

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 14th April 2025

Case No: 24/02228/FUL

Proposal: Erection of two-bedroom barn-style property & associated works

Location: Land at 516 Great North Road Eaton Ford

Applicant: HW Unique Developments Ltd

Grid Ref: 517438 261155

Date of Registration: 18.12.24

Parish: St Neots

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, as the Officer recommendation of refusal is contrary to that of the Parish Council's recommendation of approval.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The site sits on the northern side of Crosshall Road close to the roundabout that links Crosshall Road with Great North Road and the B645, which runs westwards. The site is a broadly triangular parcel of land covering 0.10 hectares and currently comprises vegetation with its boundaries on all sides being high boarded timber fencing with mature trees, hedging and timber gate to the front of the site facing Crosshall Road.
- 1.2 Immediately northwest of the site is Cross Hall Manor, a Grade II* Listed Building and to the east lies a residential dwelling at 204 Crosshall Road. The Eaton Oak, a Grade II Listed Public House sits approximately 72 metres southwest on the opposite side of the roundabout. The whole of the site is in St Neots Conservation Area. Subsequently all trees over 7.5 centimetres in diameter, measured 1.5 metres above the ground both on and in close proximity to the site are legally protected.
- 1.3 The site is in Flood Zone 1 according to Environment Agency Mapping Data and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024), which also places the site at a low risk of ground and surface water flooding.

- 1.4 The proposal seeks planning approval for the erection of one two-bedroomed single storey two-bedroom barn-style property and associated works including permeable block-paved driveway and the removal of the existing conifers on the front boundary to be replaced with mixed species native hedge.

Site History

- 1.5 It is noted that a non-determination planning appeal was subject to the site (APP/H0520/W/20/3249223) with the same red line boundary following a planning application proposing one new single storey dwelling (19/01736/FUL) in 2021 within the site.
- 1.6 While it is recognised that this 2021 application proposed a dwelling sited closer to Crosshall Road spanning most of the width of the site, it should also be noted that this non-determination appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on the grounds that the site as an enclosed verdant space with a general absence of built form and sense of spaciousness above and beyond the fencing and hedging contributed positively to the setting Grade II* Cross Hall Manor to the immediate north west and the wider St Neots Conservation Area.
- 1.7 The Inspector also noted that Cross Hall Manor's significance relates to its siting on a historical junction linking St Neots with Cambridge and Northampton and as per page 30 of the St Neots Conservation Character Area Statement, forms an part of the arc of the original course of the Great North Road where setbacks and trees enclosing the space contribute positively to the Conservation Area and so are historically important. While noting that the grounds of Crosshall Manor have been subdivided and sold off over time and that the historic grounds were now viewed as physically and visually separated, the Inspector was clear that the open and spacious character of the proposal site still had a relationship with Cross Hall Manor and its current character remained a positive contribution to the setting and significance of the listed building and wider conservation area.
- 1.8 Additionally, on this 2019 dismissed application, the Inspector noted that the proposed dwelling, at 3.978m above ground level would be visible over the existing 2 metre fencing with the northwest elevation being seen from the GII* listed Manor, and the introduction of a barn-like dwelling having an awkward and incongruent relationship which would diminish the setting and significance of the Manor. Furthermore, the inspector also raised concern that the amount of green space around the dwelling as compared to Crosshall Manor and No.204 and would feel cramped in comparison with a dwelling's siting contrary to the existing arc characterising this historic crossroads.

- 1.9 This Inspector's dismissal is a material consideration in the determination of the current proposal. This Appeal decision is found at the end of this report pack as an appendix.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 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).'

- 2.2 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.

- 2.3 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 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>

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

LP1: Amount of Development

LP2: Strategy for Development

LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery

LP5: Flood Risk

LP6: Waste Water Management

LP7: Spatial Planning Areas

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

LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

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

LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)

Annual Monitoring Review: Housing land supply (2024 Part 1)

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

The National Design Guide (2021)

St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2029 (2016):

*Policy A3 – Design

*Policy PT1 – Parking and Traffic

*Policy P4 – Drainage

Local policies are viewable at:

<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 17/02534/FUL for Creation of access with gate and new fencing to amenity land., APPROVED 11.05.2018.
- 4.2 19/01265/FUL for Proposed erection of one new dwelling consisting of a main two-storey element and two single-storey elements., WITHDRAWN 28.08.2019.
- 4.3 19/01736/FUL for Proposed erection of one new dwelling consisting of a main single-storey hipped element, single-storey gable element and single-storey link piece. APPEAL AGAINST NON-DETERMINATION DISMISSED (20/00012/NONDET) 25.03.2021.
- 4.4 19/02465/CLED for The fence (being the close boarded wooden panelled fence (with concrete posts between each panel and with concrete gravel boards at its base) having a height varying

between circa 2.7m and 2.1m) erected along the western boundary of the land (which is the subject of this application) between the points shown marked 'A' and 'B' on the plan which accompanies this application., CONSENT GIVEN 17.02.2020.

- 4.5 23/02430/CLED for Creation of access with gate and new fencing to amenity land., CONSENT GIVEN 13.02.2024.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 St Neots Town Council – Supports the application. Full comments:

Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development.

- 5.2 Huntingdonshire District Council's Conservation Officer – Objects to the proposal. Summary comments:

The proposal is not considered to preserve the character of the Grade II* Listed Building Crosshall Manor because of the development within its setting and it is considered harmful to its significance. The proposal is also considered harmful to the significance, character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Eaton Oak public house, Grade II* Listed Building Crosshall Manor (516 Great North Road) and the St. Neots Conservation Area.

- 5.3 Historic England – Objects to the proposal. Summary comments:

Raises concern that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the St. Neot's Conservation Area and the grade II* listed Crosshall, noting comments from the Planning Inspectorate on non-determination appeal on the site (19/01736/FUL) which viewed the site as contributing positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area and a minor positive contribution to the setting of the listed building. Historic England conclude that this current application would have a negative effect upon the verdant quality, general absence of built form and sense of spaciousness of the application site.

- 5.4 Cambridgeshire County Council's Highway Authority - No objections subject to conditions for sufficient manoeuvring space and a metalled surface shall be provided for a minimum distance of 5m along the access road from its junction with the public highway to safeguard highway safety.

- 5.5 Huntingdonshire District Council's Arboricultural Officer – No objections subject to a condition requiring the Arboricultural Method Statement be adhered to.
- 5.6 Huntingdonshire District Council's Ecology Officer – Raises no objection to the submitted Biodiversity Matrix.
- 5.7 Huntingdonshire District Council Waste Officer – No response.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 One letter of objection was received during the course of the application from the occupants of Crosshall Manor raising the following concerns (full comments):

I believe the above proposed development will negatively impact on the character and appearance of the St Neots Conservation Area & there is no valid justification for this. In addition, such a development would be detrimental to the setting of CrossHall Manor, a 17th Century Grade II* listed building of historical significance. Development would diminish the significance of this important heritage asset.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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 48 of the NPPF (2024). 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".
- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan relevant to this application consists of:
 - o Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - o Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
 - o St. Neots Neighbourhood Plan to 2036 (2016)
- 7.4 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.

