

Delegated Report

Planning Reference: 25/00738/HOU
Applicant(s): Mr R Smith
Ward: Newbold Verdon with Desford and Peckleton



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Application Site: Desford Mill, Desford Road

Proposal: Conversion of existing garage, addition of balcony and associated works.

Case Officer: Gwion Russell (Planning Officer)

1. Recommendations

1.1. Grant planning permission subject to:

- Planning conditions detailed at the end of this report.

2. Planning Application Description

2.1. This householder planning application seeks planning permission for a garage conversion and associated fenestration works.

2.2. The proposed development involves converting the existing ground floor double garage into a new living room. This will include replacing the garage doors with two white-framed uPVC windows, set within reclaimed brickwork that matches the existing façade. Additionally, the applicant proposes modifying the central window on the property's side elevation at ground floor level by replacing it with a patio door, with two additional windows proposed either side. On the first floor front elevation (above the existing double garage doors), one of the two previously bricked-up window openings are proposed to be reinstated with a new window that would match the style and detailing of the existing ones. A patio door already present on this elevation at first-floor level would remain unchanged and is intended to serve a master bedroom, walk-in wardrobe and en-suite (which includes minimal internal wall alterations). No further external or internal configuration alterations are proposed.

3. Description of the Site and the Surrounding Area

3.1. The application site is located within the hamlet of Newtown Unthank just 1.3km to the northeast of Desford. The property is generously sized, on a vast plot measuring approximately 2.2ha with paddocks to the rear and within the property boundary.

3.2. Although not a Listed Building, the dwelling, which was originally constructed as a water mill in approximately 1297, is recognised within the Desford Neighbourhood

Plan as having significant heritage value. Originally built to serve the nearby areas, the building currently has a total footprint of approximately 555m² and the outbuildings and garage have a further 239m². The property has undergone various alterations since its construction, resulting in various outbuildings within its curtilage and differing yet complementing building styles. The main dwelling is constructed in red brick and features various notable projections from its L-shaped building shape, typical of historical water mill designs. However, one of its most notable features is a projecting gable at its 3rd floor, which was originally used as a water bucket hoist/pulley and has been retained. The property is not visible from the highway and is accessed via a single carriageway, screened by various degree of foliage.

- 3.3. The surrounding area is predominantly rural with open landscape surrounding the property itself. Properties in the wider vicinity generally vary in scale, massing and design, however due to the property siting, there are no properties in the immediate vicinity for direct comparison.
- 3.4. A tennis court lies to the east of the application site; a neighbouring property 'Mill Home' to the south of the application site and the Rothley Brook meadow the west of the site. The site is accessible via Desford Lane, which is nestled between this road and Botcheston Road, and due to its generous layout there is ample off-street parking available to serve the property.
- 3.5. The site is not located within a conservation area. However, due to its historical use it is now regarded as a locally listed heritage asset, as per the Desford Neighbourhood Plan. The site is located with Flood Zone 3.

4. Relevant Planning History

96/00741/FUL

- STABLE BLOCK AND IMPLEMENT STORE
- PER
- 05.11.1996

17/00625/FUL

- Formation of manege, erection of four associated flood lights on 5 metre high columns and extensions and alterations to dwelling
- PER
- 11.10.2017

79/01807/4

- ERECTION OF ONE DWELLING
- REF
- 23.10.1979

90/01298/4

- ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO DWELLING

- PER
- 26.03.1991

5. Publicity

- 5.1 The application has been publicised by sending out letters to local residents. A site notice was also posted within the vicinity of the site.
- 5.2 No responses have been received.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 There have been no objections from the following consultees:
- Local Highway Authority (LHA)
 - HBBC Heritage Officer - The consultee considers Desford Mill to be a non-designated heritage asset due to its historic and architectural significance and advises that relevant local and national heritage policies should apply. They welcome the removal of the canopy and balcony, and are generally supportive of the proposed alterations, noting they would preserve the building's character. However, they recommend ensuring new windows include matching cill details and suggest a one-brick-depth reveal for infilled openings to retain evidence of the building's historic form. These details could be secured via plan annotations or a planning condition.
- 6.2 There have been no comments received from the following consultees:
- Desford Parish Council
- 6.3 No further responses have been received.

