

## Item No. 10

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/12/04208/LB</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>35 to 39 High Street, Cranfield, Bedford, MK43 0DP</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Conversion of 35 to 39 High Street Cranfield to one dwelling with single storey side and rear extensions and conversion of roof space to create a first floor.</b>
<b>PARISH</b>	<b>Cranfield</b>
<b>WARD</b>	<b>Cranfield &amp; Marston Moretaine</b>
<b>WARD COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>Cllrs Bastable, Matthews &amp; Mrs Clark</b>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Annabel Gammell</b>
<b>DATE REGISTERED</b>	<b>09 January 2013</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>06 March 2013</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Hartwell Trust</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	<b>Graham Wright Architect</b>
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE</b>	<b>Councillor Matthews called the application to committee on the grounds “to bring uninhabited premises back into use and prevent the loss of a Listed Building”.</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>Listed Building - Refused</b>

**Reason for committee:** Councillor Matthews called the application to committee on grounds "to bring uninhabited premises back into use and prevent the loss of a listed building."

### **Site Location:**

35 to 39 High Street in Cranfield, is a small terrace of three single storey dwellings, which were purpose built and have been used as Almshouses for the village of Cranfield. The building is Grade II Listed, it was constructed in 1834. The building is set at the back of the site, some 45 metres from the highway. The original building has a symmetrical design form with three thatched gable porches, and two pairs of ornate chimney stacks. The building has been unsympathetically extended to the side and the rear.

The three dwellings are set within a roughly rectangular plot some 63 metres long and 19 metres in width, there is no off road parking, there is a central path leading from a pedestrian gate to number 37 High Street, Cranfield, which splits off to serve the other two properties. The front garden is laid to grass with two trees at the frontage, and hedging to the front and sides. The plot has an open character, with views of the building prominent from the High Street.

The dwellings are on the north western side of the High Street, adjacent to residential properties and Cranfield Methodist Church. The dwellings are currently vacant.

### **The Application:**

Listed Building Consent is sought for the demolition of the existing side and rear extensions, the conversion of three dwellings into one dwelling and the erection of a link

rear extension, a side conservatory, a first floor within the roof space, with two dormer windows, a vehicular access, and parking for four cars.

The conversion of three dwellings into one dwelling, involves internal alterations to the existing rooms, to knock through three walls to open the internal space up, and remove two existing walls entirely. A staircase would be constructed to give access to the existing roof space, the conversion of the first floor would involve the removal of internal beams, the construction of two gable dormer windows within the rear roof slope, this would facilitate three rooms upstairs. It is not clear from the plans, but it may require rafters and the chimney stacks to be lost or relocated.

The rear extension would be some 7.3 metres wide, and 6.5 metres in depth, at its widest point from the original dwelling. It is noted that the main bulk of the extension would be some 4.6 metres in depth, connected by a flat roof brick link forming a WC. The maximum height of this building would be 5.5 metres, the flat roof height and eaves height would be 2.9 metres.

The side extension would be some 3 metres by 3.6 metres, largely glazed, with a height of 4 metres.

The access would be centrally located at the existing pedestrian access, the parking area, would be hard standing creating four off road parking spaces.

The resulting dwelling would have three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a WC, entrance lobby, dressing room, study, conservatory, living room, kitchen, dining room, music zone, and two additional stores/studies, and would have a floor area of 180 sqm, each original dwelling has a floor area of 26 sqm, the original floor area of the three dwellings totalling 78 sqm. The floor area of the three dwellings with the existing extensions is some 95 sqm.

Revised plans were submitted during the application.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES:**

### **National Policy Planning Framework (2012)**

Section 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Section 7: Requiring good design

Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire - draft**

Policy 45: The Historic Environment -

The Council will conserve, enhance, protect and promote the enjoyment of the historic environment: This will be achieved by:

- Requiring developers (where applicable) to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development, including any contribution made by their setting.