- 7.5 The main issues to consider are:
- o The Principle of Development
 - o Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets
 - o Residential Amenity
 - o Highway Safety and Parking Provision
 - o Flood Risk and Surface Water
 - o Biodiversity
 - o Trees
 - o Developer Contributions
 - o Accessible and Adaptable Homes
 - o Water Efficiency

The Principle of Development

Housing Land Supply

- 7.6 NPPF paragraph 78 requires the Council to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against our housing requirement. A substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory approach for establishing housing requirements was introduced on 12th December 2024 in the revised NPPF and associated NPPG (the standard method).
- 7.7 As Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is now over 5 years old it is necessary to demonstrate a five year housing land supply (5YHLS) based on the housing requirement set using the standard method. NPPF paragraph 78 also requires provision of a buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. As Huntingdonshire has successfully exceeded the requirements of the Housing Delivery Test a 5% buffer is required here. The 5 year housing land requirement including a 5% buffer is 5,501 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,430 homes equivalent to 4.03 years' supply.
- 7.8 As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply

and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

7.9 Policy LP2 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (the Local Plan) sets out the overarching development strategy for Huntingdonshire through the plan period. The main objectives are:

- Concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities;
- Direct substantial new development to two strategic expansion locations of sufficient scale to form successful, functioning new communities;
- Provide opportunities for communities to achieve local development aspirations for housing, employment, commercial or community related schemes;
- Support a thriving rural economy;
- Protect the character of existing settlements and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside;
- Conserve and enhance the historic environment; and
- Provide complementary green infrastructure enhancement and provision to balance recreational and biodiversity needs and to support climate change adaptation.

7.10 Policy LP2 directs approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing (together with a limited amount of employment growth) to sites dispersed across the Key Service Centres and Small Settlements in order to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply. In addition, rural exception, small and windfall sites will be permitted on sites which are in conformity with other policies of the plan, thereby providing further flexibility in the housing supply.

7.11 Policy LP2 is within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and is therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. Notwithstanding this, weight should still be given to Policy LP2 given that it directs development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities which is consistent with the NPPF.

7.12 Local Plan Policy LP7 identifies St Neots as a Spatial Planning Area, one of four larger settlements across Huntingdonshire

which have the greatest amount of available services and facilities.

7.13 Policy LP7 states that:

Development Proposals on Unallocated Sites

A proposal for development on a site which is additional to those allocated in this plan will be supported where it fulfils the following requirements and is in accordance with other policies:

Residential Development

A proposal for housing development (class 'C3') or for a residential institution use (class 'C2') will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement.

- 7.14 Policy LP7 is within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and is therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. Notwithstanding this, weight should still be given to Policy LP7 given that the policy sets out that a set of criteria for assessing whether the proposal reflects sustainable development which is consistent with the NPPF. However, the part of Policy LP7 which specifies that only certain types of development on land within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement which accords with specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan is to be given reduced weight in determining a proposal for residential development.
- 7.15 This means that any residential development on land outside of the built-up area may be acceptable in principle subject to other material planning considerations.
- 7.16 Given the proposal seeks approval for the erection of 1 residential dwelling within an existing residential and built-up area of St. Neots, the development is therefore considered to be situated in an appropriate location and acceptable in accordance with LP7 of the Local Plan.
- 7.17 NPPF Para 110 states: The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise

sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

- 7.18 It is considered that the development would have access to services and facilities within St. Neots, and through sustainable modes of transport. The development would therefore not result in the development of isolated homes in either the edge of settlement or countryside, nor would the future occupiers have an over-reliance on the private motor vehicle as other options are available in the settlement.
- 7.19 It is considered therefore that the site is considered to be sustainable for the amount of development hereby proposed.

Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets

- 7.20 Planning approval is sought for the erection of one dwelling sited within the St. Neots Conservation Area and within the setting of a Grade II* Listed Building Crosshall Manor (516 Great North Road) and across the junction where the Grade II Listed Building The Eaton Oak public house is sited.
- 7.21 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. Section 66 also 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. This is also reflected in Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
- 7.22 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).
- 7.23 Policy A3 of the St. Neots Neighbourhood Plan (2016) requires all development to be designed to a high quality that reinforces local distinctiveness and should reflect the town heritage design

and be guided by its surroundings, paying due consideration to flood risk management, carparking and servicing and waste.

- 7.24 This stretch of Crosshall Road is comprised of a mixture of single storey, 1.5 storey and two storey dwellings with a variety of designs, setbacks and materials. It is accepted therefore that there is no uniform character in terms of dwellings in the street scene although it is acknowledged that the line of development curves around the historic line of Crosshall Road where it leads to Great North Road. This curved line of development was observed by the Planning Inspectorate in non-determination appeal for a dwelling on this site as part of the historic character (LPA ref 19/01736/FUL as set out in paragraphs 1.5-1.8 of this report and discussed further below).
- 7.25 According to the submitted Site Plan (DWG JLG912/01), the dwelling proposed would be sited 8.4 metres into the site with a new permeable block paved driveway taking up a large part of the front of the site and this driveway then wraps around the eastern side to allow for vehicular turning. The existing 1.8 metre close boarded timber fencing would be retained with a new section introduced to the rear boundary and an existing gate to the eastern rear would be removed and replaced with fencing to fully enclose the site. Otherwise, the site is laid to grassland / vegetation.
- 7.26 The proposed dwelling comprises a half-hipped Dutch style rectangular roof with a maximum 5.4m-high ridgeline, with a width 6.965m and depth 11.577 metres. Velux rooflights are proposed to both sides of the roof planes. The proposal would be constructed with rectangle black feather boarding and clay pantiles. The front door of the dwelling would be to the eastern side and the side facing the road would have a blank elevation.
- 7.27 The existing conifers to the front boundary would be replaced with mixed species native hedge.
- 7.28 In the non-determination appeal dismissal for a dwelling on the site in 2021 (19/01736/FUL / 20/00012/NONDET), it is a material consideration to take into account the Planning Inspectorates assessment that the site “is largely screened by mature trees, close boarded fencing and hedging at the perimeters. It is generally characterised by an enclosed verdant quality, a general absence of built form adjacent to the highway and sense of spaciousness above and beyond the fencing and hedging ... which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (Paragraph 9 of the appeal report), with a dwelling set between 2.926 metres and 8.028 into the site with a ridge hight of 3.978 metres to be largely visible over fencing, with the northwest elevation viewable from the Manor (Paragraph 17), stating that “situated roughly midway in

the “tree enclosed space” [as set out in the St. Neots Conservation Area Character statement, 2006], the development would be incongruous to the detriment of the spacious open character and appearance of this part of the St Neots Conservation Area. It would be seen over the fence line and glimpsed through the access” (Paragraph 20). The Inspector concludes that the proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building, and would fail also to preserve the character and appearance of the St. Neots Conservation Area.

