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Planning Design and Access Statement & Heritage Statement

Proposed Single Dwelling and Double
Garage

Land between 'Lodge Cottage' and
'Spring Cottage', Newnham, SG7 5JX

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On Behalf of
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1.0 Introduction / Background

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement (Planning Support Statement) together with brief section dealing with the heritage issues and associated drawings are submitted for planning permission in respect of a single detached dwelling on part of the amenity area associated with 'Lodge Cottage' and adjacent to 'Spring Cottage'.
- 1.2 This application seeks permission subject to conditions which will be separately dealt with in section 5.0.
- 1.3 The application is lodged pursuant to planning permission granted for a single detached dwelling 31 March 2025 ref 24 / 01498 / FP.
- 1.4 The subject site occupies under-utilised ground to the North East of 'Lodge Cottage' on the Ashwell Road, currently garden/amenity area to the rental property, 'Lodge Cottage'.
- 1.5 The site is acknowledged to lie within the Conservation Area which effectively defines the whole of Newnham. However, the site has no other known special designation.
- 1.6 The host house, 'Lodge Cottage' is not Listed but like a number of properties in Newnham has been designated as a Building of Local Interest.
- 1.7 Newnham has been designated a Category B village in which infilling, which does not extend the built core of the village, will be allowed. This proposal does not extend the settlement envelope.
- 1.8 Whilst the above (1.7) sets the principle, it is fully acknowledged and accepted that this will be subject to individual context and all important detail.
- 1.9 This specific proposal takes a strong lead from the recent permission, now implemented, on land adjacent to 'Lodge Cottage' for a single 4-bed dwelling ref: 22 / 02115 / FP (Spring Cottage), together with the permission granted earlier this year, as referenced in 1.3.
- 1.10 Additionally, advice tendered in the pre-application advice related to the land to the rear of 'Lodge Cottage' and 'Pilgrims Cottage', ref: 23 / 02756/ PRE provided an excellent steer into formulating the previous proposals and now this application.
- 1.11 Accordingly, with all this wealth of information, no further pre-application advice has been sought, nor considered necessary.
- 1.12 Therefore, taking the acceptability of the principle as a given, this submission seeks acceptance to the nominal changes to the extant permission with are described in section 4.0.

- 1.13 Noting that NHC still have an adopted pro-active policy, it is asked that the Council looks positively at ways these relatively small changes can be supported by the employment of proactive interaction with the applicant's agent.

2.0 Site Analysis

- 2.1 This section largely replicates that submitted with application 24 / 01498 / FP but is included for completeness.
- 2.2 The existing overall curtilage of the host house 'Lodge Cottage', equates to c. 2,140 m² (0.53 acres).
- 2.3 'Lodge Cottage' is a Building of Local Interest which is classed as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 2.4 The site lies directly opposite the Village Hall and a small hard standing car park associated with the hall.
- 2.5 The land is currently part of an anomalously large garden associated with 'Lodge Cottage', and unmanageable for the tenants.
- 2.6 The current total site frontage is c. 40m with the proposed subdivision resulting in the proposed plot having a frontage of 20m leaving an equal 20m for the host house, which is compatible with the local grain.
- 2.7 The land is bounded to the North by the access road between the new 'Spring Cottage' and the site. The access road serves 'Spring Cottage', the agricultural fields and semi agricultural facility / stables to the rear of 'Spring Cottage'. It will also serve access to a car parking area to the rear of Lodge Cottage, as requested by the LPA in application 24 / 04198 / FP. This is now annexed from this application and is subject to separate dialogue with NHC.
- 2.8 The Ashwell Road frontage provides a traditional hedge fronted cottage garden with no vehicular intervention. However, as requested by the LPA, a footpath provides pedestrian access to Lodge Cottage by a dedicated footway.

3.0 Heritage Statement

- 3.1 As with section 2.0 this largely replicates the previous submission.
- 3.2 This brief statement is put forward as part of this overall planning statement and in support of the planning application in respect of heritage assets that might be considered to be affected by the application proposal.
- 3.3 The relevant heritage assets related to this specific site are: Conservation Area; Listed Buildings; Buildings of Local Interest and potentially archaeology.

