

5f a) 3/11/1174/FP and b) 3/11/1159/LB – Repair, refurbishment and extension and change of use of building to Town Council offices at The Cottage, Sayesbury Manor, Sawbridgeworth, CM21 9AN for Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Date of Receipt: a) 21.07.2011
b) 21.07.2011

Type: a) Full – Minor
b) Listed Building

Parish: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Ward: SAWBRIDGEWORTH

a) That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Three Year Time Limit (1T12)
2. Programme of archaeological work (2E02)
3. Approved plans (2E10)
HD10042/01, HD10042/02, HD10042/10F, HD10042/13,
HD10042/20, HD10042/21, HD10042/30D, HD10042/31B,
HD10042/33A, HD10042/40A
4. Samples of materials (2E12)
5. Refuse disposal facilities (2E24)
6. Lighting details (2E27)
7. Cycle parking facilities (2E29)
8. Landscape design proposals (4P12)
Include b, d, e, f, i, j, k, l
9. Landscape works implementation (4P13)
10. Landscape maintenance (4P17)
11. Construction hours of working (6N07)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local

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Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular TR7, TR13, STC5, ENV1, ENV3, BH1, BH2, BH3 and BH6 and PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development and PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

(b) That Listed Building Consent be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Listed Building three year time limit (1T14)
2. Listed Building (new window) (8L03)
3. Listed Building (new doors) (8L04)
4. Listed Building (new brickwork) (8L06)
5. Listed Building (new external rendering) (8L08)
6. Listed Building (new rainwater goods) (8L09)
7. Listed Building (making good) (8L10)

Directive:

1. Listed Building advice (25LB)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies within PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that consent should be granted.

_____ (117411FP.FH)

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. The Cottage forms part of a Grade II Listed complex of buildings known as Sayesbury Manor. It is a two storey, three bedroom terraced property constructed of render and slate with a small private rear garden.

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- 1.2 Sayesbury Manor is set back from Bell Street, in the centre of Sawbridgeworth and vehicular and pedestrian access is through the adjoining surface car park which surrounds the site. Other than the Hailey Day Centre, which occupies the former coach house and stables, the complex accommodates residential properties. The site is situated in the Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area.
- 1.3 The applications propose to refurbish and alter The Cottage and erect a new extension for use as the Sawbridgeworth Town Council offices. The new extension will abut the Hailey Centre and will be built in a contemporary style using a mixture of modern and traditional materials. It will be attached to the existing cottage and Hailey Centre via two flat roofed single storey elements. The main part of the extension will be a large double height gable ended building which will mirror the height and form of the existing cottage. Further space is proposed for three offices in a lean-to addition on the western side. In total of approximately 200 square metres of floorspace will be created for office and community use.
- 1.4 The applicant advises that the size of the extension is governed by its intended use, including the requirement to provide a Council Chamber available both for Town Council meetings and community activities. The space created will occasionally be used in conjunction with the Hailey Centre and direct access will be provided by way of interconnecting doors and a shared internal courtyard.
- 1.5 The application is supported by a Historic Building Appraisal, Schedule of Works, Landscape Proposals and Design and Access Statement.

2.0 Site History:

- 2.1 The most recent planning history relating to the site relates to the conversion of Sayesbury Manor into 4no. flats and the erection of 2no. 3 bed dwellings in 2002 (LPA Ref: 3/02/1693/FP and 3/02/1964/LB).
- 2.2 In addition in 1993 planning permission and listed building consent were granted for the change of use of the former coach house and stables and the erection of an extension to be used as a day centre (LPA Refs: 3/93/0265/FP and 3/93/0264/LB).
- 2.3 There is no planning history relating specifically to The Cottage.