- 7.29 Two formal consultees, namely Historic England and the Huntingdonshire Council’s Historic Conservation Officer as well as a neighbour at the Grade II* listed dwelling (Crosshall Manor) have objected to the proposals on the basis of heritage harm, with the formal consultees both noting that a previous proposal on the site for a residential dwelling was dismissed at non-determination appeal on grounds including less than substantial harm to the significance of the St. Neots Conservation Area and the Grade II* Listed Building Cross Hall Manor.
- 7.30 Historic England (HE) notes that the St. Neots Conservation Area Character Assessment (2006, henceforth CACC) shows the site to be one of only 2 Grade II* listed buildings in this part of St. Neots Conservation Area and is sited in a historic strategic location at a crossroads and that the Planning Inspector in the previous dismissal to have highlighted the importance of the of the verdant quality, general absence of built form and sense of spaciousness of the application site which made a positive contribution to the setting of the wider St. Neots Conservation Area and a minor positive contribution to the setting of the listed building to the north of the site (Cross Hall Manor).
- 7.31 Similarly, the Huntingdonshire District Councils Historic Conservation Officer notes that the CACC describes Crosshall as a small hamlet associated with an important manor house on the crossroads where the Great North Road meets the road from Cambridge to Northampton and while noting that the current proposal is orientated differently and set further back from the road maintains the Inspectors views on the previous application that the current proposal would remain a harmful intrusion into the curtilage and setting of the Grade II* listed building.
- 7.32 Crosshall Manor is a Grade II*1 Listed Building, and such heritage assets are described by Historic England as “particularly important buildings or more than special interest” and only 5.8% of Listed Buildings are included in this category. In addition, the NPPF gives greater protection to buildings which have a Grade II* listing. Development that impacts this heritage building of special interest is therefore requires particular consideration.

- 7.33 It is acknowledged that there have been two applications for Certificate of Lawful Developments (CLD) issued for fencing on the site (19/02465/CLED and 23/02430/CLED). It should be acknowledged that applications with the suffix 'CLED' seek to confirm that carried out development does not require planning permission.
- 7.34 19/02465/CLED was for confirmation that a close boarded wooden panelled fence (with concrete posts between each panel and with concrete gravel boards at its base) having a height varying between circa 2.7m and 2.1m) erected along the western boundary from the front of the site to where it bends towards the rear was lawful being in situ since at least 2014 and was therefore immune to enforcement action as it had been in place for over four years. This CLD confirmation was issued in February 2020 before the non-determination appeal decision in March 2021. It is noted that a close boarded fence along this western boundary is included in the site photos for the non-determination appeal and is referenced by the inspector in paragraphs 3, 16, 20 and 35 of the appeal decision. Specifically, paragraph 20 of the Inspectors report states:
- “Situated roughly midway in the “tree enclosed space” the development would be incongruous to the detriment of the spacious open character and appearance of this part of the St Neots Conservation Area. It would be seen over the fence line and glimpsed through the access.”*
- 7.35 23/02430/CLED, issued in February 2024 confirmed that the implemented access with gate and new fencing to amenity land was in accordance with the approved plans within approved application 17/02534/FUL and was evident in mapping data in September 2018.
- 7.36 It can therefore be reasonably assumed that the site was physically separated and visually detached from the historic Grade II* Crosshall Manor when the Planning Inspectorate appraised the site against its heritage setting in 2021.
- 7.37 Crosshall Manor stands at the crossroads of the old Great North Road with Crosshall Road and Kimbolton Road which is now adjacent to the modern A1 road. This location is described in the CCAC as an important crossroads where the Great North Road met the road from Cambridge via St Neots to Northampton, and the CACC notes that a short stretch of the Great North Road original alignment prior to the construction of the modern dual carriageway can still be seen.
- 7.38 The Eaton Oak Public House, a Grade II Listed Building, also stands on this crossroads, opposite Crosshall Manor and

together they form a surviving group recording the historic layout of the crossroads and this relationship between the buildings contributes to their settings. The area which includes the proposal site forms part of the historic road network based on the river crossing that underpinned the prosperity of St Neots and Eaton Socon and much of the Great North Road south of Crosshall now lies amongst late 20th century housing estates built over the fields.

- 7.39 Crosshall Manor and the proposal site therefore forms part of an important historic record of the layout of St Neots and its development from the three separate settlements of St Neots, Eaton Socon and Eaton Ford. The proposal site, as part of the historic curtilage of Crosshall Manor, contributes positively to the evidential and historic values which form the significance of the Grade II* Listed Building as well as that of the Conservation Area.
- 7.40 The existing building at 204 Crosshall Road which stands adjacent to the proposal site is an isolated building on the northern side of the road. Number 204 is an anomaly in the location which is not considered to contribute positively to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area being a modern dwelling of a standard modern design. It also stands beyond the historic curtilage of Crosshall Manor in contrast to the proposed dwelling. Planning records at Huntingdonshire DC related to planning consent for a dwelling at Number 204 date back to 1977, prior to the current legislation and regulations which protect heritage assets and Listed Buildings and their settings.
- 7.41 The design of the proposed dwelling appears to suggest a converted agricultural building. The building has a half-hipped roof, black timber boarded walls, and a large dormer above a large door opening. The proposed barn type house has only one window but numerous rooflights which are prominent, being high in the roof slope.
- 7.42 The proposal is not for the conversion of an existing historic building associated with Crosshall Manor but for a new dwellinghouse which imposes into the historic curtilage and setting of that heritage asset. It is not clear that the proposed design has any reference to Crosshall Manor and there is no record of a building in this location historically.
- 7.43 In considering the current application, Historic England (HE) note the design of the dwelling, which resembles an agricultural barn and is a more modest than the previously refused dwelling on the site still results in a negative effect upon the verdant quality, general absence of built form and sense of spaciousness of the application site. HE conclude that the current proposal would

cause less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of the St. Neot's Conservation Area and the grade II* listed building and object to the proposals.

- 7.44 Furthermore, regard must be given to the Inspectors appraisal of a previously proposed dwelling on the site with an above ground level ridgeline of 3.978 metres as unacceptable given it would be seen over the fence towards the Grade II* building to the north and wider conservation area. In comparison, with this current proposed dwelling having a 5.4 metre ridgeline, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would be similarly sited to the shared boundary with Crosshall Manor causing an increased level of harm as it would be taller and more viewable over the fence from the GII* Listed Building. Given the increased height, although set back into the site would again be viewable from the wider St. Neots Conservation area.
- 7.45 In addition to the dwellinghouse, the residential development of the proposal site requires ancillary works including the addition of hardstanding for parking (in addition to existing hard standing for access and turning), bin and cycle storage (although not denoted on plans), formal gardens to front and back, and the site would necessarily accumulate the usual domestic detritus such as garden furniture, etc. Such domestication of the historic curtilage and setting of the Grade II* Listed Building would not preserve the contribution which the undeveloped site currently makes to the setting of the heritage asset as a neutral green space and historic record of the extent of its historic curtilage. The proposed changes to the site would also remove the contribution which the site makes to the record of the historic arc of the road layout and junction and its relationship with Crosshall Manor and its historic site.
- 7.46 Although the applicant proposes to add native hedging to the front of the site, these could fail to provide any meaningful screening and could not be relied upon as a permanent screen for the proposed permanent building from the public realm of the wider St Neots Conservation Area.
- 7.47 Therefore, for the above reasons and paying regard to the planning history of the site, the proposal is not considered to preserve the character of the Grade II* Listed Building Crosshall Manor because of the development within its setting and it is considered harmful to its significance.
- 7.48 The NPPF requires that great weight be given to the conservation of heritage assets (Para 212) and clear and convincing justification for any harm to them (Para 213). Given that the proposal is for a market dwelling, no clear and convincing justification has been provided for the harm to the setting of the Listed Building or the Conservation Area.

In accordance with Local Plan Policy LP34 and paragraph 215 of the NPPF 2024, where there would be less than substantial harm to heritage assets, there is a requirement for this to be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme. The balancing exercise has been carried out at the end of this report.

