

**ITEM NUMBER:**

**REFERENCE NUMBER: UTT/21/2358/LB**

**LOCATION: Howe Hall, Littlebury Green Road,  
Littlebury CB11 4XB**



**PROPOSAL:** Conversion and extension to The Dovecote including restoration of oak frame, removal of cement render and addition of ply bracing, wood wool insulation and lime render

**APPLICANT:** Mr and Mrs Bradfield

**AGENT:** Mr Gideon Brimmer, Donald Purkiss & Associates

**EXPIRY DATE:** 15th September 2021 (EOT 30th November 2021)

**CASE OFFICER:** Mrs Nicola Perry

**NOTATION:** Outside Development Limits, Listed Building Polygons

**REASON AT COMMITTEE:** Called-in by Cllr Gregory if recommended for refusal on the material planning grounds of preservation of a listed building.

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**1. RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL**

**1.2 REASON**

1 The impact of the proposal on the heritage asset will be harmful to the historic fabric, form and character of the building, and as such the proposal fails to accord with the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 - Policy ENV2, Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, albeit the level of harm to the listed building is considered to be 'less than substantial' as per paragraph 202.

**2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2.1 The application relates to the Dovecote, situated to the west of Howe Hall within the residential curtilage, on the southern boundary of the adjacent working farm now in separate ownership. The site is located within Littlebury Green, a hamlet to the west of the main village of Littlebury. The Dovecote is a Grade II listed building, dating from the seventeenth century, it is square on plan and of timber framed and plastered construction on a brick base with clay tiled roof, typical of Essex type (list entry number: 1231698). The north elevation of the Dovecote abuts a full-height brick and flint which forms the boundary of the residential curtilage. Howe Hall is also a Grade II listed building, which dates from the early nineteenth century and is externally finished in red brick with a slate roof (list entry number: 1273819).

**2.2 PROPOSAL**

2.3 Listed Building Consent is sought for the proposed conversion and extension to The Dovecote, including restoration of oak frame, removal of cement render and addition of ply bracing, wood wool insulation and lime

render. The Dovecote would be converted to an ancillary annex associated with Howe Hall, as both buildings are in the same ownership.

- 2.4 A separate application for Householder Planning Permission has been sought for the same proposal.

### 3. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 The development does not constitute 'EIA development' for the purposes of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

### 4. **APPLICANTS CASE**

- 4.1
- Design and Access Statement
  - Bat Survey (Essex Mammal Surveys, May 2021)
  - Great Crested Newt Survey (Essex Mammal Surveys, March 2021)
  - Heritage Statement (Brighter Planning, July 2021)
  - Summary Justification (Brighter Planning, August 2021)
  - Rebuttal Letter (Brighter Planning, September 2021)
  - Supporting Photographs

### 5. **RELEVANT SITE HISTORY**

UTT/21/0493/HHF – Proposed conversion and extension to The Dovecote to create annexe. Refused April 2021.

UTT/21/0494/LB – Proposed conversion and extension to The Dovecote to create annexe. Refused April 2021.

### 6. **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

#### 6.1 **Littlebury Parish Council**

The PC has discussed the application and do not have any objections and pleased that they are bringing back use to a historic building without impacting its visual integrity.

#### 6.2 **Historic Buildings and Conservation Advice**

Built Heritage Advice pertaining to an application for the proposed conversion and extension to The Dovecote including restoration of oak frame, removal of cement render and addition of ply bracing, wood wool insulation and lime render.

The building affected by this application, Dovecote at Howe Hall, is Grade II listed. It is a seventeenth century timber framed and plastered dovecote of typical Essex type, square on plan (list entry number: 1231698). Adjacent to the site is the Grade II listed, Howe Hall, which dates from the early nineteenth century and is of red brick with a slate roof (list entry number: 1273819).

This application is identical to the recently refused applications, UTT/21/0493/HHF & UTT/21/0494/LB.

The Dovecote at Howe Hall is a modest timber framed building, the significance of which is primarily expressed through its evidential and historical value as a utilitarian structure, square on plan. The proposal for conversion to an annex with extensions and alterations will fundamentally result in a baseline level of less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset. It is not understood whether alternative uses have been explored which assessed whether conversion to residential use is securing the best optimum viable use of the building and its preservation. The local planning authority should take this into consideration, and should the principle of residential conversion be accepted, this is of the understanding that the proposals will start with a level of less than substantial harm through the fundamental change in use and required alterations for residential conversion.

With regards to the proposed residential conversion, the re-use of existing apertures is a positive. However, a key concern towards the acceptability of conversion to residential use is minimising the level of harm to occur from any such scheme. The proposal is for the ancillary residential conversion of the Dovecote, therefore there is not a requirement for a separate kitchen, leading to the building being viewed as a separate dwelling. As mentioned above, the significance of the Dovecote is primarily expressed through its evidential value and square plan form, the addition of an extension would intrinsically be harmful to the significance of the heritage asset. I do not consider the harm arising from an extension to outweigh the benefits from securing the optimum viable use of the building and its preservation. I consider a more sympathetic scheme could be realised which omits the proposed extension, thus preserving the architectural interest and legibility of the designated heritage asset as a Dovecote.