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3.0 Consultation Responses:

- 3.1 County Highways advises that, given the location of the site in relation to the town centre and public car park, the proposal will not be significant in terms of impact on the highway.
- 3.2 The Landscape Officer comments that the development proposal is reasonably non contentious in landscape terms, but detailed landscape proposals are still necessary. The submitted landscape proposal includes some anomalous choices of plant species for their locations and there could also be some improvements made to the hardsurfacing elements. Overall the scheme will need to be reconsidered to create a better sense of coherence and materials specification for fencing, paving, kerbs, edgings etc all need to be considered. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved subject to landscape conditions being attached.
- 3.3 The Conservation Officer comments that the interior of the Cottage has a collection of architectural features, including the fireplaces, which are considered of architectural and historic merit, in terms of continued use and needs of the property as a domestic dwelling and that the proportion and completeness of the planform is also considered a key historic feature as a domestic dwelling.
- 3.4 Concerns were originally raised regarding the removal and disposal of the existing hearth and fireplace surroundings, which would result in the irreversible alteration of historic fabric contrary to conservation principles and practice. In addition, it was felt that the wholesale removal of the ground floor partition wall could be accommodated more sensitively given the significance of the room proportions and planform.
- 3.5 With regards to the extension, and when assessing its mass, scale and alignment the Conservation Officer has acknowledged that the extension presents itself as a 'separate' later addition with a varied roofline which assists in reducing its overall mass. However, concerns were originally raised regarding the single storey, monopitch roof at the junction between the existing building and extension which was visually awkward. Furthermore, the principal gable end elevation, which will form the main entrance to the council offices, had little or no bearing on the formal architecture of the principle listed building, and did not taken advantage of its position, in that it could be an opportunity for a more contemporary design, making use of modern materials.

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- 3.6 In response to these concerns amended plans were submitting addressing all of the above points. The Conservation Officer has now advised that the revised floor and elevation plans have addressed conservation and design concerns raised through the initial consultation and therefore the scheme is now considered acceptable subject to conditions regarding making good, sample of materials, windows and doors.
- 3.7 The Historic Environment Unit at HCC comment that the development site is in Area of Archaeological Significance 166. Sayesbury Manor dates from 1780, although the core of the main house is timber framed suggesting that it is an earlier structure which was remodelled in the later 18th century. The proposed development is therefore likely to have an impact on significant heritage assets and it is recommended that a condition be imposed requiring a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken.

4.0 Town Council Representations:

- 4.1 Sawbridgeworth Town Council have advised they have no comments in relation to the application.

5.0 Other Representations:

- 5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 No letters of representation have been received.

6.0 Policy:

- 6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:

TR7	Car Parking Standards
TR13	Cycling- Facilities Provision (non- residential)
STC5	Conversion of Dwellings to Commercial Uses
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV3	Planning Out Crime
BH1	Archaeology and New Development
BH2	Archaeological Evaluations and Assessments
BH3	Archaeological Conditions and Agreements
BH6	New Development in Conservation Areas

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6.2 In addition, the following National policy guidance is relevant:-

Planning Policy Statement 1, Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

7.0 Considerations:

7.1 The site is situated within the town of Sawbridgeworth where the principle of development is acceptable. The main issues for consideration are therefore:

- The loss of the residential unit;
- The appropriateness of the design, size and siting of the extensions;
- The impact of the development on the character, appearance and setting of the Grade II Listed Building and Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area;
- Parking and access arrangements;
- Any adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring properties;
- Landscaping;
- Archaeology

The loss of the residential unit

7.2 Under Policy STC5 planning permission for the conversion of existing vacant or occupied dwellings into commercial uses will be refused where such premises are suitable for continued or renewed occupational development. Whilst the use of the building for Town Council Offices is not strictly commercial it is important that this issue be addressed. The Cottage, whilst currently unoccupied and in a poor state of repair, is suitable for renewed residential occupation. In this case however it is considered that the loss of the residential unit is justified given the intended multi purpose use of the building and the improved facilities that will be available for community use. The wider community benefits associated with the proposed development are considered in this case to outweigh the harm associated with the loss of this one residential unit.