Residential Amenity

- 7.49 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.
- 7.50 The nearest neighbouring residential properties surrounding the proposed development are No.204 Crosshall Road approximately 21 metres to the east and Crosshall Manor which is approximately 28 metres to the north west, both of which exceed the 21 metre separation recommendations as set out in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide in terms of safeguarding residential amenity.
- 7.51 Having regard to the single storey nature of the proposal and the orientation and height of windows on the proposed new dwelling (including rooflights) it is considered that there would be no significant loss of residential amenity, overlooking loss of privacy or disturbance to any of the surrounding neighbours.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

- 7.52 The Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposed development would provide appropriate private amenity spaces for the proposed dwellings, providing a rear garden at a depth of at least 15.8 metres which would allow for activities such as drying laundry and recreation space in good weather.
- 7.53 The proposed dwelling is 2-bedroom and the plans show a four-person capacity bedspace, which accord with the nationally described space standards (NDSS). The proposal exceeds the overall 70 sqm floorspace which is recommended for 2 bedroom or 4-person, single storey home. The garden areas for both dwellings are considered satisfactory, both having adequate private amenity areas and sufficient parking (2 spaces). Accordance with the NDSS is not a policy requirement within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 but provides some context in terms of living space. In this instance, the proposed internal space is considered appropriately functional and acceptable such that future occupiers would experience a good standard of amenity in this regard.

- 7.54 In addition the Huntingdonshire Council's Environmental Health Officer has considered the proposals and raise no objections, nor recommend the appending of any conditions to the proposal should it be approved.
- 7.55 Overall, taking the above factors into consideration, 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 and Parking Provision

- 7.56 Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) states that development should only be prevented or refused on Highway Safety Grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Policy LP16 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 also encourages sustainable transport modes. Policy PT1 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan seeks development to maximise sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.57 The proposed dwelling would be accessed via Cross Hall Road, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. The proposal would utilise existing dropped kerbs and access that serve the existing site and seeks to implement an area of hardstanding to the front and side of the dwelling and use this as a drive and turning area with the plans showing space for at least two vehicle to park within the curtilage of the site with additional space available on the driveway should this be required. With regard to the level of parking provision, the Local Plan to 2036 does not include set standards, but having regard to Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036, two formal spaces for the dwelling is considered to be acceptable in this instance.
- 7.58 No cycle parking is proposed, however it is accepted that there is room on site to accommodate 2 cycle spaces (1 per bedroom) and could be secured by condition should the proposal be approved to allow the proposal to accord with LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036. Furthermore, the site is in a sustainable location in St. Neots where services can be accessed without reliance on the motor vehicle.
- 7.59 Cambridgeshire County Council as the Local Highways Authority have reviewed the proposals and raise no objections subject to conditions for sufficient manoeuvring space and a metalled

surface shall be provided for a minimum distance of 5m along the access road from its junction with the public highway to safeguard highway safety.

- 7.60 Overall, subject to conditions and informatives recommended by the Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Officer, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policies LP16 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy PT1 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Flood Risk

- 7.61 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. Accordingly, 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. Policy P4 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan seeks development to have adequate drainage.
- 7.62 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.
- 7.63 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, Policy P4 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Biodiversity

- 7.64 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.
- 7.65 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) by Sound Ecology dated October 2024 accompanies the application and states the site is of negligible ecological value with no further surveys required. The report provides recommendations within part 6 to

protect nesting birds, bats and hedgehogs and offers biodiversity enhancement measures including insect and bat boxes, as well as hedgehog friendly boundary treatments. A condition is recommended to ensure compliance with the recommendations contained in the PEA should the proposal be approved.

- 7.66 The proposal is also subject to Biodiversity Net Gain Legislation (BNG) which pursuant to the Environment Act 2021, 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain is required following the hierarchy of onsite provision; mixture of on-site and off-site provision; and the last resort of statutory biodiversity credits. A Biodiversity Net Gain Metric accompanies the application and identifies offsite habitat creation totalling 0.13 habitat units. HDC's Ecology Officer has reviewed the metric and has confirmed that this is acceptable, and a 10% net gain can be achieved. As this will require the purchase of off-site credits, should the proposal be approved, a condition should be sought to secure this.
- 7.67 Therefore, subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with the objectives of Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Schedule 7A of the Town and country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) in this regard.

Impact on Trees

- 7.68 Policy LP31 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated. Furthermore, 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. Paragraph 136 of the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and decisions should ensure that existing trees are retained, wherever possible.
- 7.69 The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan by East Midlands Tree Surveys Ltd, dated 9/9/2024.
- 7.70 There is a Cypress tree to the front of the site which is annotated in the accompanying tree documentation as H1. Otherwise, there are a number of trees on the western boundary and to the rear and northeast side.
- 7.71 It is acknowledged that given the location of the site within St Neots Conservation Area, all qualifying trees are legally

protected. Nevertheless, no trees within close proximity to the site have Tree Protection Orders.

- 7.72 The submitted tree report states that there will be no impact on the root protection areas of any on or off-site trees. There will be some minor shading to the NW of the building from NT1 (Sycamore), outside the red line boundary plan to the eastern front corner & NT2 (Yew) also outside the red line boundary plan to the western side. However, officers are satisfied that the proposal would not cause significant pressure to prune trees in the future.
- 7.73 The Council's Tree Officer has reviewed the application and raises no objections to the proposal and considers that the applicant has demonstrated that the proposal would not have a significant detrimental impact on nearby trees, subject to condition requiring the Arboricultural Method Statement is followed.
- 7.74 Accordingly, subject to condition the proposal is considered to accord with Policy LP31 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Sections 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Developer Contributions

- 7.75 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development, which in this instance would be secured by the Unilateral Undertaking already submitted with the application.
- 7.76 On this basis, the proposal is considered to provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal therefore accords with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

- 7.77 Policy LP25 of the Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that all housing developments in the district offers a genuine choice of Accessible and adaptable dwellings that meet the requirements of residents:

f. ensuring 100% of new dwellings, across all tenures provided, meet Building Regulation requirement M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' (or replacement standards).

- 7.78 To ensure that the development can meet these standards a condition would be imposed on any permission that may be granted in this regard in accordance with Policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Water Efficiency

- 7.79 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 is recommended to be imposed on any permission to ensure compliance with the above, in accordance with Policy LP12 (j) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 7.80 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

- 7.81 A revised NPPF was published in December 2024, introducing a substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory approach for establishing housing requirements. This has resulted in the Council being unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply (5YHLS).

- 7.82 As stated earlier, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'.

- 7.83 NPPF para 11 states:

'Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (7*) provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

7* Foot note 7 states: The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to:

“habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.”

- 7.84 The site is within the historic setting of a Grade II* Listed Building and is characterised by its enclosed, verdant quality, a general absence of built form adjacent to the highway and a sense of spaciousness above and beyond the fencing and hedging, making a minor positive contribution to the setting and significance of the listed Building. The proposal for one dwelling on the site would bring modern development closer to the Grade II* Listed Building and within its curtilage and setting, removing the existing spacious and verdant buffer zone between Crosshall Manor and the modern development of Crosshall Road and would be viewable over the proposed boundary from both the public realm and the setting of the Grade II* Listed building. Therefore, the placing of built form here would remove the undeveloped space which provides a positive contribution within which the grade II* Listed Building (Crosshall Manor) can be experienced as a historic building within the St Neots Conservation Area away from the modern housing beyond its historic setting. The proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building, and fail also to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.85 The above identified heritage harm forms a strong reason for refusing the development proposed as set out in Paragraph 11 d (i) and footnote 7. Tilted balance is therefore disengaged, and there is no need to move forward to the test in paragraph 11 d (ii).