I am unable to support this application. The local planning authority should take into account whether residential conversion is securing the optimum viable use of the building and its preservation. Should the principle be accepted then so is a baseline level of less than substantial harm. I do not consider the proposal for residential conversion and extension to preserve the architectural interest or significance of the heritage asset. I consider there to be a more sympathetic approach which minimises the harm to the designated heritage asset. The proposals would result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 202 of the NPPF (2021) being relevant.

## **7. REPRESENTATIONS**

**7.1** Neighbours were notified of the application by letter. A site notice was also displayed adjacent to the site and an advertisement was placed in the local press. Representations were received from neighbouring residents in support of the proposal, and the following observations have been made:

- Sympathetic restoration of the Dovecote is essential, so it has a functional use and is maintained for the future;
- Adaptive reuse of buildings has gone on for centuries;
- The design gives it a modern purpose whilst maintaining the site as a record of its historical past.

## **8. POLICIES**

- 8.1** S16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)(2021) and Policy ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) are material considerations.

**8.2 National Policies**

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)

**8.3 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005**

ENV2 – Development affecting Listed Buildings

**8.4 Supplementary Planning Document/Guidance**

Not applicable.

**9. CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1** The issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

**i) Development affecting a Listed Building (ULP Policy ENV2, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the NPPF)**

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- 9.2** Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 states that a planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and local planning authorities are required to apply this statutory advice when determining listed building applications. ULP Policy ENV2 advises that development affecting a listed building should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings. Demolition of a listed building, or development proposals that adversely affect the setting, and alterations that impair the special characteristics of a listed building will not be permitted. These policies are further supported by the aims of the NPPF, which clearly sets out the requirement to conserve the significance of heritage assets and emphasises that great weight should be given to this. Any harm requires clear and convincing justification and should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal.

- 9.3** The building affected by this application, The Dovecote, is Grade II listed and situated adjacent to and within the curtilage of Howe Hall, also Grade II listed, it is therefore necessary to seek specialist heritage advice. Place Services Conservation Officers reviewed the submitted information and responded with the following:

- 9.4** *“The building affected by this application, Dovecote at Howe Hall, is Grade II listed. It is a seventeenth century timber framed and plastered dovecote of typical Essex type, square on plan (list entry number: 1231698). Adjacent to the site is the Grade II listed, Howe Hall, which dates from the early nineteenth century and is of red brick with a slate roof (list entry number: 1273819).*
- 9.5** *This application is identical to the recently refused applications, UTT/21/0493/HHF & UTT/21/0494/LB.*
- 9.6** *The Dovecote at Howe Hall is a modest timber framed building, the significance of which is primarily expressed through its evidential and historical value as a utilitarian structure, square on plan. The proposal for conversion to an annex with extensions and alterations will fundamentally result in a baseline level of less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset. It is not understood whether alternative uses have been explored which assessed whether conversion to residential use is securing the best optimum viable use of the building and its preservation. The local planning authority should take this into consideration, and should the principle of residential conversion be accepted, this is of the understanding that the proposals will start with a level of less than substantial harm through the fundamental change in use and required alterations for residential conversion.*
- 9.7** *With regards to the proposed residential conversion, the re-use of existing apertures is a positive. However, a key concern towards the acceptability of conversion to residential use is minimising the level of harm to occur from any such scheme. The proposal is for the ancillary residential conversion of the Dovecote, therefore there is not a requirement for a separate kitchen, leading to the building being viewed as a separate dwelling. As mentioned above, the significance of the Dovecote is primarily expressed through its evidential value and square plan form, the addition of an extension would intrinsically be harmful to the significance of the heritage asset. I do not consider the harm arising from an extension to outweigh the benefits from securing the optimum viable use of the building and its preservation. I consider a more sympathetic scheme could be realised which omits the proposed extension, thus preserving the architectural interest and legibility of the designated heritage asset as a Dovecote.*
- 9.8** *I am unable to support this application. The local planning authority should take into account whether residential conversion is securing the optimum viable use of the building and its preservation. Should the principle be accepted then so is a baseline level of less than substantial harm. I do not consider the proposal for residential conversion and extension to preserve the architectural interest or significance of the heritage asset. I consider there to be a more sympathetic approach which minimises the harm to the designated heritage asset. The proposals would result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 202 of the NPPF (2021) being relevant.”*
- 9.10** *The advice provided by the Conservation Officer has been reviewed with reference to the supplied Heritage Statement, Summary Justification, and Rebuttal Letter and further discussion with the Conservation Officer. In terms of heritage impacts the proposal fails to preserve the significance of*

the historic planform and fabric of the Dovecote and undermines its character and architectural interest. The public benefits of the proposal have been weighed against the harm, in this instance it is considered that the optimum viable use of the Dovecote could be secured without an extension of the scale and format proposed, to ensure the special characteristics of the listed building are conserved.

**9.11** As such the proposal will cause 'less than substantial harm' to the listed building and fails to accord with ULP Policy ENV2, the NPPF and Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## **10. EQUALITIES**

**10.1** Equality Act 2010

**10.2** The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers.

**10.3** The Committee must be mindful of this duty inter alia when determining all planning applications. In particular, the Committee must pay due regard to the need to:

- (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**10.4** Due consideration has been made to The Equality Act 2010 during the assessment of the planning application, no conflicts are raised

## **11. CONCLUSION**

**11.1** The following is a summary of the main reasons for the recommendation:

- i) The proposal will be detrimental to the designated heritage asset for which the public benefit will not outweigh the harm caused.

**11.2** It is therefore recommended that the application be refused.