

Application Ref: 12/01354/HHFUL

Proposal: Addition of second storey to existing property and two storey extension with underlying cellar

Site: The Retreat, Leicester Road, Thornhaugh, Peterborough

Applicant: Mr Martin Witherington

Agent:

Referred by: **Head of Planning Services**

Reason: The level of local interest in the application

Site visit: 24.09.2012

Case officer: Mr D Jolley

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E-Mail: david.jolley@peterborough.gov.uk

Recommendation: **REFUSE**

1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal

Site and surroundings

The property is located in a very small settlement off the A47 comprising Home Farmhouse, its former agricultural buildings (converted to residential use), two pairs of semi-detached former agricultural workers cottages (mid and late Victorian period) and two new detached infill dwellings. The area is considered to be open countryside and has no village boundary as defined in the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2005 and in the emerging planning policies (DPD) 2012.

The property sits in a large site in wooded shallow valley and is located to the north east of the former Home Farmstead, which comprises three grade II listed buildings. The supporting information advises that the application property is set in part of a former quarry.

The existing dwelling is a small storey stone faced property under a hipped Collyweston slate roof. The dwelling is in need of renovation and modernisation.

Proposal

Permission is sought to extend the property and increase its height to make it two storeys in height.

The height of the dwelling will be increased from 4.7 metres to 10 metres to apex. The property will be extended to the North West with a two storey extension for 9.6 metres.

The footprint of the property will increase from approximately 87sqm to 145 sqm.

The ground floor extension will be finished in brick with all upper parts of the extension and new first floor above the existing cottage will be rendered. Clay or slate tiles are the proposed roof materials.

2 Planning History

No relevant planning history

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 7 - Good Design

Development should add to the overall quality of the area; establish a strong sense of place; optimise the site potential; create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses; support local facilities and transport networks; respond to local character and history while not discouraging appropriate innovation; create safe and accessible environments which are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Planning permission should be refused for development of poor design.

Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)

CS16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

CS17 - The Historic Environment

Development should protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment including non scheduled nationally important features and buildings of local importance.

CS10 - Environment Capital

Development should make a clear contribution towards the Council's aspiration to become Environment Capital of the UK.

Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (Submission Version 2012)

Whilst this document is not yet adopted planning policy, it is at an advanced stage of preparation. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 216), considerable weight can be given to the policies contained within the document in decision-making.

PP01 - Design Quality

Permission will only be granted for development which makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment; does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area; is sufficiently robust to withstand/adapt to climate change; and is designed for longevity.

Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) (2005)

H16 - Residential Design and Amenity

Permission will only be granted for residential development (including change of use) where adequate amenity for the residents is provided.

4 Consultations/Representations

Parish Council (26.09.12)

The development of the bungalow should be mindful of the privacy of neighbouring properties. There appears to be a potential issue as the proposed 1st floor windows would overlook the Old Dairy, and part of their garden, which are the main living areas of the property. Could this aspect of the design be considered by Planning so that immediate and potential impact be minimised, maybe by restriction of height and planning conditions preventing future addition of windows which overlook affected properties, i.e. to the south and east aspect of the property?

Comment has been made regarding the accuracy of the plans submitted with respect to proposed heights. Could Planning please ensure that they are in order?

Are there any conditions or controls which can be applied to ensure that the development, as proposed or otherwise, is carried out in such a manner which contains these risks for the benefit of the immediate neighbours and wider community of Home Farm?

Conservation Officer (25.09.12)

Objects (see section 5 of this report for more details)

Ramblers (Peterborough)

No comments received

Peterborough Local Access Forum

No comments received

Rights of Way Officer

No comments received

Local Residents/Interested Parties

Initial consultations: 5

Total number of responses:5

Total number of objections: 2

Total number in support: 3

5 representations were received in relation to the application, 2 objections and 3 letters of support.

Objections

- If the application goes ahead it will permit views into the habitable room windows and amenity space of the old dairy.
- The drawings contain inaccuracies which make it difficult to determine the heights of the proposed dwelling.
- It is unclear whether the increase in height is due to the cellar
- Concerned that the roof space will allow for the insertion of an additional floor.
- Plans are inaccurate, the drawing that shows the plan view of the existing property does not reflect the view from the south, it shows a mirror image of what is there.
- Drawing R3a shows faint lines on the north and west faces but does not explain what these are.
- Drawings do not show the impact of the cellar in terms of the topography of the site and what will be visible, if the ground level is to be raised, this should be shown on drawings, complete with finished slab levels.

Support

- The design is appealing, sympathetic to the situation and the surroundings.
- The proposal can only be an improvement on the grubby little residence currently situated there. The current bungalow is situated so low down in the valley that adding a second storey couldn't affect anyone. An additional level will not negatively impact on anyone.
- The proposal could also greatly improve the ambience of the whole Home Farm hamlet.