CONSERVATION AREA

- 3.4 Virtually the whole of Newnham is a designated conservation area which by definition is a “Heritage Asset”. This however, does not preclude development such as here proposed and endorsed by grant of permission 24 / 01498 / FP.
- 3.5 Whilst the buildings and structures within the village limits are of varied styles, construction materials, appearance, etc, and of varied architectural or historic significance they are all, to a degree, covered by the protection of the conservation area status.
- 3.6 Whilst specific elements are dealt with individually here, I would submit that in reality it is hard to disentangle one from the whole. In other words, it is an aggregate of Listed Buildings, Building of Local Interest, Landscape, historic features, etc, that all make a collective contribution.
- 3.7 Accordingly, the Conservation Area is effectively the whole heritage asset.
- 3.8 The site inarguably makes some contribution to the Conservation Area by way of its openness as opposed to a built environment, however with no feature of significant merit, the contribution is limited.
- 3.9 Additionally, with grant of planning permission on land adjacent to Lodge Cottage (ref: 22 / 02115 / FP) now called ‘Spring Cottage’, a strong precedent has been set in support of this linear policy compliant infill and endorsed by grant of permissuioim 24 / 01498 / FP.
- 3.10 Moreover, the siting of the property fully conforms with the linear characteristic of this part of Newnham and with cottage garden and hedgerow preserved, compatibility is assured.

LISTED BUILDINGS

- 3.11 There are no Listed Buildings immediately adjacent to or directly opposite the proposed site.
- 3.12 The only property set obliquely on the opposite, East side of Ashwell Road is ‘Crouches’.

This is Grade II, List Entry - 1102669:

House. Early C17 cottage with C19 cross wing extension. Restored. Timber frame main range, brick cross wing to right; all plastered. Steeply pitched tiled roof, originally thatch on main range. Brick axial stack aligned with entrance. 1 storey and attic to left, plank door entrance, 2 light casement and gabled dormer to left, single light casement to right. Purlins and wall plate visible in left hand gable into which a window has been inserted. Gabled cross-wing of 2 storeys with 3 light casements in deep reveals under shallow arches, bargeboards to street. Further lean-to extension to right. Interior not inspected.

I would say however, from a personal / professional point of view, purely from outward appearance, 'Crouches' does not wear its status well externally and resembles a more contemporary structure.

3.13 However, it is submitted that having granted planning permission for 'Spring Cottage' directly opposite 'Crouches', there can be no substantive justification for this being a reason for objection.

3.14 As already established with NHC, the quality of design and overall end result previously approved can ensure that the Listed Buildings will not be adversely affected. With no change to the principle/street elevation, this too is automatically ensured.

3.15 There are a number of properties in Newnham that have been awarded the status of being a 'Building of Local Interest' and 'Lodge Cottage' is within this category, but as already demonstrated, not adversely affected.

ARCHAEOLOGY

3.16 Archaeology is also a heritage asset and Newnham is known to be in an area of Archaeological Significance

3.17 From research into previous applications which attracted archaeological implications, it is clear that Newnham, as a whole settlement does in some instances deserve respectful consideration.

3.18 On reviewing the application and more specifically the Permission Notice associated with 'Spring Cottage', it is important to note that there was no Archaeological Condition whatsoever.

3.19 Furthermore, in consideration of the need for any archaeological evaluation, it should be noted that, as the proposed dwelling is situated over redundant septic tank chambers and run off drains, along with the numerous tree root balls that have or are to be removed and the buried 11kv cable, any archaeology will already have been significantly disturbed.

3.20 Accordingly, it is suggested that it would be perverse to make any archaeological imposition on this application.

4.0 Development Proposals

- 4.1 The approved proposals were an amalgam of meeting client aspirations, what was deemed appropriate for the site and collaborative dialogue with North Herts over a protracted period.
- 4.2 Whilst the applicant was naturally party to the design process, the elapse of time has allowed him and his wife to give greater consideration on this being a long term home for them.
- 4.3 Whilst the fundamental scheme met their brief, there were small details that did not.
- 4.4 The main issue was with the rear two storey element, although agreed, it was felt to be too bulky and would be improved by reducing to single storey.
- 4.5 Since there would be more than adequate space within the main two storey element for two good size double bedrooms with ensuites, the rear wing upper floor could be omitted.
- 4.6 This will have the added benefit of allowing the kitchen/diner to be vaulted, a feature not possible with the extant consented scheme.
- 4.7 This has the effect of reducing the overall mass and bulk, creating an improved relationship between the elements and provides an enhanced aspect for Spring Cottage and Crouches.
- 4.8 It is important to note that with this change, there are no changes whatsoever to the principal street elevation visually or material wise.
- 4.9 However, with the now single storey element being clearly a separate element, the opportunity to distinguish this has been taken by using vertical boarding over the brick plinth.
- 4.10 The only other variation is related to the location of the approved garage, which needs to be moved nominally in a Westerly direction in order to avoid the, newly identified 11kV underground cable that runs from the Electricity Board pole to the highway. It is suggested that this is of little consequence planning wise and de minimis accords with the extant planning permission. Boarding to match the single storey rear element.
- 4.11 It is noted that BNG does not apply and the relevant plans have been amended accordingly.

- 4.12 All other standard elements such as waste and recycling storage are met as will be an electric vehicle charging point in the garage which will also accommodate cycles and provide roof void storage. All as before.
- 4.13 No doubt landscaping and boundary treatment will be a standard condition appended to the Permission Notice, but it is suggested that, taking a lead from previous advice, a traditional native species hedge, most possibly beech would be a more appropriate choice rather than close boarded fencing or even post and rail, or estate fencing rather than close boarded.

