

North Hertfordshire District Council

Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 24/02230/FPH

Date: 16/04/2025

Planning Officer: TH

Address: 2 Lodge Temple Dinsley, St Albans Highway, Preston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 7RU

Subject: Single storey rear and side extensions and insertion of front dormer window following demolition of existing outbuilding and greenhouse.

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 The host building was built between 1861 and 1873 with the second lodge added between 1884 and 1891. The lodges occupy an entrance to Temple Dinsley (a grade II* registered park and garden). There is single reference to the lodge in the HPG description as follows *"The east drive enters at a two-storey lodge standing 450m east of the house, adjacent to the St Paul's Walden to Gosmore lane"*. I acknowledge that at pre-app, the case officer considered that the *"built form and layout of the proposed extensions are broadly considered to be acceptable and would appropriately respond to the layout of the site"*. In which case, I understand if this were to be granted.
- 1.2 However, this is a modest 2-bedroom lodge and notwithstanding its single-storey form, by reason of the quantum of ground floor addition resulting in a 235% increase in single-storey floor area, the rear/side addition would in my opinion, be disproportionately large compared with the host building harming the character and appearance of this non-designated heritage asset and in doing so not only harming the character of this high value registered park and garden setting but also the wider setting and significance of Temple Dinsley which itself is also grade II*. The lack of a Heritage Statement means that the applicant has not described the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting (Para 207, NPPF). The proposal fails to satisfy the provisions of Sections 66(1) of the Planning (LB & CA) Act 1990 and will fail to accord with Section 16 of the Framework and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031. The proposal is **OBJECTIONABLE** in heritage terms. The level of harm is considered low/moderate on the less than substantial harm continuum, there are no public benefits, and the building has an optimum viable use.

2.0 The Local Plan and NPPF (Dec 2024)

- 2.1 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 is relevant as are the following paragraphs of the NPPF:
- **135 c)** (*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment*),
 - **207** (*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting*)
 - **210** (*desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*),
 - **212** (*great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*),

- **213** (clear and convincing justification), and
- **215** (harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use).

3.0 Context

3.1 The key issue here before considering the proposal is to establish the status of 1 and 2 Lodge i.e. whether these are to be regarded as curtilage-listed or not. The following is known:

- Originally, there was only one Lodge (built sometime between 1861 and 1873)
- Second attached lodge built probably between 1884 and 1891.
- From the creation of the Lodges to 1918, they were occupied by individuals who served as staff for the main dwelling Temple Dinsley, such as butlers and chauffeurs.
- From 1918 the lodges transitioned from housing housekeeping staff for Temple Dinsley to housing 'regular' tenants and this was the case at the time of listing in 1952.
- In June 1935, the estate was bought by Princess Helena's College for Girls.
- Not until May 2024 did no.2 (and may be no.1 also?) fall under new freehold ownership thus separated in ownership terms from the estate.
- No.2 Lodge pre-dates 1st July 1948 and was in the same ownership as Temple Dinsley at the time of listing (9 June 1952).
- The Lodges have historically had their own defined curtilage within the park as noted on the map regression below.



3.2 On 7 July 2023 under a pre-app, Historic England wrote the following as part of its response which informed the submission of application ref: 24/01691/FP and is of relevance:

The site contains a further four structures of national significance and designated as listed buildings: the gate, gate piers and park wall facing School Lane (grade II); the

Piggery by Edwin Lutyens (grade II); the icehouse (grade II); and the Dower House (grade II).

The house and gardens are included within the Preston Conservation Area designated by North Hertfordshire Council in 1970.

Additionally, various structures are recognised as non-designated heritage assets, including: the pumping station and barn in the parkland south of the mansion; the agricultural building in Summerhouse Plantation; **the Lodges on the park's southern boundary**; the barn at the Dower House; and, of particular relevance to this consultation, the walled garden adjacent to the Dower House.

(Note: I think it should have said 'the Lodges on the park's eastern or south-eastern boundary')