The current property is very run down and does nothing to improve the area. Any attempt to maintain the building in its current format should be discouraged. The property is more or less out of sight of just about every other local resident and will remain so. The building, if proceeded with, will at least match another extensive building project recently concluded nearby as regards its suitability for the location.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

The main considerations are

- The impact of the proposal on the character of the area
- The impact of the proposal on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings
- The impact upon adjacent listed buildings

The impact of the proposal on the character of the area

The property stands in a large site in wooded shallow valley which was once the site of a former quarry. The dwelling is located to the north east of the former Home Farmstead, which comprises three grade II listed buildings.

The current building is a small single storey stone faced property under a hipped Collyweston slate roof. The building is not readily seen against others in the settlement because of its location. The building is only readily visible from the end of the road leading down to the former stables and Dairy Lodge. The building is not currently prominent in views from Dairy Lodge to the south owing to its size, low height and the strong wooded backdrop.

The height of the proposed dwelling will cause it to break the line of the tree cover to the rear of the dwelling, bringing what is a rather large building further forward within the street scene and making it far more prominent.

This effect will be worsened by the applicant's decision to render the top half of the dwelling. The use of half render is considered to be against the grain of the local vernacular, especially in relation to period buildings and is considered to be harmful to the character of the wider area when viewed from the south west. Brick is proposed to be used for the ground floor extension, but given the size of the extension, this is considered inappropriate.

The current design suffers from being both excessively tall and narrow, giving the proposed dwelling an odd massing and form, in particular the front facing gable element which is seen against the excessively wide extension running to the north west and results in visually unbalanced dwelling at odds with the more successful dwellings within the hamlet. The scale of the proposed extensions creating a two storey property is excessive, with an overall width of 19 metres at ground floor.

The proposed fenestration appears haphazard again is lacking a cohesive approach. The windows of the front elevation are an odd mix of sizes and heights, no two windows appear to be exactly the same, with the full height French doors appearing particularly unsuccessful, competing with the main entrance. The front porch appears rather small in comparison to the excessive width of the dwelling, its design and roof pitch do not seem to relate properly to the main dwelling. The drawings themselves are not clear in this respect but it would appear to show the porch being constructed of some type of translucent material, if this is the case the porch would be considered to be totally incongruous with its surroundings.

The drawings submitted do not adequately explain how the basement element is to be realised and how this will appear when viewed from the front. The drawing of site profiles is rather confusing and it is unclear what it actually shows. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is concerned that the walls of the basement will be visible from the front of the property, further increasing its bulk and perceived height and exacerbating the problems of its design.

As a consequence of making the existing building two storeys and because of the different ground

levels, the roof will become visible from the lane and garden of Home Farm Cottage. This will appear overbearing to the occupier and damaging to the street scene.

The overall scheme is considered to be incoherent, lacking a cohesive theme and not referencing the more attractive and successful buildings within the surrounding area. The steep roof pitch, resulting in a 10 metre apex height, the mix of materials and uncoordinated fenestration would create an over dominant building that would be visually poor and significantly out of character with the locality.

It is considered that the form, fenestration and excessive scale of the proposed extensions is contrary to the grain, form and scale of existing development in the area. The proposal harms the character of the area and is contrary to policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy (DPD) 2011.

The impact of the proposal on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings

The closest dwelling to the application site is Old Dairy Cottage located 35 metres (building to building) to the west. The dwelling as proposed would permit views into some of the amenity space of the neighbour however the retreat is considered to be sufficiently far from the neighbour as to not materially harm the privacy of the occupiers of Old Dairy Cottage, who have objected to the proposal on the grounds of overlooking. It is acknowledged that overlooking will be possible but that the level of overlooking is not sufficiently harmful as to warrant the refusal of the application.

Another objection related to the height of the building and that the loft could be converted to living accommodation, which would permit views into the dwellings at the top of the hill to the south east. It is considered that this is a valid objection and had the proposal been recommended for approval, a condition to control the insertion of windows in the roof would have been appended to the permission. As currently designed and without accommodation in the roof the proposal does not harm the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings with any overlooking that results from the development not materially harmful enough to constitute a refusal of the application.

Impact upon the setting of adjacent listed buildings

Home Farmhouse, the stable range and granary to the North West are grade II listed buildings. The application site occupies a sensitive location to the North East of these buildings. The LPA is obliged to establish if the setting of the listed buildings is impacted by the proposal. Setting is defined as the 'the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced' the conservation officer considers that the scale of the proposed dwelling would visually dominate the immediate area, which would detract from the landscape and intrude on the setting of the listed building.

Planning officers do not necessarily agree with this point, given that the development does not appear to form any key backdrop to views of the listed building. However officers do consider the proposal harmful in respect of the appropriateness of the design.

