

Planning Design and Access Statement & Heritage Statement

Proposed Single Dwelling

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

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On Behalf of
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Contents

No.		Page
1.0	Introduction / Background	2
2.0	Site Analysis	3
3.0	Heritage Statement	4
4.0	Development Proposals	6
5.0	Summary	9

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 potential 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.
- 1.3 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 premises, 'Lodge Cottage'.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 The host house, 'Lodge Cottage' is not Listed but like a number of properties in Newnham has been designated a Building of Local Interest.
- 1.6 Newnham has been designated a Category B village in which infilling, which does not extend the built core of the village, will be allowed.
- 1.7 Whilst the above (1.6) sets the principle, it is fully acknowledged and accepted that this will be subject to individual context and all important detail.
- 1.8 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 Land Adjacent 'Coker Cottage', Ashwell Road ref: 23 / 01807 / F.
- 1.9 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 has provided an excellent steer into formulating these proposals, which have already been discussed informally with the Council.
- 1.10 Accordingly, with all this wealth of information, rather than take the formal pre-application route, we believe that all the pre-application advice has already been offered in detail through the above quoted examples.
- 1.11 Accordingly, this submission seeks confirmation of the acceptability of the principle of a single dwelling on this site together with the detail submitted.
- 1.12 Noting that NHC have adopted a pro-active policy, it is asked that the Council looks positively at ways in which this or a similar form of development could be supported and

enabled and if necessary, dialogue opened with regard to the detail of siting, quantum, materials and sundry design issues.

1.13 This planning application takes the formal step, having assimilated the empirical data from the previous submissions highlighted, and trust that it will be supported by the planning authority at least in principle and hopefully detail too. However, as part of the Council's pro-active policy, as noted above, it is hoped that there will be engagement if any queries or if any beneficial changes are recommended to areas that can readily be resolved.

1.14 As a footnote, it is worth highlighting that whilst the original brief was for this to be a house to sell on the open market, due to the lack of success at 2 Caldecote Road to realise a modest bespoke home for the applicant's retirement, in this case, as a genuine self-builder, this, hopefully more straightforward proposal will now be Mr Bartlett's opportunity to move out of rented accommodation and +continue to reside in Newnham.

2.0 Site Analysis

- 2.1 The existing overall curtilage of the host house 'Lodge Cottage', equates to c. 2,140 m² (0.53 acres).
- 2.2 'Lodge Cottage' is a Building of Local Interest which is classed as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 2.3 The site lies directly opposite the Village Hall and a small hard standing car park associated with the hall.
- 2.4 The land is currently part of an anomalously large garden associated with 'Lodge Cottage', and unmanageable for the tenants.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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'.
- 2.7 To the West is currently land which is deemed to be within the settlement limit and was subject of pre-application advice for land to the rear of 'Lodge Cottage' and 'Pilgrims Cottage'. The advice has been taken on board by abandoning the idea of a separate building on this parcel of land but incorporating it within the subject site and providing 'Lodge Cottage' with more appropriate amenity area.

- 2.8 The Ashwell Road frontage provides a traditional hedge fronted cottage garden with no vehicular intervention.

3.0 Heritage Statement

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The relevant heritage assets related to this specific site are: Conservation Area; Listed Buildings; Buildings of Local Interest and potentially archaeology.

CONSERVATION AREA

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 feature, etc, that all make a collective contribution.
- 3.6 Accordingly, the Conservation Area is effectively the whole heritage asset.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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. This is further reinforced by the recent planning permission granted at ‘Coker Cottage’.
- 3.9 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

3.10 There are no Listed Buildings immediately adjacent to or directly opposite the proposed site.

3.11 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 point of view, purely from outward appearance, 'Crouches' does not wear its status well externally and resembles a more contemporary structure.

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

3.13 As already established with NHC and more specifically the Conservation Officer, the quality of design and overall end result can ensure that the Listed Buildings will not be unduly affected.

3.14 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.