- 3.3 On 12 December 2024, I emailed colleagues with a further assessment of the status of nos. 1 and 2 Lodge stating that: *"I appreciate that I hold the view that the lodges are curtilage-listed to Temple Dinsley but in light of the attached appeal, Christopher Laine's comment and the 1 Jan 1969 curtilage-listing position, do we take the view that these lodges are actually Non-Designated Heritage Assets after all and which make a positive contribution to the special interest, significance and setting of the listed building (Temple Dinsley) as well as the significance of the registered park and garden".*
- 3.4 The appeal decision that I referred to was from 2023 and has several similarities with this case.
- Cell Park is a Grade II* listed building.
 - Cell Park is located within the Grade II registered park and garden known as Markyatecell Park.
 - New Lodge is located in the north-west corner of the site immediately adjacent to a red brick entrance gate and screen wall. The two storey building dates from the early 20th century as part of one of the then new approaches to the main house.
 - Cell Park was listed in 1952. However, the law relating to curtilage only came into effect on 1 January 1969 and so the general approach to any consideration of the above factors is to look at the position from this date.
 - The lodge and appeal site are in separate ownership to Cell Park today, but the evidence before me is unclear for ownership on 1 January 1969.
 - New Lodge is some 700m from Cell Park and there is no intervisibility due to topography and vegetation.
 - There is a clear physical and functional relationship between New Lodge and Cell Park, at least historically and perhaps at the date of listing and/or 1 January 1969.
 - New Lodge has architectural and historic interest as a relatively late example of an entrance lodge serving an approach through a parkland landscape to a historic country house. Its size and the use of thatch and render results in a modest but nevertheless attractive vernacular building. Therefore, the lodge makes a positive contribution to the special interest, significance and setting of the listed building as well as the significance of the registered park and garden. It can also be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset notwithstanding the lack of identification on any formal list.

Para 11 of the appeal decision states that *"Even if the lodge is not listed by virtue of being within the curtilage of Cell Park, it is located within the parkland surroundings in which the listed building is experienced. Therefore, the lodge forms part of the listed building's setting. It also forms part of the registered park and garden".*

Para 16 of the decision notice states: *Consequently, the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and the registered park and garden. It would also detract from the building as a non-designated heritage asset. Thus, the development would not preserve the special interest or setting of the listed building as required by the LBCA Act. This carries considerable importance and weight in the overall balance.*

- 3.5 On 12 December 2024, I went on to say the following: *"I apologies for raising this yet again but the situation is still not crystal clear (not helped by HE's more recent response) but probably, on review and on balance, we should perhaps be regarding these lodges as non-designated heritage assets and not curtilage-listed which I appreciate contradicts my previous position".* Following my email, the Development & Conservation Manager responded saying that: *Considering the additional research undertaken, I consider that the lodge buildings are not curtilage listed.*

- 3.6 I note The Gardens Trust's response that *"The lodge marks an entrance to the parkland and thus strongly contributes to the approach to the designed landscape"* and that they urge officers to request a Heritage Statement.

- 3.7 I note that Historic Buildings and Places responded on 21 January 2025 stating that their Statutory Remit. Forming part of HB&P's comments is the following:

*HB&P have reviewed the documentation available and note that this lodge building is within Temple Dinsley, a grade II listed park and garden and noted as being constructed at the east entry to the main house, **to which it is also curtilage listed.** The lodge appears to be Victorian and shown on historic OS maps from 1878.*

HB&P also state that i) the application is not accompanied by a heritage assessment to analyse the impact the extension would have on the views, vistas and significance of the listed parkland, or to the historic interest of the lodge house itself, an important set piece at the entry to the estate, as noted in the parkland list description; ii) the extension is rather large, in terms of its footprint, and iii) harms the external symmetry of the lodge building as a whole, albeit the eastern cottage's porch is to the east.

4.0 The Proposal

- 4.1 Apart from wall finish and some fenestration, this proposal is very similar to that submitted under ref: 24/01353/PREH and to which the case responded saying:

*The proposed extensions would be sited the rear of the dwelling and would therefore be set away from the visual amenities of the public realm and public highway. **The built form and layout of the proposed extensions are broadly considered to be acceptable and would appropriately respond to the layout of the site.** Vertical cladding is proposed to the external elevations, a departure from the brickwork present to the pair. I recommend using brick to match given that the cladding would not suitably match the existing dwellings. Fenestration is proposed to be white painted timber with glazing bars and double-glazed casements. Their scale is different to the existing dwelling, and I therefore recommend utilising window layouts to better reflect the character of the existing dwellings.*

During the site visit the introduction of a modest pitched roof dormer to the principal roof slope was discussed. Provided the dormer window is well designed, with a modest scale and sympathetic materials of construction, I consider that its introduction would be acceptable.