- Requiring the highest quality of design in all new development, alterations and extensions and the public realm in the context of heritage assets and the historic environment. Design which positively contributes to local character and distinctiveness, and sustains and enhances the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and the setting of Listed Buildings will be encouraged and supported.
- Safeguarding and promoting improvements to Central Bedfordshire's historic environment including securing appropriate viable uses and improvements to Listed Buildings and reducing the number of heritage assets “at risk”.
- Encouraging the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment by supporting appropriate management and interpretation of heritage assets.
- Refusing development proposals that will lead to harm to or loss of significance of a heritage asset whether designated or non-designated, unless the public benefits outweigh the harm or loss.

### **Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009**

CS14 High Quality Development  
 CS15 Heritage  
 DM3 High Quality Design  
 DM13 Heritage in Development

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide - Design Supplements 4 (Residential Alterations and Extensions) and 5 (The Historic Environment)

### **Planning History**

None

### **Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)**

Town Council	No objection
Neighbour Response	Two letters of objection received from 33C High Street Cranfield

### **Consultations/Publicity responses**

Conservation Officer	<b>Objection - Recommends refusal</b>
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#### Comments to 1st Consultation:

There are no objections to the principle of converting the three almshouses into one single dwelling as long as the original historic layout of the three almshouses remains visibly legible

and important features are retained intact. The proposed layout of the ground floor of the almshouses appears appropriate.

As stated at pre-application, there are no objections to the removal of the present rear extension and replacement with a more appropriately designed modest and subservient extension. The proposed new rear and side extension however is not considered acceptable in terms of size and design. Whilst the new rear extension has been reduced in size from the first pre-application proposals, it is still considered too large and bulky, being over half the length of the whole listed building and wider than a single almshouse, and will dominate in the immediate rear setting of the building. The extension is also not considered of suitable high quality design to compliment the listed building. The flat roof link has the appearance similar to the present detracting flat roof extension and the detailing of the main pitched roof element, including soldier courses above the windows, appear crude and out of character with the elegant high quality detailing of the listed building. Furthermore, due to its size, one ground floor window (proposed to house an en-suite) will be completely masked by the extension, as well as the one of the first floor proposed dormers.

As stated at pre-application, the conservatory style extension to the side with its abundance of glazing, is considered out of character with the listed host building, and due to its size, will interrupt with the important symmetry of the main elevation.

There are concerns regarding proposals to convert the roof space to form two bedrooms and a bathroom and the impact on the historic fabric of the building and its aesthetic appearance (in terms of the proposed introduction of rear dormers). Two dormers are being proposed to the rear of the property which are likely to involve removal of roof timbers, notably rafters, and a large part of the thatch. Sympathetic conversion of the roof space might be considered if it can be fully demonstrated as part of a clear and convincing justification, that the three almshouses could not be fully repaired and viably converted to a single dwelling without the requirement for the introduction of a first storey. Unfortunately this justification has not been provided. Indeed, the drawings significantly lack important information as it appears that a full survey of the roof structure has not been undertaken to ascertain whether there is the space to accommodate the new rooms. An assessment of the dimensions of the roof space have only been based on the external dimensions of the building, as set out in drawing SK07 and this drawing appears inaccurate as it is likely that the thatch is much thicker than shown.

The drawings of the proposed internal alterations also only provide an approximate location for one of the important chimney

stacks and it is not clear how many rafters will need to be removed to accommodate the dormers. As such, it is not possible to fully assess the impact of this aspect of the works on the historic fabric of the building. The design of the new dormers, in the form of a disproportionate and rather modern triangular shape is also not considered appropriate and will be out of character with the traditional detailing of the listed building.

The justification provided for the proposed harmful alterations and additions to the listed set of almshouses as part of the heritage asset assessment, appears to state that the harm will be outweighed by the securing of an optimum viable use. The level of harm caused to the significance of the almshouses can not be suitably outweighed by this public benefit as it is considered that the set of almshouses can be much more sympathetically converted to a single dwelling without such a substantial rear and side extension.

