

MAIN CASE

Reference No: 20/00214/FUL

Proposal: Proposed conversion of outbuilding to provide annexe accommodation

Site Address: Cross Green House Cross Green Soham Ely
Cambridgeshire CB7 5DU

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Charlesworth

Case Officer: Rachael Forbes, Planning Officer

Parish: Soham

Ward: Soham South
Ward Councillor/s: Ian Bovingdon
Dan Schumann

Date Received: 10 February 2020 **Expiry Date:** 6th July 2020

[V27]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are recommended to **APPROVE** the application subject to the recommended conditions below. The conditions can be read in full on the attached Appendix 1.

- 1 Approved Plans
- 2 Full Time Limit
- 3 Annexes

2.0 **SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

2.1 The application seeks the conversion of a Grade II listed stable and coach house (NHLE reference 1126453) to an annexe. The application is being assessed alongside application reference 20/00215/LBC.

2.2 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. **Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, in the application file.**

2.3 The application has been brought before Planning Committee as the applicant is a District Councillor, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

20/00215/LBC <i>Pending Consideration</i>	Proposed conversion of outbuilding to provide annexe accommodation		
15/00895/LBC	Demolish and rebuild boundary wall	Approved	02.10.2015
15/00963/FUL	Demolish and rebuild boundary wall	Approved	30.09.2015
16/01041/LBC	Siting of waste water and extractor outlets in the North East exterior wall.	Approved	17.10.2016

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The building proposed for conversion is a Grade II listed stable and coach house (NHLE reference 1126453) within the curtilage of Cross Green House (NHLE ref 1160782 Grade II), a former vicarage prominently located within the Soham conservation area. The site is also situated within the development envelope of Soham. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of residential and commercial properties.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Parish Council – 1 June 2020

No comment or objection.

Ward Councillors - No Comments Received

Conservation Officer - 21 February 2020

The application site is NHLE ref 1126453, an individually-listed Grade II C19 stable & coach house within the curtilage of Cross Green House (NHLE ref 1160782 Grade II), a former vicarage prominently located within the Soham conservation area. It is of flint with brick dressings and a slate roof, and although the two halves are of different spans, it is clear from the Paddock St elevation that they are of a single build.

The application is supported by a heritage statement which complies with NPPF requirements. However it misses the point that these types of ancillary building are analogous to farm buildings, which have particular sensitivities around residential conversion, so it is appropriate to assess the scheme against Historic England's 2017 specialised guidance 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings: Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Re-use':

'Any adaptation will need to strike a balance between the practical requirements of a new use and protection of the historic character of the existing farm building and its setting. Thoughtful and innovative design can usually resolve these potential conflicts, but users may have to accept some degree of compromise - for example restricted headroom or slightly lower daylight levels than might be ideally desired.

Because ventilation was a more important consideration than light, farm buildings often have few external openings. The historic pattern of openings is related to the function of the building over time, and often makes a fundamental contribution to its mass and character.

Maximising the use of these existing openings by planning internal spaces around them and limiting the formation of new ones will help retain character. Where new openings are added or new windows inserted within existing door openings, great care needs to be given to their placing and design.

Where a degree of subdivision is possible it needs to respect the original structural bay divisions, whether these are defined by cross-walls, framed partitions or masonry nibs...When a space is subdivided, borrowed light can be used to avoid the need for new external openings...

One of the most sensitive issues with any farm building adaptation is the insertion of roof lights. Farm buildings rarely had any form of glazing at roof level, though sometimes glazed tiles or slates were used. Numerous new roof lights poorly positioned can have an intrusive impact, particularly where the roof is the dominant characteristic and is steeply pitched.'

The building is of domestic scale and indeed incorporated some groom's living accommodation, which was commonplace in coach houses, so in principle the residential use proposed is not incompatible. However the conversion scheme must work within the building's constraints. With this in mind it is evident that too many rooflights are proposed on the south roof pitch: both bedrooms already have windows and there is the opportunity of glazing the taking-in door in the east gable, so only the one to the bathroom has any real functional justification. As the 2017 Guidelines stress, 'users may have to accept some degree of compromise...[such as] slightly lower daylight levels than might be ideally desired' and as bedrooms are not generally occupied in daylight hours, the rooflights could easily be omitted without penalty.

One of the principal objectives when converting buildings which were not built for human habitation is to avoid over-domestication, and features such as porches and balconies tend to dilute their functionalism. The balcony platform to the east gable is an uncharacteristic feature, and is likely to generate overlooking conflicts on Paddock St in any case, so should be omitted. It might still be desirable to glaze the taking-in door but this could be treated as a fixed screen or French doors with a Juliet balcony within the opening.

Recommendation: amendments recommended

Conservation Officer – 12 May 2020 (following amended plans)

The amendments have addressed all the previous heritage concerns.