3.15 Within Building Conservation's comments dated 15/09/2022 in relation to 'Spring Cottage' ref: 220 / 02115 / FP it was concluded that a singular, East-facing property with garaging/parking set behind would be a positive response in that location

3.16 Whilst it is acknowledged that, at this time, 'Spring Cottage' was separated from 'Lodge Cottage' by the existing access road and land to the North of 'Lodge Cottage', it is clear that the residual land clearly represents a defined building plot. Any loss of amenity land associated with 'Lodge Cottage' is fully compensated and explained within Development Proposals.

ARCHAEOLOGY

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

3.18 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.

3.19 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.

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

4.0 Development Proposals

4.1 In developing the submitted proposals, detailed analysis has been made of what are considered to be relevant in the consideration of this submission.

4.2 Application L/A 'Lodge Cottage' for two semi-detached 4 bed dwellings ref: 22 / 00532 / FP. Below bullet points taken from Planning/Conservation comments in the order raised:

- Local interest 'Lodge Cottage'. No adverse effect as long as its integrity is maintained.
- Ditto Conservation Area.
- View of St Vincent's Church is maintained, as existing, through the gap twist the proposed site and 'Spring Cottage'. The view in any event is highly tenuous even in winter when trees are in a defoliated state.
- View towards Newnham Hall also not affected.
- Policies – suggest that as 'Spring Cottage' was deemed not to create even "less than substantial harm" and indeed it was down to the initial poor design that weighted against this initial proposal, that likewise here it will be down to "DESIGN" and that is a matter that can be resolved through sound collaboration with NHC/Conservation under pro-active policy or just good practice.
- Public benefits of another important rural property that allows gradual organic growth of the community.
- Newnham Category B village which supports growth, as above, as long as it does not extend the settlement boundary. We are told Newnham does not have a defined boundary but it is clear that this is more than adequately demarked by the Conservation Area which is well delineated.

- Case Officer's pre-application advice confirms that the site lies within the core of Newnham and would not be harmful to the Conservation Area.
 - Conservation Officer/Parish Council – 2 × 4-bed too large for the site. A single dwelling more in keeping facing the road. Wholly supportive of this and hence this proposal. Also acknowledge Conservation Officer re front garden/parking. 100% in agreement that the property needs to retain a traditional front garden uncluttered with vehicles. These can be accommodated off the adjacent access road between 'Lodge' and 'Spring' cottages.
 - 2 parking spaces meet the standard with our proposal exceeding the standard with a double garage and supplementary parking.
 - The plot is now comparable with the locality in terms of road frontage, approximate building line, scale and importantly spacing between buildings that is sympathetic to the west side of Ashwell Road. Additionally, the amenity space for both proposed and host properties is generous and relates well to Newnham.
 - Agree with Conservation Officer re orientation etc, which is a positive statement in favour of development per se.
- Also agree on size and parking. Front garden, as before, to be retained as a cottage garden essential and any parking / garaging to the rear.
- Space no longer dominated by trees - reference boundary treatment, perhaps in lieu of post and rail – a beech or similar hedge.
 - Finally, the Conservation Officer fully supported a single detached 4-bed dwelling.

4.3 Pre-application submission for one 3-bed dwelling to the Rear of 'Lodge Cottage' and 'Pilgrims' Cottage, ref: 23 / 02756 / PRE.

- Confirmation that Newnham was designated as a 'Category B' village which allows limited infilling development which does not extend the Settlement Core.
- It is noted that there is no defined settlement boundary and submitted that an objective assessment would be required to assess compliance with Policies SP2 and CGBI. The conclusion was that in this particular case there was a lack of conviction that this proposal constituted infill and was probably more akin to back land development.

Whilst this is not necessarily agreed, the LPA's comments have been fully taken on board which has provided the following ancillary benefits to the proposals submitted herewith.

1) This additional land's development potential has been abandoned and partially given over to 'Lodge Cottage' as a quid pro quo for the loss of the proposal land. 2) That land

also provides the requisite amenity land complementary to a modest retirement home. It also provides the opportunity to bring garaging and parking to the rear of the site.