The appropriateness of the design, size and siting of the extensions

7.3 The proposed extensions are significant and will in some respect dominate the existing building. However, the applicant has argued that an extension of this size and scale is needed in order to provide the necessary facilities for the Town Council and that the finished development will significantly benefit the community. In order to alleviate

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concerns raised during pre application discussions modifications have been made to the external appearance of the extensions to introduce flat roof elements to break up the mass. As well as breaking up the mass of the building these lower, more subtle, parts will provide a visual separation between the existing building and the new extension. The extension is to be rendered and will have contemporary detailing such as large areas of glazing on its gable end. This will ensure that rather than creating a pastiche of the original building which will compete visually, the extended part will have its own identity to complement the building.

- 7.4 Overall Officers are satisfied that whilst large, the scale of the building is justified and that the use of different complementary elements and the provision of visual breaks between the existing cottage and the Hailey Centre ensures that the size, siting and design of the extensions will be acceptable. The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of Policy ENV1.

The impact of the development on the character, appearance and setting of the Grade II Listed Building and Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area

- 7.5 Turning first to the proposed alterations to the existing cottage; these are limited to the removal of a door and the removal of a small section of wall to widen the access; the creation of access into the new extension where currently a window exists and the creation of new entrance into the building on the northern elevation. In line with advice from the Conservation Officer Officers consider that these alterations will not adversely impact upon its special character nor will they result in the loss of any important historic fabric.
- 7.6 Likewise, given the location of the proposed extensions in relation to Sayesbury Manor and The Cottage, Officers are satisfied that the proposed extensions will not unduly impact upon its special character nor will they result in the loss of any important historic fabric. Furthermore they will not impact adversely upon the setting of the listed building or the character and appearance of Sawbridgeworth Conservation Area, as required by Policy BH6 and PPS5.

Parking and access arrangements

- 7.7 The site is located in the centre of Sawbridgeworth and is adjacent to a large public car park. Officers therefore consider that in line with County Highways comments the proposal will not be significant in terms of impact on the highway and that sufficient parking already exists to

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accommodate the new use without the need to provide additional dedicated parking for the new use. Furthermore space is available for sufficient cycle parking facilities to be provided on the site, and a condition requiring such facilities is recommended accordingly.

Any adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring properties

- 7.8 Officers are satisfied that the proposed development due to its juxta position with neighbouring properties and the location of openings will not result in a significant loss of light, privacy or similar. Furthermore Officers consider that whilst there will be an increase in activity on the site, it is of a nature which will not result in any undue noise or nuisance to local residents.

Landscaping

- 7.9 Turning to landscaping; the proposed development provides an opportunity to improve the character, quality and functioning of the area and the rear of Sayesbury Manor by creating a new frontage onto the car park. Officers note the comments made by the Landscape Officer and in line with these Officers are satisfied that an appropriate landscaping scheme can be achieved which takes into account the setting of the building and its new public function. Appropriate conditions have therefore been included accordingly.

Archaeology

- 7.10 The County Archaeological Officer has advised that the development is in Area of Archaeological Significance 166 and that Sayesbury Manor dates from 1780, although the core of the main house is timber framed suggesting that it is an earlier structure which was remodelled in the later 18th century The County Archaeological Officer has requested a condition to require a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken accordingly. Officers agree that the development is likely to have a significant impact on this heritage asset and a condition is therefore recommended for a programme of archaeological work to be carried out, in accordance with policies BH1, BH2 and BH3 of the Local Plan and PPS5.

8.0 Conclusion:

- 8.1 To conclude, Officers consider that the proposed re-use of the building as Town Council Offices constitutes appropriate development. The works proposed to the building are considered to be acceptable, and

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would not harm the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, its setting or that of the wider Conservation Area. The proposed use of the building and the activity associated with such uses is considered to be acceptable and would not result in any unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents or traffic generation and highway safety. Accordingly it is recommended that planning permission and listed building consent are granted subject to the conditions outlined at the head of this report.