday services and facilities.

In addition, the conversion of the outbuilding, is considered to be carried out sympathetically and retains the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

LP33 Rural Buildings states that a proposal for the conversion of a building in the countryside will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
a. the building is:
i. redundant or disused;
ii. of permanent and substantial construction;
iii. not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required; and
iv. structurally capable of being converted for the proposed use; and
b. the proposal:
i. would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting; and
ii. any extension or alteration would not adversely affect the form, scale, massing or proportion of the building.

A proposal for the replacement of a building in the countryside will be supported where criteria a, i to iii above are fulfilled and the proposal would lead to a clear and substantial enhancement of the immediate setting. A modest increase in floorspace will be supported.

It is noted that the proposal is for the conversion of an existing outbuilding, with no increase in floorspace. Site photos and a site visit confirm that the outbuilding is currently disused and is of sound construction, capable of being converted into a single dwelling. The external appearance

of the outbuilding will be maintained with original openings being reinstated and a new slate roof will match that of the main dwelling. Therefore, it is considered that the conversion will lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting.

Overall, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in this instance, with the proposal being accordance with Policy LP9 and LP33 of the adopted Local Plan, subject to all other planning matters being addressed.

*Design and Visual Amenity and the Impact Upon Heritage Assets

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, the National Design Guide and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Stables for Gaynes Hall is a Grade II Listed Building and is adjacent to the outbuilding. Gaynes Hall, a Grade II* is opposite the application site, but is set within its own grounds and is of limited visibility from the application site.

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 proposal seeks approval for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to a self-contained dwelling. The existing outbuilding stands within the enclosed garden of 17 The Drive, which is surrounded by trees along its perimeter boundary. The Listed Building Gaynes Hall Stables stands a short distance from the outbuilding with the fence and tree boundary between. The proposed works reconfigure the interior of the building to convert it to residential use. The exterior of the building is to be retained, with new openings to the west elevation, re-using three of the blocked openings and creating a large glazed opening at the north end, incorporating the existing doorway. A new single doorway is to be inserted into the south gable end. The existing roof of corrugated sheeting, described as asbestos, is to be removed and replaced with roof slates to match the farmhouse. By maintaining the external appearance of the outbuilding and reinstating openings to the west elevation and adding a roof covering similar to that of the farmhouse, the proposal is considered to maintain the existing contribution which the outbuilding makes to the setting of the Listed Building Gaynes Hall Stables.

A timber post and rail fence to the match existing boundary treatments will divide the garden space from the original existing dwelling.

The proposed access and parking for the converted outbuilding is contained within the existing garden perimeter of No 17 and aligns with the outbuilding.

Officers have given special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the setting of the Listed Buildings. It is considered that harm will not be caused to these designated heritage assets because the proposed alterations to the outbuilding and the proposal site are not considered to have an impact on its existing contribution to the setting of the Listed Building. As such it will not have a significantly detrimental impact upon either the character and appearance of the local area, or on the setting of the listed building. The proposal, therefore, accords with policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019), the NPPF (2024) and the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) 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 proposal involves the conversion of an existing single storey outbuilding. New window openings to the front elevation will face the private amenity space for the property. There are no fenestration details on the rear or side elevations, with the front door to the side south facing side elevation. As such it is considered that there will not be any significant detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties to warrant a refusal of the application.

Therefore, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

*Highway Safety

Policy LP17 states that a proposal will be supported where it incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates accessibility for service and emergency vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles. Policy LP16 seeks safe physical access from the public highway.

The proposed access and parking for the converted outbuilding is contained within the existing garden perimeter of No 17 and aligns with the outbuilding. Parking is provided for three cars. No bin or cycle storage is shown on the site plan, however this requirement will be conditioned to be provided prior to first occupation. It is considered that there is sufficient space to provide storage areas within the application site area.

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Department has been consulted on the proposal and notes that the site is located on a private development from the B661 East Perry. It is considered that the there will be no significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway as a result of the proposal.

Therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policy LP16 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework 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 the proposal is for the conversion of an existing outbuilding. One existing tree within the site will be retained. It is noted that the proposal does not involve any construction

works within the site, however care should be taken regarding the storage of construction materials within the root protection area of the tree. Due to the visual significance and size of the tree, a pre-commencement condition will be applied to secure the protection of the tree.

Therefore, notwithstanding the required condition, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy LP31 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 also requires development proposals to ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain in biodiversity 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, since the previous application was determined there is now a statutory requirement for sites to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Exemptions to this legislative requirement include developments that are below the following thresholds:

A development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:?
- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat?
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows

The proposal impacts the conversion of an existing building and as such there will be limited impact on the existing site. The proposal is therefore below the stated threshold and therefore the application is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain legislation and the mandatory 10% increase.

Matters relating to LP30 do still need to be addressed, however. An Ecology Report has been submitted with the proposal, which confirms that no evidence of protected mammals, reptiles, amphibians or notable invertebrates being found on site. Additional planting has been proposed to enhance the site which will be secured by condition.

Therefore, subject to conditions, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Flood Risk

Given that the site is at the lowest risk of flooding according to the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 and Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Flood Zone 1) and the proposal is for minor development, the sequential and exceptions tests for flooding nor the submission of a flood risk assessment are considered necessary in this instance in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG.

Given the low flood risk and minor scale of development, officers are satisfied that full details of the surface and foul water drainage can be secured as part of building regulations and other relevant legislative requirements in this instance.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on both flood risk and surface water and therefore accords with Policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

* Other Issues

Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

Policy LP25 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals that include housing to meet the optional Building Regulation requirement M4(2)" Accessible and adaptable dwellings" unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this unachievable. No statement has been provided to confirm that the proposed development is designed in accordance with and will be built in accordance with the M4(2) standards. Therefore, this will be secured by condition to ensure that the development is built in accordance with these standards and that they are maintained for the life of the development.

Water Efficiency

Policy LP12 (j) of the Local Plan to 2036 states that new dwellings must comply with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations. A condition will be attached to any consent to ensure compliance with the above, in accordance with Policy LP12 (j) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Developer Contributions

A Unilateral Undertaking to secure the provision of wheeled bins has been submitted as part of the application process. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The development will be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education.

*Conclusion
The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it:

* The principle of the development of this site for residential purposes is acceptable;
* 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.
* Would not adversely affect flood risk in the locality;
* There are no other material planning considerations which lead to the conclusion that the proposal is unacceptable.

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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