- 7.86 As the identified harm is considered to be less than substantial, paragraph 215 is engaged.

Paragraph 215 of the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework 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.”

- 7.87 The harm to the designated heritage asset would be less than substantial as set out in the NPPF and therefore the harm has to be weighed against the public benefits but the limited public benefit of the development that include the provision of additional market dwellings and the employment opportunities associated with the construction, would not outweigh the harm caused.
- 7.88 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of one market dwelling in St Neots.
- 7.89 The proposal will result in the delivery of 1 new home towards the housing supply. In terms of the economic dimension of sustainable development, the proposal would contribute towards economic growth, including job creation - during the construction phase and in the longer term through the additional population assisting the local economy through spending on local services/facilities. In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, notwithstanding the loss of the on-site trees, the proposal offers the incorporation of some energy efficiency measures, as well as the delivery of new landscaping and some biodiversity enhancements. The application site constitutes a sustainable location for the scale of development proposed in respect of access to local employment opportunities, services and facilities within wider St Neots Spatial Planning Area; and is accessible by sustainable transport modes.
- 7.90 However, these identified benefits would not outweigh the identified harm to the heritage assets.
- 7.91 It is acknowledged that the applicant has submitted a reduced scheme to address the previous reasons for refusal in the non determination appeal for a single dwelling on site. However, taking into account the special interest of the site as within the setting of the Grade II* Listed Building Crosshall Manor notable for its open, verdant and spacious character providing a buffer between modern built form and the historical setting, it is considered that the introduction of a dwelling and associated residential praphernelia would not be acceptable in line with the previous appeal decision.

7.92 Taking national and local planning policies into account, having paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

8. RECOMMENDATION - REFUSAL FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

1. The site is within the historic setting of a Grade II* Listed Building and is characterised by its enclosed, verdant quality, a general absence of built form adjacent to the highway and a sense of spaciousness above and beyond the fencing and hedging, making a minor positive contribution to the setting and significance of the listed Building. The proposal for one dwelling on the site would bring modern development closer to the Grade II* Listed Building and within its curtilage and setting, removing the existing spacious and verdant buffer zone between Crosshall Manor and the modern development of Crosshall Road and would be viewable over the proposed boundary from both the public realm and the setting of the Grade II* Listed building. Therefore, the placing of built form here would remove the undeveloped space which provides a positive contribution within which the grade II* Listed Building (Crosshall Manor) can be experienced as a historic building within the St Neots Conservation Area away from the modern housing beyond its historic setting. The proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building and fail also to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and paragraphs 8c, 192, 194 and 196 of the NPPF 2024, which aim to preserve and enhance the conservation area. It is also contrary to the requirements of section 16 and paragraph 130 the NPPF and is also considered to be contrary to Policies LP2, LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policies A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan, and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

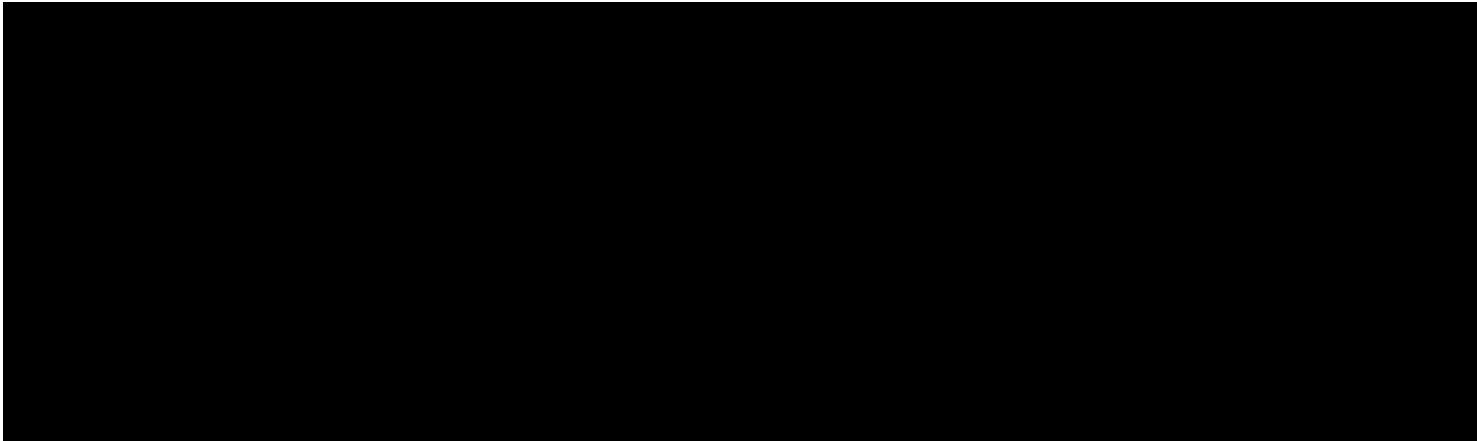
If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

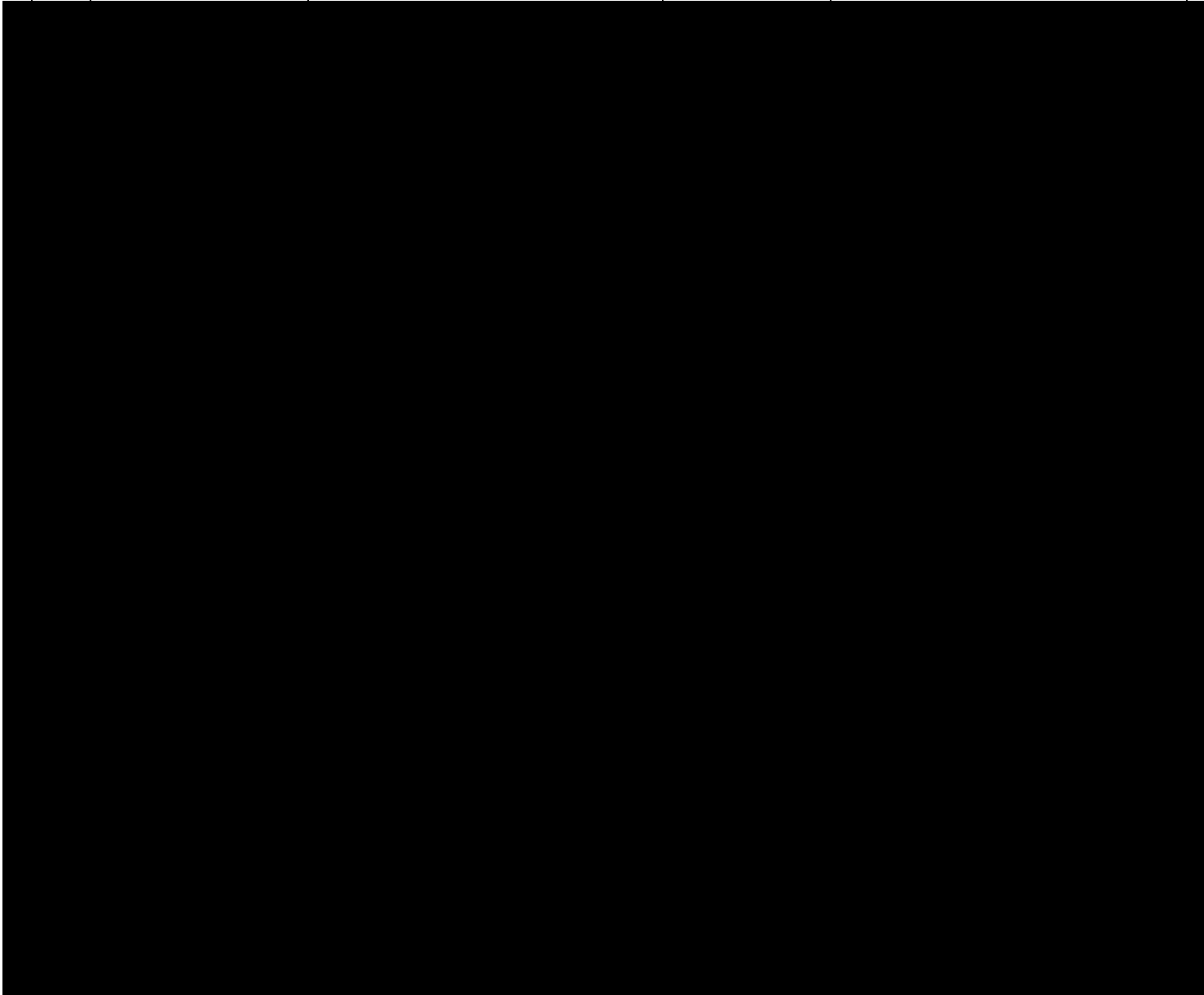
Enquiries about this report to Marie Roseaman, Senior Development Management Officer – marie.roseaman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Schedule of Planning Applications –14th January 2025