Other matters

The proposal would improve the sites appearance

A supporter states the proposal can only be an improvement on the residence currently situated there and that the current bungalow is situated so low down in the valley that adding a second storey couldn't affect anyone. The LPA agrees that the addition of another level will not hurt anybody but do not agree that the proposal as submitted represents an improvement over the existing dwelling. The LPA considers that the existing dwelling should form the basis in terms of scale and character of any replacement/redevelopment as this will preserve the character of what is a unique an interesting part of the hamlet.

The supporter also states that the proposal could also greatly improve the ambience of the whole Home Farm hamlet. The current property is very run down and does nothing to improve the area. Any attempt to maintain the building in its current format should be discouraged. The property is more or less out of sight of just about every other local resident and will remain so. The building, if

proceeded with, will at least match another extensive building project recently concluded nearby as regards its suitability for the location. The LPA does not agree with this assertion, firstly the proposal is not out of site of all residents and will not match the style of other buildings in the area for the reasons stated above. The LPA also do not agree with the statement that any attempt to maintain the current building should be discouraged. By using the current building as the design basis, the character of the dwelling and that of the wider area will be preserved.

Inaccurate drawings

That the drawing contain inaccuracies which make it difficult to determine the heights of the proposed dwelling. The LPA partially agree with this statement, the scales used by the applicant and some of the drawings appear to show slight variations in the overall height of the dwelling. For the purposes of assessing the proposal the LPA has taken a figure of 10 metres as the overall height of the proposed dwelling.

The objector states that the plans are inaccurate, the drawing that shows the plan view of the existing property does not reflect the view from the south, and it shows a mirror image of what is there. This is noted but is not considered to be materially relevant to the determination of the application.

Drawing R3a shows faint lines on the north and west faces but does not explain what these are. The LPA agree that this appears to be an inaccuracy of the plans. It would appear to show a kind of conservatory type addition to the property on the northern side elevation. For the purposes of determining the application it is assumed that the conservatory is not proposed and were the application to be approved it would have been conditioned that the conservatory would be excluded from the proposal.

Can prompt completion of the development be ensured

The parish council have enquired as to whether, if approved, that the timescales for the completion of the development could be conditioned. This is not possible as once a permission is implemented there is no upper limit on the time that can be taken to complete the development and it would be unreasonable for the LPA to impose such a condition in this instance.

6 Conclusions

The proposal is unacceptable having been assessed in light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan and for the specific reasons given below.

7 Recommendation

The Head of Planning, Transport and Engineering Services recommends that planning permission is **REFUSED**

R 1 The proposed extensions by way of their design, form and scale are contrary to the grain form and scale of the existing development in the area. The excessive size and height would appear incongruous and out of place with the character and form of development locally. This is contrary to policies CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy (DPD) 2011 and emerging policy PP1 of the Peterborough Planning Policies (DPD) 2012, which state;

CS16 - New development should respond appropriately to the particular character of the site and its surroundings, enhance local distinctiveness through the size and arrangement of development plots and make use of appropriate materials and architectural features.

PP1 - Development should make a positive contribution to the quality of the natural and built environment in terms of its location, size, scale, massing, density, proportions,

materials and design and should not have a detrimental effect on the character of any immediately adjoining properties or the surrounding area.

- R2 The use of render as the external finish to the 1st floor and the use of brick for the ground floor of such a large development would appear incongruous and would draw attention to the unbalanced appearance and excessive width and height of the dwelling to the detriment of the character of the area. This is contrary to policies CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy (DPD) 2011 and emerging policy PP1 of the Peterborough Planning Policies (DPD) 2012, which state;

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- R3 The proposed development is considered to suffer from unacceptably haphazard fenestration; the range of sizes and shapes of both windows and doors contributes towards an incoherent design and will result in a dwelling of incongruous appearance, thus harming the character of the area. This is contrary to policies CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy (DPD) 2011 and emerging policy PP1 of the Peterborough Planning Policies (DPD) 2012, which state;

CS16 - New development should respond appropriately to the particular character of the site and its surroundings, enhance local distinctiveness through the size and arrangement of development plots and make use of appropriate materials and architectural features.

PP1 - Development should make a positive contribution to the quality of the natural and built environment in terms of its location, size, scale, massing, density, proportions, materials and design and should not have a detrimental effect on the character of any immediately adjoining properties or the surrounding area.

- R4 The proposal involves making the single storey dwelling two storeys. A consequence of this is that the roof of the dwelling will become a prominent and incongruous feature in the streetscene and when viewed from Home Farm Cottage, to the detriment of the character of the area. This is contrary to policies CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy (DPD) 2011 and emerging policy PP1 of the Peterborough Planning Policies (DPD) 2012, which state;

CS16 - New development should respond appropriately to the particular character of the site and its surroundings, enhance local distinctiveness through the size and arrangement of development plots and make use of appropriate materials and architectural features.

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Copies to Councillors Holdich and Lamb

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