7. Policy

- 7.1 Core Strategy (2009):
- Policy 7: Key Rural Centres
 - Policy 8: Key Rural Centres Relating to Leicester
 - Policy 9: Rothley Meadow Green Wedge
- 7.2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (SADMP) (2016):
- Policy DM1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy DM7: Preventing Pollution and Flooding
 - Policy DM10: Development and Design

- Policy DM11: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- Policy DM12: Heritage Assets
- Policy DM17: Highways and Transportation
- Policy DM18: Vehicle Parking Standards

7.3 Desford Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2036 (DNP) (2021):

- Policy ENV5: Local Heritage Assets

7.4 National Planning Policies and Guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)
- National Design Guide (2019)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

7.5 Other Relevant Guidance:

- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council – The Good Design Guide (2020)
- Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG) (2024)

8. Appraisal

8.1. Extensions to existing domestic properties are generally considered to be sustainable development in principle. The key issues in respect of this application are therefore:

- Design and impact upon the character of the area
- Impact upon the heritage value of the building and surrounding area
- Impact upon residential amenity

Design and Impact upon the Character of the Area

8.2 Chapter 12 of the NPPF confirms that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and the creation of high quality, beautiful, and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF details the six national policy requirements of development to ensure the creation of well-designed and beautiful places.

8.3 Guidance Point C1 of the NDG confirms that well-designed new development should respond positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond including the existing built development and landscape character, amongst others. Guidance Point I1 of the NDG highlights that new developments should consider the composition of street scenes and individual buildings and their elements including the height, scale, massing and relationship between buildings, as well as views, vistas, landmarks, and landscaping, amongst others.

8.4 Ultimately, Guidance Point I2 of the NDG advises that well-designed places should contribute to local distinctiveness and Guidance Point I3 of the NDG highlights that

- design decisions at all levels and scape should help to create a memorable sense of place.
- 8.5 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that applicants, where applicable, should provide sufficient information to demonstrate how their proposals will meet the design expectations set out in local and national policy.
- 8.6 Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design (as contained in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code), taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.
- 8.7 Policy DM4 of the SADMP states that development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where:
- i.) It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character of the countryside; and
 - ii.) It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and
 - iii.) It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development.
 - iv.) If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line with Core Strategy Policies 6 and 9; and
 - v.) If within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy Policy 21.
- 8.8 Policy DM4(i) of the SADMP states that development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where it does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character of the countryside.
- 8.9 Policy DM10(c) of the SADMP states that developments will be permitted where they complement or enhance the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features.
- 8.10 The proposals include no additional external alterations to the dwelling and given the property's large set back and high degree of screening from the neighbouring property and highway, it is considered that there is little design harm on the immediate area.
- 8.11 Given the variety in architectural design and historical alterations associated with the building, the proposed windows reflect the building's dominant architectural style and the proposed white uPVC, albeit differing in material, is sympathetic to the existing façade. All window sizes and shapes proportionate to existing openings and

elevations and align with existing fenestration patterns and spacing. Additional windows are not seen to disrupt the existing fenestration sequence.

- 8.12 Although it is not known whether the garage door openings are considered original features of the building, most of the alterations will not alter or remove the original features, such as the water pulley mentioned previously and any softwood timber windows on the existing dwelling elevations.
- 8.13 The dwelling has been extended previously and undergone various alterations since the water mill ceased operating in approximately 1922. Given that the alterations proposed utilise the existing garage door openings, respect and complement the existing fenestration detailing and the alterations benefit from the reclamation of existing brickwork (to surround the windows) the proposal is seen to complement the existing dwelling and present no design harm to the existing and original building.
- 8.14 By virtue of its secluded location and sensitive design the proposal respects the character of the existing dwelling and surrounding area and is in accordance with Policy DM10 of the SADMP and the Good Design Guide.

Impact upon the heritage value of the building and surrounding area

- 8.15 Policy ENV5 of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan states '*Development proposals that affect an identified building or structure of local significance or its setting will be required to preserve and enhance the significance and setting of that heritage asset. Any benefits arising from a development proposal, or a change of use requiring planning approval, will need to be balanced against the scale of harm or loss and their significance as heritage assets.*'
- 8.16 Policy DM11 of the SADMP states 'all development proposals which have the potential to affect a heritage asset, or its setting will be required to demonstrate:
- a) An understanding of the significance of the heritage asset
 - b) The impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset and its setting,
- 8.17 Policy 9 of the Core Strategy sets out its guidance on protecting the Rothley Meadow Green Wedge and states '*any land use or associated development in the Green Wedge should: (a) Retain the function of the Green Wedge (b) Retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas (c) Retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation (d) Retain and enhance function as a floodplain and infiltration basin (e) Retain the visual appearance of the area.*
- 8.18 Figure 13 of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan outlines any protected important views. Although the Desford Mill site sits within the protected view Nos. 8 and 5. The proposed alterations are minimal and with no additional footprint both protected viewpoints remain protected.