No.	Reference	Development	SNTC Decision	Notes
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S3	24/02228/FUL	HW Unique Developments Ltd Land At 516 Great North Road Eaton Ford Erection of two-bedroom barn-style property & associated works	SUPPORT JD abstained	Satisfactory proposal in terms of scale and pattern of development.
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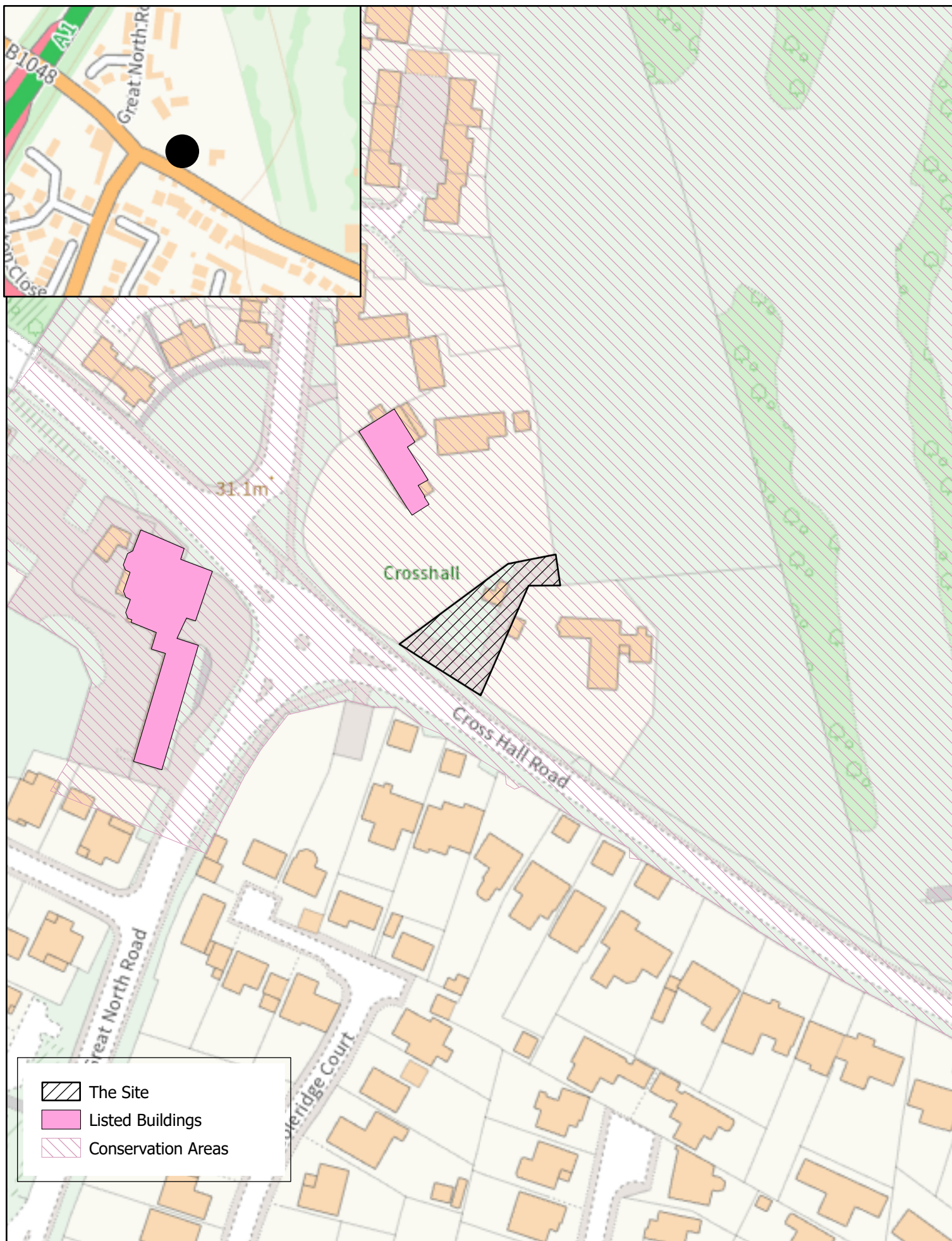
Development Management Committee

Application Ref: 24/02228/FUL



Scale = 1:1,250

Date Created: 02/04/2025



Location Plan

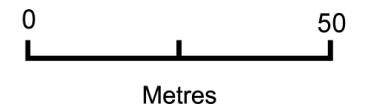
Site Address: Easting: 517439 Northing: 261152

Date Produced: 27-Nov-2024

Scale: 1:1250 @A4



Planning Portal Reference: PP-13583331v1





Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2020

by **Helen Heward BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/20/3249223

Land at 516 Great North Road, Eaton Ford, Northamptonshire

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Lord Vincent Constantine, Tavistock Antiques Ltd against Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01736/FUL, is dated 2 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as "erection of one new dwelling consisting of a main single-storey hipped element, single-storey gable element and single-storey link piece".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have used the site address given on the appeal form and used by both parties, although I have noted that the application form described the site as "land adjacent (west) of 204 Crosshall Road". The application and appeal are made by Tavistock Antiques Ltd. Folium Architects advise that the person named should be Lord Vincent Constantine of Tavistock Antiques Ltd.
3. A boundary fence has the benefit of a Certificate of Lawful Existing Development.
4. Matters concerning how the Council dealt with the application are not before me and I have considered the proposal on its own merits.

Main Issues

5. The Council put forward four putative reasons for refusal relating to heritage, protected trees, biodiversity and building regulations. I consider the main issues to be the effect of the proposed development on (1) the special interest of CrossHall Manor which is listed Grade II* and on the character and appearance of the St Neots Conservation Area, and (2) trees.