- 4.4 The proposed new dwelling takes a traditional approach and although a challenging contemporary approach is often the more appropriate solution, it is strongly suggested that this location would not be the place to put this to the test.
- 4.5 Additionally, noting advice and permissions related to other sites in Newnham indicate the Planning Authority's preference. Also, noting that this is a home neither for the authors nor the Planning Authority, the design is of the applicant's and end users' choosing.
- 4.6 Noting that a detached property on the 'Spring Cottage' site was appropriate it is concluded that a dwelling of comparable proportions should also be favourably received, and this has already been informally indicated.
- 4.7 The ground floor plan proposes a double aspect lounge with separate snug and walk-in WC/shower to future proof the home for the occupants. The kitchen/diner forms a single storey west wing with a vaulted ceiling.
- 4.8 The upper floor provides a master suite and a second bedroom both with ensembles.
- 4.9 The L-shaped configuration has been consciously adopted as it provides two major benefits namely 1) it provides an ideal South West aspect for any adjacent amenity area/patio and 2) it ensures that the neighbouring property, 'Lodge Cottage' is neither overshadowed nor dominated by an overbearing element.
- 4.10 In consideration of this last point, likewise the Southern portion of the property is stepped down to emphasise the separation between 'Lodge Cottage' and the new dwelling. It should however be noted that generous separation between the two is assured by virtue of the large timber shed to the 'Lodge Cottage' northern boundary.
- 4.11 As noted in 4.4 the traditional approach extends to the elevations and critically to the street elevation.
- 4.12 Taking the lead from other Newnham properties, a full two storey for the main right hand section has been adopted to give the illusion of this portion being the original building with a subservient (in height and width) left hand element.
- 4.13 Light colour washed render on brick plinth with timber windows under a natural slate roof.
- 4.14 The entrance door is emphasised with a simple flat roof cantilevered lead topped canopy on timber bracket kneelers and doorcase.
- 4.15 A brick chimney completes the traditional package together with exposed rafter feet and bracketed rainwater goods.

- 4.16 The garage block, being adjacent to the open countryside will take a more agricultural approach being timber framed with feather edge boarding under a plain tile roof.
- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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 hedge, most possibly beech would be a more appropriate choice rather than close boarded fencing or even post and rail.
- 4.19 As part of the planning process obligations, Elmaw Consulting were appointed to assist with the requirements for meeting the criteria set for Biodiversity Nett Gain of at least 10%. It is confirmed that 10.86% has been achieved as indicated on drawing no. AB07A and endorsed by Elmaw's attached report.

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 It is believed that sufficient advice has already been gleaned by virtue of the planning permission granted adjacent to 'Lodge Cottage', now 'Spring Cottage' with the formal pre-application advice given in respect of L/R 'Lodge Cottage' and 'Pilgrims Cottage'.
- 5.2 Furthermore with the additional grant of planning permission at The Green and 'Coker Cottage', sufficient guidance has been given by the Planning Authority to obviate the need for a formal pre-application submission on this site. This has been robustly reinforced by an on-site conversation between Officer and the landowner when discussing the earlier backland proposal.
- 5.3 Within all the recent applications, whether approved or refused, there has never been the objection to a dwelling per se whereby the site can reasonably be deemed to be infill and not expanding the settlement's envelope.
- 5.4 Whilst the pre-application advice on L/R 'Lodge Cottage' and 'Pilgrims Cottage' put into question the location of the village boundary, on this site, that questioning has no veracity here being firmly within the well-defined core of Newnham and the siting of the proposed dwelling following the strongly established rhythm of the houses on this side of Ashwell Road.
- 5.5 With this application it is trusted that sympathetic consideration be given to this worthwhile addition to Newnham's housing stock, allowing modest organic growth of the community and encouraging a continued vitality to the area and all in full compliance with both National and Local policies. Moreover, it will provide a long term home for the family

that failed to obtain planning permission at 2 Caldecote Road, allowing them to reside in Newnham whilst, as a self-builder, helping, in a modest way, to improve North Herts self-build provision.

- 5.6 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.