- 4.2 I have taken measurements off the existing and proposed plans and whilst the pre-app indicated that there is a 42% increase in square metreage, I question the basis on which that calculation was made. If just comparing existing and proposed single-storey rear additions, then the existing internal floor area equates to a difference between 17m² as existing and 57m² as proposed representing a 235% increase.
- 4.3 The lodges were originally more or less symmetrical in plan form (see below)



- 4.4 However, under ref: 24/00327/FPH a single-storey front and side extension following demolition of existing front/side element was granted and has been implemented at no.1 Lodge. There was no consultation with Conservation and I am unconvinced that this responds positively to the host building. Furthermore, I am mindful that whatever decision is taken on no.2, to an extent, could set a precedent for additional works at no.1.
- 4.5 Upon entering the driveway to Temple Dinsley, the view of no.2 Lodge is one of a pronounced stepped hierarchy of built form. The two-storey second phase whilst the same height as the first phase is narrower and set back whilst the third phase is lower still and set further back. This creates a pleasing descending heirarchy.

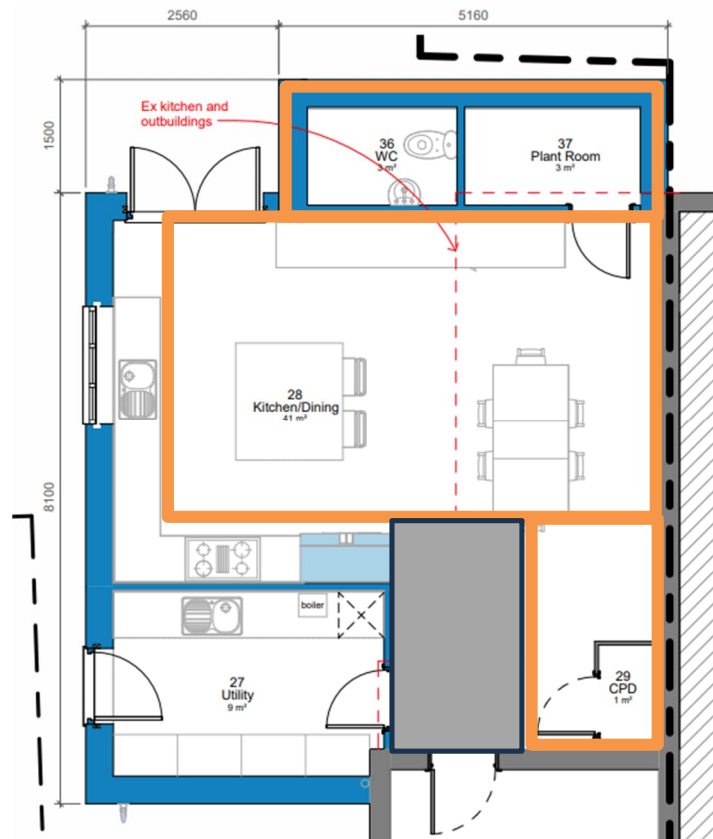


- 4.6 Although the proposed extension remains single-storey, the depth of the forward projection with the right-hand gable wrapping around the left-hand corner of the two-storey second phase addition, upsets this hierarchy, harming the positive contribution these lodges make to the character and appearance of the parkland setting to Temple Dinsley. This would be

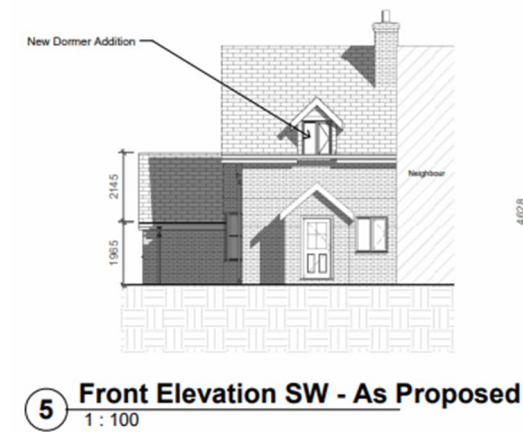
compounded by the use of Upvc doors and windows. Furthermore, where are the clay wall tiles proposed to be used?



- 4.7 Whilst I understand the desire to have large kitchen/dining area and utility, this ground floor footprint is considered disproportionate to the size of the lodge and a more modest sized kitchen/dining would be commensurate with the host building. I have sought to illustrate an alternative with the orange lines below and where the greyed in rectangle would represent a flat roof.



- 4.8 Just to add that no door access is shown to the WC in the above layout and there is still scope to provide some utility space even in this reduced arrangement.
- 4.9 Finally, although I find the simple unaltered roof slope in the images below (left-hand one from 1913) to be a positive aspect of this building's form and appearance, I note that the case officer for the pre-app stated that the dormer would be acceptable and I find no reason to disagree. Having said that, visually, a dormer to the right-hand side of the roof i.e. not directly above the gabled porch would, in my opinion have sat better on the roof but this section forms part of no.1 Lodge.



Mark Simmons
Senior Conservation Officer