Recommendation - no objection subject to the following conditions:

Rooflight details

Joinery details - Before work begins, drawings to a scale of 1:20 (part elevations) and 1:5 (head, jamb, sill & glazing bar sections) fully detailing all new windows and doors throughout the site shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and installed completely in accordance with the approval.

Consultee For Other Wards In Parish - No Comments Received

Local Highways Authority - 3 March 2020

The highways authority has no objections in principal to this application

The development benefits from an existing access with the highway.

I would recommend that the planning authority ensures that there is sufficient vehicle parking and turning for both properties within the curtilage of the development, so as to enable the required number of vehicle to complete the necessary turning maneuvers to enter the highway in a forward gear.

Waste Strategy (ECDC) - 13 March 2020

East Cambs District Council will not enter private property to collect waste or recycling, therefore it would be the responsibility of the owners/residents to take any sacks/bins to the public highway boundary on the relevant collection day and this should be made clear to any prospective purchasers in advance, this is especially the case where bins would need to be moved over long distances and/or loose gravel/shingle driveways; the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide defines the maximum distance a resident should have to take a wheeled bin to the collection point as 30 metres (assuming a level smooth surface).

Under Section 46 of The Environmental Protection Act 1990, East Cambridgeshire District Council as a Waste Collection Authority is permitted to make a charge for the provision of waste collection receptacles, this power being re-enforced in the Local Government Acts of 1972, 2000, and 2003, as well as the Localism Act of 2011.

5.2 **Neighbours** – five neighbouring properties were notified and no responses were received. A site notice was posted on 24th February 2020 and a press notice was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 19th February 2020.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 **East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015**

GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 11	Conservation Areas
ENV 12	Listed Buildings

6.2 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Soham Conservation Area
Design Guide

6.3 **National Planning Policy Framework 2019**

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 16 Conserving & enhancing the historic environment

6.4 Planning Practice Guidance

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

The main considerations in the determination of this application are the principle of development, impact on the historic environment and visual amenity, residential amenity and any other matters.

7.1 **Principle of Development**

- 7.1.1 The East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 does not contain a specific policy relating to residential annexes and applications for this type of proposal are assessed based on their functional relationship with the existing dwelling, to ensure they are not tantamount to the creation of a new dwelling or separate planning unit.
- 7.1.2 The proposed annexe would be situated within an existing building in the residential curtilage of Cross Green House. The building is a Grade II listed stable and coach house within the curtilage of Cross Green House currently used for storage. The proposal would use existing openings and no new ones are proposed. The elevation to Paddock Street has no alterations save for the first floor door to the hay loft, which is glazed and the door retained as a shutter. The existing slate roof will also be retained.
- 7.1.3 The annexe would contain flexible accommodation so that the occupant could live on the ground floor if they could no longer manage the stairs. The outbuilding is large and would accommodate a kitchen, utility room, sitting room and a future bedroom and future bathroom on the ground floor and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. While the level of accommodation in the annexe would allow the occupant to be somewhat independent of the main dwelling, the parking area and garden would be shared.
- 7.1.4 A condition is recommended to the planning permission (condition 3) ensuring that the annexe is linked to the host dwelling as ancillary accommodation to the existing residential use of that property. This would prevent the annexe being subdivided into a

new dwelling or separate planning unit which would likely be considered unacceptable. Furthermore, both buildings are listed and the list entry for the coach house and stables states that they have been included for group value and therefore separation of the listed buildings is unlikely to be supported. The application is therefore not tantamount to a new dwelling and is supported in principle.

7.2 Historic Environment and Visual Amenity:

- 7.2.1 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of Listed Buildings.
- 7.2.2 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area.
- 7.2.3 Policy ENV 11 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development within a Conservation Area should be of a particularly high standard of design and materials in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.
- 7.2.4 Policy ENV12 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where they would:
- Preserve or enhance those elements that make a positive contribution or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset
 - Not materially harm the immediate or wider setting of the Listed Building
 - Facilitate the long term preservation of the building.
- 7.2.5 Policy ENV1 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should ensure that they provide a complementary relationship with the existing development and conserve, preserve and where possible enhance the distinctive and traditional landscapes and key views in and out of settlements. Policy ENV2 states that development proposals ensure that the location, layout, massing, materials and colour of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area.
- 7.2.6 The application site is an individually-listed Grade II C19 stable & coach house within the curtilage of Cross Green House, a former vicarage prominently located within the Soham conservation area. It is of flint with brick dressings and a slate roof, and although the two halves are of different spans, it is clear from the Paddock Street elevation that they are of a single build.
- 7.2.7 Historic England's 2017 specialised guidance 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings: Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Re-use' states:

'Any adaptation will need to strike a balance between the practical requirements of a new use and protection of the historic character of the existing farm building and its setting. Thoughtful and innovative design can usually resolve these potential conflicts, but users may have to accept some degree of compromise - for example restricted headroom or slightly lower daylight levels than might be ideally desired.'

Because ventilation was a more important consideration than light, farm buildings often have few external openings. The historic pattern of openings is related to the function of the building over time, and often makes a fundamental contribution to its mass and character'.