In summary, it is recommended that the application be refused on the basis that the proposed extensions, by virtue of their excessive size, bulk and inappropriate and incongruous design, will cause harm to the significance of the listed building and will dominate in its setting, contrary to Policies CS15 and DM13 of the Council's Core Strategy, Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the English Heritage 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide'. The level of harm caused by the works can not be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals.

In addition, there is significant lack of sufficient information to assess the potential impact of the proposed conversion of the roof space of the listed building, or whether conversion would be possible in the space. The proposed conversion has the likely potential to involve negative loss of historic fabric, notably removal of rafters, a clear and convincing justification for which has not been provided, contrary to paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed dormers are also not considered appropriate in terms of design and will be out of character with the listed building.

#### Comments to 2nd Consultation:

The pitched roof extension has been slightly improved in design with the removal of the shoulder course above the windows. The addition, however does not present any pointers or stylistic references to the architectural style of the host dwelling, its rhythm or proportions (e.g. solid walls to void, vertical or horizontal emphasis, alignments). These are very important in achieving an addition which compliments the historic and architectural values of the listed building. The extension appears as a bulky shed-like structure. In addition, from comparing the

previous plans and those subsequently submitted outcome of comments provided, the extension has in fact been enlarged rather than reduced in terms of footprint. As such, the extension is still considered to be too large and bulky and will dominate in the immediate setting of the listed building. The proposed glazing on the south west elevation will serve to increase its prominence due to the incongruity of this feature.

A conservatory style extension to the side is considered out of character with the listed building. Whilst some of the glazing has been slightly reduced on the rear roof (full height glazing is still proposed on the front and side), an extension of this modern untraditional style is generally not in keeping with modest vernacular buildings such as the almshouses. A modest side extension could certainly be achieved on this building in a more appropriate traditional and subservient design as long as it is of a size and in a suitable set back location that does not interrupt with the strong symmetrical proportions of the main elevation.

As stated at pre-application stage and in my previous advice, the roof of this building could be sympathetically converted in outcome of a detailed survey of the roof and on the basis of a clear and convincing justification. As stated in my previous comments, there is significant lack of sufficient information submitted as part of this application to ascertain the potential impact on the historic fabric of the roof. Within historic buildings, the roof structures are particularly important as they both provide evidence of traditional technologies such as thatching, and are usually one of the only areas of the building to remain almost unaltered from its original construction. The roof space of the almshouses has high evidential value as it has the great potential to yield further information about the original construction of the building as there is likely to be a high survival of historic original fabric. No additional information has been provided, including more accurate drawings, therefore my concerns regarding the potential harmful impact of these proposals remain unchanged.

The appearance of the proposed dormers have been altered, however, no further details have been provided regarding if or how much historic fabric might need to be removed to accommodate these proposed features and the roof conversion as a whole. This information is extremely important in order for us to ascertain how much impact the proposals will have on the historic fabric of this part of the building. As stated in paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the level of detail provided by the applicant should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Heritage assets, designated or undesignated, are irreplaceable and any harm or loss to their significance requires a clear and convincing justification (para.132 NPPF).

**In summary, the updated plans submitted have not satisfied concerns raised in my previous comments, both regarding the design, size and bulk of the rear extension, the design of the side extension and the lack of sufficient information to assess the impact of proposals to form accommodation in the roof space. As such, my objections remain unchanged and it is recommended that the application is refused.**

English Heritage            **No comments received**

Ancient Monument Society    **No comments received**

## **Determining Issues**

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle of development
2. Impact upon Listed Building
3. Pre-Application Advice
4. Any other considerations

## **Considerations**

### **1. Principle of development**

The development is for the conversion of three dwellings into one dwelling, with extension and alteration of the existing building.

It is considered that the principle of converting the Listed Building from a terrace of three dwellings into one family home is acceptable, providing it respects the character of the original building. It is considered that it is reasonable to allow a degree of internal changes to ensure the future use of the Listed Building.