5.0 Conditions Related to Permission Notice 24 / 01498 / FP

- 5.1 Whilst pleased to at last receive planning permission, there was surprise at the considerable number of conditions appended for appended for a simple single dwelling.
- 5.2 Moreover, it was not just the number but the nature of the imposed conditions together with the lack of consistency with other similar permissions granted in Newnham.
- 5.3 Accordingly, this application seeks to level out the playing field in ensuring fairness and consistency of the Council's decision making process. Each condition is scheduled below with commentary:
1. Time – Agreed.
 2. In accordance – Agreed.
 3. Construction Method Statement – It should be noted that planning permission was granted for a four bed dwelling 06/10/2022 ref 22 / 02115 / FP, now known as Spring Cottage, immediately adjacent to this application site and with no such condition.
 4. Materials – Agreed.
 5. Open Eaves – Agreed.
 6. Windows/doors – It is wished to diverge from the traditional uniformity of white windows and, as indicated on the elevations they are proposed to be Black Grey RAL7021 not dissimilar to New Cottage, Spring Cottage, Pilgrims Cottage, Old Thatch and Thatch End, all with frame decoration other than white. Weberpral colour Earth. Accordingly, approval is sought for this specific colour, obviating the need for a separate condition, being covered by condition 2.
 7. Joinery Sections – Metric scale sections form part of the application again obviating the need for a separate condition.

8. Render colour – as noted on the elevations. Weberpral - colour Earth.
9. Contamination – Agreed.
10. EV charging point – Agreed.
11. Archaeology – There was no archaeological Condition append to Spring Cottage – 220/02115 / FP on the immediately adjoining site. Nor did the garage block at New Cottage have any such condition. It is therefore submitted that justification needs to be provided, again, to show consistency of decision making.
12. Ecological Enhancement plan - Once again, this application seems to have been singled out with no such condition appended to Spring cottage 22 / 02115 / FP nor The Green 20 / 00970 / FP nor Coker Cottage 23 / 01807 / FP which only required a single box. However, a generous provision of bat/bird boxes and bee boxes/bricks have been indicated on the application drawings. This should remove the need for this condition to be imposed.
13. Lodge Cottage access – Agreed.
14. Landscaping – Such a condition imposed on a domestic rather than Civic project is found to be fundamentally unacceptable. The planning authority is effectively dictating to people how they should set out their garden/amenity space. Whilst an indicative scheme is indicated within the application, it is asked that either this be approved or the condition dispensed with.
15. Ashwell Road hedgerow – Agreed.
16. Removal of Permitted Development Rights – This condition should not be imposed as the site provides a more than adequate environment for works covered by Classes A, B, C, and E. Moreover it would be inconsistent with other recent permissions granted, including the immediate neighbouring property, Spring Cottage 22 / 02115 / FP which sits on a significantly smaller plot than the Lodge Cottage site. Coker Cottage 23 / 00970 / FP retained all PD Rights as did The Green 20 / 00970 / FP, again with inferior amenity space. It is therefore requested that the LPA employs consistency of decision making and does not impose this condition.

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 It is believed that sufficient precedents have already been set by virtue of the planning permission granted adjacent to 'Lodge Cottage' ref 24 / 014980/ FP, 'Spring Cottage' ref 22 / 02115 / FP.
- 6.2 Most importantly, the permission granted for this site has set the principle with only the detail and conditions to be considered. Moreover, the detail that is sought to be carried is of a very modest nature with a reduction on the overall mass and bulk of the building.
- 6.3 The siting and street elevation remain precisely as approved with only a nominal nudge of the garage to accommodate the underground electricity cable.
- 6.4 With the rising cost of utilities as well as taking a responsible attitude to building heat losses and climate change, it is intended that the house be built responsibly to a standard that exceeds the current Building Regulations.
- 6.5 Not only will this make a worthwhile contribution to Category B Newnham's vitality, it will provide Mr and Mrs Bartlett with a home within a community in which they are much respected and very much part of.
- 6.6 It will also add a small but important addition to Newnham's house stock whilst at the same time contributing to North Herts self-build target.
- 6.7 It is therefore suggested that there are no substantive planning grounds for not granting planning permission.
- 6.8 Additionally, noting the in depth consultations that were carried out and the associated extended timescales, it is hoped that North Herts can act expeditiously, enabling the permission to be implemented soonest.
- 6.9 However, noting NPPF policy together with in-house policy with regard to the Council taking a pro-active role, it is requested that in a collaborative way of trying to enable rather than frustrate development of this type, if there are any issues that would benefit from dialogue, please open up communication at the earliest opportunity to allow a timely response.