One of the most sensitive issues with any farm building adaptation is the insertion of roof lights. Farm buildings rarely had any form of glazing at roof level, though sometimes glazed tiles or slates were used. Numerous new roof lights poorly positioned can have an intrusive impact, particularly where the roof is the dominant characteristic and is steeply pitched.'

- 7.2.8 The Conservation Officer commented that the building is of domestic scale and incorporated some groom's living accommodation, which was commonplace in coach houses and so in principle the residential use proposed is not incompatible, however, the conversion scheme must work within the building's constraints. Originally, the proposal contained six rooflights on the south roof pitch, these have been omitted following objections from the Conservation Officer, with the exception of the one to serve the bathroom.
- 7.2.9 The Conservation Officer also objected to the balcony to the east gable due to being an uncharacteristic feature of this type of building. This has been removed and replaced with a glass door and glass balustrade.
- 7.2.10 Following these amendments, the Conservation Officer has no objections to the proposals subject to conditions for rooflight details and joinery details. As the building is listed and a listed building application has been submitted for these works (20/00215/LBC), these conditions would be appended to that decision.
- 7.2.11 It is therefore considered that the proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, preserve the significance of the Listed Building and not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area and complies with Policies ENV 1, ENV 2, ENV 11 and ENV 12 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF 2019.

7.3 **Residential Amenity:**

- 7.3.1 Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that new development will be expected to ensure that there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.
- 7.3.2 The stable and coach house proposed is adjacent to Paddock Street. There are dwellings situated opposite to the proposed annexe on Paddock Street. Following the removal of the rooflights, with the exception of the rooflight to serve the bathroom, there are no additional openings proposed and existing openings will be utilised. All windows and doors, with the exception of the window to serve the first floor landing and the glazed doors on the eastern gable will face towards Cross Green House.
- 7.3.3 The window on the north east elevation facing the dwellings situated opposite is noted on the plan as a glazed screen. It is considered that this would resolve any overlooking issues and the window serves a non-habitable room and would therefore be considered acceptable. The glazed doors on the eastern elevation will not open onto a platform

following the removal of the balcony from the proposal. The doors would face the garden at Cross Green House and it is considered that it would not provide a direct view of the dwellings opposite.

7.3.4 As the building is not being enlarged in any way, it is considered that there would be no increase in any overshadowing or overbearing impacts that already exist.

7.3.5 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015.

7.4 **Other Material Matters:**

The Local Highways Authority has been consulted as part of the application and have no objections in principle to this application and have noted that the development benefits from an existing access with the highway. The Local Highway Authority have further commented that they would recommend that the planning authority ensures that there is sufficient vehicle parking and turning for both properties within the curtilage of the development, so as to enable the required number of vehicle to complete the necessary turning manoeuvres to enter the highway in a forward gear. During the site visit, it was noted that three cars were parked in the gravel driveway, which were all facing towards the access to the site which suggests that there is ample parking and turning. Furthermore, as the proposal is for an annexe, an ancillary building to the host dwelling, the applicant would not be expected to provide two further parking spaces for the annexe.

7.5 **Planning Balance**

7.5.1 The conversion of the existing stables and coach house to an annexe has been assessed on its functional relationship with the existing dwelling. While it is accepted that the amount of accommodation proposed does result in a level of independence from the main dwelling, it will share the parking and garden areas. A condition has been recommended to tie the annexe to the main dwelling which will prevent it being used as a separate dwelling (condition 3). Further to this, the outbuilding and main dwelling are listed individually but the stables and coach house have been included for group value and therefore sub-dividing or the creation of a new planning unit is unlikely to be supported.

7.5.2 Following the removal of the majority of the rooflights and balcony, the Conservation Officer has no objections to the proposal. The proposal is not considered to result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area or to the significance of the Listed Building. Furthermore, the proposal is not considered to result in any significant adverse impacts to residential amenity.

7.5.3 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with all relevant Local Plan policies and the NPPF and is recommended for approval.

8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Conditions – Appendix 1

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
20/00214/FUL	Rachael Forbes Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Rachael Forbes Planning Officer 01353 665555 rachael.forbes@eastcambs.gov.uk
20/00215/LBC		
15/00895/LBC		
15/00963/FUL		
16/01041/LBC		

National Planning Policy Framework -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>

APPENDIX 1 - 20/00214/FUL Conditions

- 1 Development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and documents listed below

Plan Reference	Version No	Date Received
19060-01	A	10th May 2020
19060-02	A	10th May 2020
19060-03		10th February 2020

- 1 Reason: To define the scope and extent of this permission.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 3 years of the date of this permission.
- 2 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
- 3 The annexe hereby permitted shall be used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling known as Cross Green House, 32 Churchgate Street, Soham, CB7 5DS and shall not be occupied as an independent unit of accommodation at any time.
- 3 Reason: The application has been assessed as acceptable and complying with policy on this basis.