Reasons

Listed Building and Conservation Area

6. St Neots Conservation Area Character Assessment 2006, (CACC) highlights Crosshall as part of the historic road network. A significant spatial element formed where the original course of the Great North Road crossed the route

- from St Neots to Northampton. Crosshall Manor being built at the important crossroad where the Great North Road met the road from Cambridge (via St Neots) to Northampton. Its form has become eroded over time.
7. Crosshall Manor is a Grade II* listed building (LB), and one of only two LB's in this part of St Neots Conservation Area (CA). Crosshall Manor (Manor) is a medieval timber framed house which has been re-fronted and altered. The Listing description refers only to details of the building. However, its location at this historical crossroads is part of its significance
 8. The Manor is located in the northeast quadrant of the crossroad where an annotated inset map in the CACC, pp 30, notes broken built form in a broad curve set back from the junction. The appeal site is located between the Manor and No. 204 Crosshall Road (204), a modern dwelling. Both have a significant setback and the broad arc indicated in the CACC can be roughly extrapolated across the gardens of the Manor to 204.
 9. The area between these properties and the road is annotated as "trees enclosing the space" on the same inset map in the CACC. This area, including most of the appeal site, is largely screened by mature trees, close boarded fencing and hedging at the perimeters. It is generally characterised by an enclosed, verdant quality, a general absence of built form adjacent to the highway and a sense of spaciousness above and beyond the fencing and hedging. In this way, and notwithstanding one glimpsed view from the access of the unkempt cleared ground within, this area, including the appeal site, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
 10. The CACC recognises that Crosshall would benefit from an enhancement plan and that its potential will not be fulfilled without a well-planned enhancement scheme. The CACC is dated 2006 and development has taken place since. There is tightly grained modern urban redevelopment in the locality and the alignment and character of the road junction is much changed. However, the historic road intersection, albeit much altered, and the Manor in the northeast quadrant remain. And in between the "trees enclosing space", including most of the appeal site, remains spacious and verdant.
 11. A Heritage Statement prepared by Humble Heritage for a two-storey development, agrees that the appeal site has a historical relationship with the Manor. On an extract from a 1799 Enclosure Award Map for Eaton Socon the Manor can be seen on the northeast side of the crossroad. The appeal site forms part of an enclosed field to the south east and part of the crossroads and the Enclosure Award refers to a farmhouse with buildings, yards and gardens. Although the exact use of the field can only be surmised.
 12. An 1884 Ordnance Survey (OS) extract indicates that the grounds of the Manor had become extended and laid out as formal gardens between the Manor and the roads, including much of the appeal site. It indicates paths, lawns and trees, although OS maps were not produced as accurate records of gardens. Subsequent OS maps continue to show the area of the appeal site to be largely within the bounds of the Manor, albeit that the bounds variously extend and contract over time. By the 1985 OS map 204 is seen in part of the former grounds of the Manor.
 13. Mapping evidence indicates that the appeal site has been part of the grounds of the Manor, but that its use, relationship and importance to the property have

changed over the years. Today ownership is separate, and the appeal site is physically and visually separated from the Manor by tall concrete post and timber panel fencing along the mutual boundary. Shrubbery, hedging and trees on the Manor side further limit intervisibility, but the Appellant acknowledges that the site can be seen from the house and gardens. Coniferous hedging and other trees along Crosshall Road prevent views of the Manor from the public realm over the appeal site.

14. The Framework is clear that any harm to the significance of a heritage asset from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification. The glossary defines the Setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
15. The contribution of the appeal site to the surroundings in which the Manor is experienced is much diminished. Even so, as part of the verdant space between the Manor and the roads, the appeal site continues to make a minor positive contribution to the setting and significance of the listed building.
16. Effects upon the significance of the Manor could only be by way of affecting the setting. The appeal proposal would not require any further changes to boundaries of the Manor as it has already been separated, fenced off and has access to the public highway.
17. The height of the roof would be reduced by lowering ground levels. Notwithstanding the 500mm cut, the drawings indicate that window headers, top courses of brickwork, the large hipped roof and lesser pitched roof would all be visible over fencing. The north west elevation would be seen from the Manor.
18. The Design and Access statement refers to the scheme reflecting the vernacular of converted barns in the former grounds of the Manor. Those barns are behind the Manor. The proposed dwelling would be largely in front. This would be an awkward and incongruent relationship which would diminish the setting and significance of the Manor.
19. Roughly 12m wide, extending across almost the full width of the site and within approximately 3m of the boundary, the front part of the dwelling would appear wide and very close to the road. Most of the dwelling would be forward of a broad arc of a building line through the front of the Manor and 204. Limited space for landscaping would make it more prominent. Whilst all of the dwelling components would fit on the site, there would be little green space about the dwelling. It would appear very cramped in comparison to the Manor and 204.
20. Situated roughly midway in the "tree enclosed space" the development would be incongruous to the detriment of the spacious open character and appearance of this part of the St Neots Conservation Area. It would be seen over the fence line and glimpsed through the access.
21. The dwelling would be close to a number of mature trees and hedging. Cut into the site and with limited space about the dwelling there would be a likelihood that the trees and hedging would combine to limit daylight and create a hemmed in and overbearing feeling for future occupants. This could lead to

pressure to cut down hedging and/or remove trees. Increased visibility of the dwelling within the CA could exacerbate the negative impact on the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of the Listed Building. This adds to my concerns.

22. I conclude the proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building, and fail also to preserve the character and appearance of the CA. The proposal would be contrary to aims of Policy LP2 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (Local Plan) to "Protect the character of existing settlements..." and to "Conserve and enhance the historic environment". It would fail to satisfy the requirement of Policy LP11 that a proposal 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, to help create distinctive, high quality and well-designed places. It would conflict with a requirement of Policy LP12 that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it (a) contributes positively to areas of character and identity and (b) successfully integrates with adjoining buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography, and landscape.
23. The proposal also fails to satisfy requirements of Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (Local Plan) which advises that works to a heritage asset within its setting must demonstrate that the proposal, amongst other things:
- Protects the significance of designated heritage assets and their settings by protecting and enhancing architectural and historic character, historical associations, landscape and townscape features and through consideration of scale, design, materials, siting, layout, mass, use and views both from and towards the asset;
 - Does not harm or detract from the significance of the heritage asset, its setting and any special features that contribute to its special architectural or historic interest and the proposal conserves and enhances the special character and qualities.
24. The harm to the significance of both the Listed Building and Conservation Area would be less than substantial. Policy LP34 requires that where this is the case, the harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I return to this balancing exercise in the final section of my decision.

Trees

25. The dwelling would be close to boundaries. Trees within the CA are subject to protection. Trees surrounding the site contribute to the character and appearance of this part of the CA.
26. Whilst Folium Architects Dwg 302 PV2 01 and 01a appear to indicate that the canopy of T3 does not extend over the site, on my site visit I found that it did, as shown on the Arboricultural Report Tree Constraints Plan. I also observed that the canopy of T2 appeared to overhang the site more than depicted on Dwg 302 PV2 01 and 01a. It appeared to overhang to the extent depicted on the visibility splay drawing DWG 2287-01. I could not be certain about the

- facts. Nonetheless, the Arboricultural Report identifies that the Root Protection Area (RPA) of G2, T3 and T5 would be impacted by the development.
27. BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations, paragraph 5.3 states that the default position should be that structures are located outside of the RPA's of trees to be retained. It goes on to say that 'where there is an overriding justification for construction within the RPA... technical solutions might be available that prevent damage to the tree(s)'. The proposal is to "ideally" retain the existing gravel surface with a top-dressing, but I find the evidence insufficient to demonstrate and justify the approach.
28. If T2's canopy is as shown on DWG 2287-01 then it may be that the Tree Protection Plan at Appendix 7 of the Arboricultural Report might not be achievable, and this adds to my concerns. Particularly given the close relationship of T2 to the dwelling.
29. The proposal fails to satisfy requirements of Policy LP31 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 which advises that loss, threat or damage to any tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of visual, heritage or nature conservation value will only be acceptable where it is addressed firstly by seeking to avoid the impact, then to minimise the impact and finally where appropriate to include mitigation measures; or where there are sound arboricultural reasons to support the proposal. Where impacts remain the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location must clearly outweigh the loss, threat or damage.

