OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00482/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Erection of single and two storey rear extension

Location: 8 St Neots Road Abbotsley St Neots

Applicant: Ms Robinson

Grid Ref: 522598 256648

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

8 St Neots Road is a two-storey semi-detached dwellinghouse located in a residential area in Abbotsley and is situated within the Abbotsley Conservation Area. The existing property is of a gable-end design with a single-storey lean-to element on the rear elevation.

This application seeks permission for the erection of single and two storey rear extensions at the property. The single storey extension would be of a flat roof design with the two-storey development split into three sections, a lean-to element, a flat roof element and a gable end element. The proposal would be constructed using matching finishing materials to the main dwellinghouse.

This application has been accompanied by a Design, Access and Heritage Statement and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

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, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, 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
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)

The National Design Guide (2021)

C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
C2- Value heritage, local history and culture
I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
I3 - Create character and identity

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history.

CONSULTATIONS

Abbotsley Parish Council - Councillors thought that it was a slightly odd and complicated scheme designed to avoid overlooking and restricted space. There was some concern about the proximity to 6 St Neots Road but as 6 St Neots Road had a fairly recent extension approved, it was considered that development of No. 8 should not have restrictions to development due to adjacent previous development. Overlooking was only from the bathroom and it was considered that obscure glass to this window should be condition of any approval.

The Parish Council considered that there was no impact on the streetscene and the extension could barely be seen from an east direction as the extension was set back from the gable end.

It was considered there were not material considerations to recommend refusal and the Parish Council therefore voted unanimously to recommend approval.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

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

- Scale, Design and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity

* Scale, Design and Impact on Heritage Assets

The Local Planning Authority is required to ensure that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at Section 72. This is also reflected in Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This application seeks permission for the erection of single and two storey rear extensions at No. 8 St Neots Road, Abbotsley. The single storey extension would be of a flat roof design with the two-storey development split into three sections, a lean-to element, a flat roof element and a gable end element. The proposal would be constructed using matching finishing materials to the main dwellinghouse. The property is located within the Abbotsley Conservation Area.

The existing dwellinghouse is two-storeys in height, of a gable-end design with a single-storey lean-to element to the rear and is constructed with a rendered finish. The character of residential properties in the streetscene and immediate vicinity is varied with examples of gables, half-hips, lean-to and flat roof elements.

The proposed two-storey rear extension is considered to be a subservient addition to the main dwellinghouse by virtue of its lower ridge height and width. The proposed two storey extension would include a flat roof element extending beyond the rear elevation at an angle, due to constraints within the site to avoid impacts on neighbouring properties amenities. A similar feature is included on the neighbouring property of No. 6 St Neots Road and as such, it would be unreasonable for the Local Planning Authority to refuse planning permission for this reason only. Furthermore, the flat roof element would not be readily visible from public vantage points.

The single-storey rear extension is considered to be acceptable in terms of its scale, design and appearance and would reflect the main dwellinghouse and neighbouring properties. It is also worth noting that the proposed extension would be constructed of matching materials to the existing dwellinghouse.

Given the varied style, design and appearance of properties in the immediate vicinity and the fact that the proposed development is localised to the rear of the property where it would not be visually prominent in the streetscene of St Neots Road, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that whilst the design of the extension is unusual, the proposed extension would not result in any visual harm to the site, the streetscene or the surrounding area. Furthermore, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Abbotsley Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its scale, design and appearance and would not result in any significantly detrimental visual impacts on the existing property, the streetscene of St Neots Road, the Abbotsley Conservation Area or surrounding area. As such, proposal is therefore deemed to be in accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (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.

The closest neighbouring properties that are likely to be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development are Nos. 6 and 10 St Neots Road, Abbotsley.

With regard to No. 6 St Neots Road, it is recognised that the proposed two-storey extension, by virtue of its scale and proximity to the neighbouring property, would result in some overbearing, overshadowing and loss of light impacts. However, No. 6 is set back and has a reasonable rear amenity area well beyond the proposed extension. The area that would be impacted upon the most would be adjacent to the neighbours two storey extension and an area used for passage to the rear of the property. The roof of the proposed extension is also sloping away from the boundary (which comprises a 1.8m high close boarded fence) to reduce any impacts. Accordingly the impacts are not considered to be severe and warrant refusal of planning permission in this instance.

Given the proposed extension would only marginally extend beyond the rearmost elevation of the neighbouring property of No. 10 St Neots Road, the proposal would not breach the 45 degree rule (as defined in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD) with the neighbouring property. Whilst the small kitchen/dining window facing the boundary is likely to be affected, the room is also served by double doors to the rear. Accordingly the proposal would not result in any detrimental overbearing, overshadowing or loss of light impacts to warrant a refusal of planning permission.

The Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposal would not result in any significantly detrimental overlooking impacts on No. 10 St Neots Road as the first-floor rear elevation window serving a bedroom would be angled so as to overlook the amenity space of the application property. This relationship would therefore be similar to others houses in the vicinity. It is noted that there would be some overlooking impacts on the rear amenity space of No. 6, however, the impacts are not considered to be severe enough to warrant refusal of planning permission in this instance due to the angle of the window in relation to the neighbouring property and the generous plot of the neighbouring property.

A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure the proposed first floor bathroom window is obscure glazed and also to remove permitted developments to allow for the installation of windows on the property without consent from the Local Planning Authority.

On balance, the development is considered acceptable in terms of overshadowing, overbearing impact, overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*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 to 2036 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, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

This application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), which concludes that there is negligible potential for protected species and there are no significant ecological constraints that would prevent the proposed works. The Local Planning Authority are satisfied with the findings of the PEA and conditions would be imposed on any planning permission

granted to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the mitigation and enhancements measures proposed.

As such, the proposal is considered to broadly be in accordance with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*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 significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours.

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 **Jennifer Wallis**