The additional text within the draft Development Strategy states:

The repair, renovation, alteration and extension of a Listed Building should not be at the expense of its intrinsic special interest and significance. It is important to guard against unnecessary change or over-restoration. In any change, materials should be sympathetic and appropriate to those used in the original building. In particular the Council will resist applications that result in the loss of traditional local features such as long straw thatched roofs, locally manufactured clay tiles and bricks and local stone.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) states:

***Paragraph 126***

Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

### ***Paragraph 128***

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

### ***Paragraph 130***

Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

### ***Paragraph 132***

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

Principle and Policy Conclusions:

It is considered that the principle of conversion to one dwelling, and appropriate extension is acceptable.

## **2. Impact upon Listed Building**

The Central Bedfordshire draft Development Strategy (2013) specifies that the Authority should be:

"Refusing development proposals that will lead to harm to or loss of significance of a heritage asset whether designated or non-designated, unless the public benefits outweigh the harm or loss."

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) specifies that:

"Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the



deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision."

#### Design Considerations in relation to the Listed Building:

The dwellings are a Grade II Listed Building, one of 18 Listed Buildings within the village of Cranfield. All design considerations have been made in the light of the significance of the Heritage Asset.

The condition of the existing building is of concern, as there is evidence of the building not being maintained to a standard that is desirable for a building of this importance. However as in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework the condition of the existing building is not a factor in the determining of this application. In addition it is considered that the conversion and extension of the building would have no significant public benefit.

It is considered that the scale and design of the proposed extensions are unacceptable. It is judged that the massing of the additions would cause harm to the heritage asset and therefore is unacceptable in accordance with Policy 45 of the draft Development Strategy. The harm would be caused by the rear and side elevations being dominated with modern incongruous elements which do not relate to the Listed Building. The proposed brick flat roof link which would form a corridor and WC to the kitchen area, would be of similar design to the existing rear extension. As the removal of the existing additions would be considered a benefit to the building, the replacement should be with something of a significantly higher quality. The dormer windows to facilitate the use of the first floor, would appear awkward and undesirable within the rear elevation. Although the principle of using 1st floor accommodation is not unacceptable it would have to have careful detailing to ensure the historic fabric of the building was not damaged, insufficient information on this element of the design have been received, further information was requested, it was acknowledged that the dimensions were based on photographs, and no formal structural survey of the roof had been undertaken. It is considered that the removal of beams would have an unacceptable harmful impact upon the historic fabric of the Listed Building.

It is considered that the design would not be of high enough quality to warrant approval in this sensitive location. This is in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide, the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy DM3 of the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies and Policy 45 of the draft Development Strategy.

### **3. Pre-application Advice**

Pre-application advice was sought before the submission of the planning application. It was stated that the application would be unlikely to receive officer support. It is considered that this recommendation is in accordance with the advice given.

### **4. Other Considerations**

There are no further considerations to this application

### **Recommendation**

That Listed Building Consent be Refused for the following reasons:

- 1 The proposed single storey extensions and dormer windows, by virtue of their excessive size, bulk and inappropriate and incongruous design, will cause harm to the character and significance of the listed building and will dominate its setting. There is significant lack of sufficient information to assess the potential impact of the proposed conversion of the roof space of the listed building, or whether conversion would be possible in the space. The proposed conversion is likely to involve negative loss of historic fabric, notably removal of rafters, a clear and convincing justification for which has not been provided, contrary to paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed development contrary to Policies 43 and 45 of the Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire (2013), Policies CS15 and DM13 of the Council's Core Strategy, Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the English Heritage 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide'. The level of harm caused by the works can not be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals.

**Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012 - Article 31**

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council acted pro-actively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage. This positive advice has however not been adequately followed and therefore the Council remains of the view that the proposal is unacceptable. The applicant was invited to withdraw the application to seek pre-application advice prior to any re-submission but did not agree to this. The requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) have therefore been met in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012.