Other Matters

30. The Council raised concern about evidence to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and accessible and adaptable buildings, but as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, these matters are not determinative.
31. I have noted references to sections of the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, 2017, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2018 and C1, C2, I1, I2 and B2 of the National Design Guide, 2019, but found insufficient specificity to address them, and these documents are not determinative in any event.

Planning balance

32. The approach to listed buildings and conservation areas is underpinned by the statutory requirements placed on decision makers by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: "s.66 (1) In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, 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." "s.72 (1) ... 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."
33. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) gives 'great weight' to the conservation of a designated heritage asset. Paragraph 194 sets out 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.

34. Paragraph 196 adds that 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. The approach set out in Policy LP34 of the Local Plan is broadly consistent with this advice.
35. The proposal would result in a net addition of one dwelling to the housing stock. This is a benefit to which I attach a moderate amount of weight. It would remove the view of the unkempt vacant site, but this is only a fleeting view and the detracting elements are not seen over the fences and hedging. I attach little weight to this as a benefit.
36. There are suburban dwellings in the wider locality. Undoubtedly the built form will interrupt some specific views, but on my site visit I observed that trees in the garden of the Manor and 204 would limit views from the Manor of the wider suburban area along Crosshall Road. There is scant evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would have any meaningful effect in terminating views of suburban style dwellings from the Manor or its grounds.
37. The overarching statutory duty imposed by s66 or s72 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 applies even where the harm to heritage assets is found to be less than substantial and I attach considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the LB and the character and appearance of the CA.
38. Although there are some public benefits they do not outweigh the considerable weight that I attach to the harms. The proposal would not satisfy the requirements of Local Plan Policy LP34 and is contrary to the Development Plan when read as a whole.

Conclusion

39. For the reasons given and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Helen Heward

PLANNING INSPECTOR



Materials
 Walls - Black feather edged timber featheredge boarding - Colour: Black
 Roof - Sandtoft New Arcadia Clay Pantiles - Colour: Reclaimed
 Entrance frame and door - Oak - Colour: Natural
 Windows, doors and rooflights - Colour: Softwood with teak finish
 Rainwater goods - Brett Martin uPVC half round cast iron effect - Colour: Black



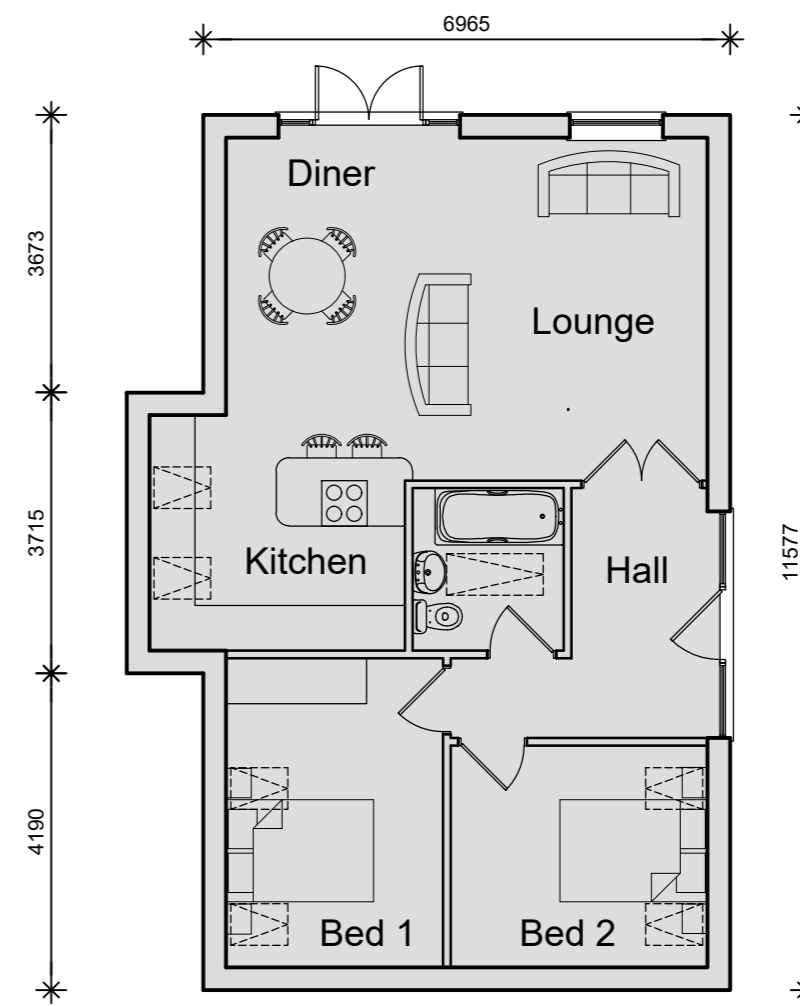
South West Elevation
(Front)

South East Elevation
(Side)



North East Elevation
(Rear)

North West Elevation
(Side)



Floor Plan



8 Tennyson Place
 Eaton Ford
 St. Neots
 Cambridgeshire
 PE19 7LL
 Tel / Fax: 01480 218440
 Email: john@jlgdesign.co.uk

Project:
 Land At 516 Great North Road,
 Eaton Ford, St Neots,
 Cambs. PE19 7GH.

Drawing:
 Plan and Elevations

Drawn by:
 JG

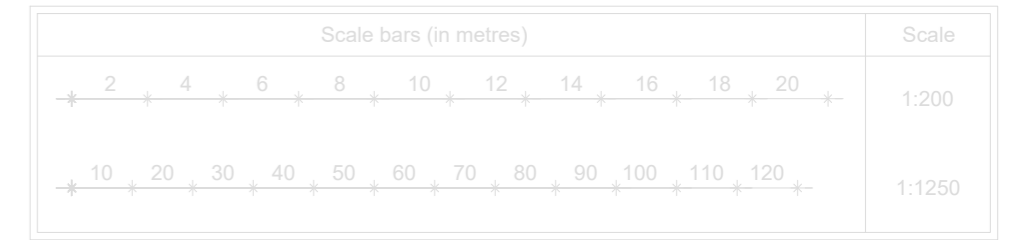
Scale:
 1:100

Date:
 17.7.24

This drawing should not be scaled other than for planning purposes. All dimensions to be checked on site.

Drawing no: **JLG912/02** Revision

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8 Tennyson Place
Eaton Ford
St. Neots
Cambridgeshire
PE19 7LL
Tel / Fax: 01480 218440
Email: john@jlgdesign.co.uk

Project:
**Land At 516 Great North Road,
Eaton Ford, St Neots,
Cambs. PE19 7GH.**

Drawing:
Site Plan

Drawn by:
JG

Scale: 1:200	Date: 17.7.24
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Drawing no: JLG912/01	Revision
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