# OFFICER REPORT

**Case No:** 25/00084/HHFUL **Householder (Full)**

**Proposal:** Retrospective application for replacement windows from white wooden windows to white PVC windows

**Location:** 9 Royce Court St Neots Road Eaton Ford

**Applicant:** Mr Stewart Blake

**Grid Ref:** 517763 260058

## DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The site is located on the south side of St Neots Road and accommodates two buildings containing two-storey apartment buildings dating from the late 1980s, constructed in brick and tile. It is accessed off the highway with a large forecourt to the side of the property for communal parking. No. 9 is located is a projection to the north of the rearmost building, which is located behind the main frontage building to St Neots Road.

To the north-west the site borders the other apartment building fronting the highway and separated by a communal car park. To the north-east and west there are neighbouring commercial premises/dwellings which are also two-storey but with a single storey rear projection bordering the application site to the north. To the south the site borders neighbouring gardens and is separated by a mature boundary hedge.

This application seeks retrospective permission for the replacement of 6 no windows on the west, north, west and east facing elevations of the ground floor of this building. They will have broadly the same appearance as the previous wooden framed windows which were removed.

The site lies within the wider St Neots Conservation Area.

## NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) paragraph 8 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 also sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* making effective use of land
* achieving well-designed, beautiful, and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural 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)
LP 11 Design Context
LP 12 Design Implementation
LP 14 Amenity
LP34 Heritage Assets and their Settings

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
Place Making Principles - Parts 3.7 Building Form and 3.8 Building Detailing
St Neots Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
3b The Eatons
Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

None Relevant

**CONSULTATIONS**

St Neots Town Council - Support - consider proposal would assimilate itself into the existing part of the town.

**REPRESENTATIONS**

None received at the time of determination.

**SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

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

- Design and Visual Amenity
- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity

*Design and Visual Amenity

Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan state, amongst other matters, that proposals will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built environment, contributes positively to the character and identity of the area and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape. The NPPF at Section 12 refers to design.

This application seeks retrospective permission for the replacement of 6 no windows on the west, north, west and east facing elevations of the ground floor of this building. They will have broadly the same appearance as the previous wooden framed windows which were removed. Apart from the use of UPVC instead of painted wood, the proposed extension would broadly reflect the character of the existing windows in the block, particularly as others have been replaced.

As such, the proposal responds positively to its context or constraints, thereby being in accordance with policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. The proposal therefore complies with Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

*Heritage

Policy LP34 states great weight and importance is given to the conservation of heritage assets and their settings. It also states 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.

The NPPF at Section 12 refers to design. Section 16 relates to heritage with paragraph 212 stating "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".

Paragraph 215 states "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use".

Section 72 of the Planning Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The site is located on St Neots Road which forms part of the wider St Neots Conservation Area, and reflects the historical importance of this main route into the town and the buildings and spaces located along it.

The flat forms part of a more modern built intervention into the conservation area and is thus not therefore considered a typical example of the typology and layout of the dwellings in this part of the street. In addition the flat in question is tucked back into the site and not particularly visible from public vantage points.

The window designs broadly reflect those on the found originally on the building in terms of size, proportion and detail, the only change is that they are manufactured in white UPVC rather than painted wood.

The impact on the character of the conservation area is therefore considered to be neutral and the proposal would thus maintain the character and appearance of the designation.

As such, the proposals would be visually acceptable and would not be harmful to the heritage assets. The proposal would therefore accord with policies LP11, LP12 and LP34, the NPPF and the abovementioned Act.

*Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 of the Local Plan states that 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 a like for like replacement of existing windows in exactly the same position on the building. The relationship to neighbouring properties would remain unchanged and the proposal would therefore not give rise to any increases in potential overlooking compared to the existing situation.

By reason of siting, scale, design and massing, the development would not result in harm to the occupiers of any neighbouring dwellings and is therefore in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

*Conclusion

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

* The siting, scale, design and materials are acceptable
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation area;
* Would not have any detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;