- 8.19 The applicant seeks to convert the internal garage into a habitable living space. This justification is considered reasonable, as an external garage already exists on the property which serves as a secure/sheltered parking facility for vehicles (albeit constructed later to the original building). It is therefore considered that the proposed living room will provide a functional benefit to the occupier. Given the location of the site in Flood Zone 3 a note to applicant is added regarding the need for flood resilience measures.
- 8.20 The proposed windows will match the existing fenestration in style, using white uPVC designed to replicate the original Georgian windows of the Mill. Given the high level of screening from the highway and the limited visibility to neighbouring properties, any heritage impact is minimal. Furthermore, the applicant has acknowledged the building's heritage value and expressed an intention to preserve its historical character.
- 8.21 Although some brickwork will be removed to accommodate two new windows, the existing bricks will be reclaimed and reused to infill the former garage door openings. The addition of ground-floor windows will create a more balanced and symmetrical elevation, resulting in a largely unnoticeable harm to the public view.
- 8.22 Although the removal of the garage doors will result in minimal harm to the heritage fabric and value of the original mill building it does not alter the main historical use of the building, and its original perceived intended use as a water mill is largely retained.
- 8.23 Not considering the removal of the garage doors and addition of two ground-floor windows, the remaining alterations proposed can be reversed without permanent damage to the building and therefore the justification and benefit to the occupier is seen to outweigh the potential public and heritage harm caused.
- 8.24 The internal layout changes are not assessed here, as they have no bearing on the level of heritage impact as perceived from public areas.
- 8.25 By virtue of these factors the proposal results in minimal heritage harm but the justification outweighs any harm to the public. Furthermore, although there is minimal harm to the heritage fabric and value of the original mill building it does not alter the main historical use of the building, the proposal does not impact the heritage value of the neighbouring properties or surrounding area and therefore is considered to be in accordance with Policy DM11 of the SADMP and Policy ENV5 the Desford Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

- 8.26 Paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible, which promote health and well-being, and a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 8.27 Policy DM10(a) and (b) of the SADMP states development will be permitted provided that it would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of

nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings, including matters of lighting and noise and that the amenity of occupiers would not be adversely affected by activities within the vicinity of the site.

- 8.28 The closest neighbouring property to the application site is approximately 34m away at the nearest corners of each property. The proposed development primarily affects the western elevation of the property, which is situated around 55m from said neighbouring property, 'Mill Home'. There will be no aspect of the proposals directly overlook any part of this neighbouring dwelling. The proposed windows face inward toward the private courtyard within the applicant's own boundary, and no window or element of the design will overlook any neighbouring garden or habitable space.
- 8.29 As the proposal does not involve any new built form or an increase in the building footprint, it will not create an overbearing presence or amount to overdevelopment within the site. Additionally, there will be no overshadowing impacts. Given the minor nature of the external alterations, the effect on residential amenity is negligible, and it is unlikely that a nearby pedestrian would even notice the changes.
- 8.30 By virtue of these factors the proposal does not result in any adverse overbearing or overshadowing impacts or any overlooking or loss of privacy to the neighbouring properties and therefore is considered to be in accordance with Policy DM10 of the SADMP and the Good Design Guide.

9. Equality Implications

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states: -

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 9.2 Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

- 9.3 There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Taking national and local planning policies into account, and regarding all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission to be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

11. Recommendation

11.1 Grant planning permission subject to:

- Planning conditions detailed at the end of this report.

11.2 Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the submitted application details received by the Local Planning Authority as follows:

- Application Form (received 28/07/25)
- Proposed site plan - Drg No. P02 A (received 18/09/25)
- Proposed Front and Rear Elevations - Drg No. P11 B (received 19/09/25)
- Proposed Side Elevations - Drg No. P12 A (received 17/09/25)
- Proposed First floor plans - Drg No. P07 B (received 19/09/25)
- Proposed Ground floor plans – Drg No. P06 A (received 17/09/25)
- Window cill and garage wall ingress details – Drg Nos. 2025-P06 B and 2025-P07 C (received 01/10/25)

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies DM1 and DM10 of the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016).

3. Prior to the installation of the new windows on the front (south) elevation of the dwelling, where the double garage was previously located, bricks shall be carefully reclaimed from the removal of the brickwork on the side (west) elevation. These reclaimed bricks shall be used to form the surrounds of the new windows in order to ensure visual continuity with the existing building materials and retain the heritage value of the original building.

Reason: To ensure the development respects the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area, in accordance with Policy ENV5 of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan and Policy DM11 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016).

a. **Notes to Applicant:**

1. The approved development may require Building Regulations Approval, for further information please contact the Building Control team via e-mail at building.control@blaby.gov.uk or call 0116 272 7533.
2. The applicant's attention is drawn to the need for flood resilience methods to be incorporated into the conversion of the garage into living accommodation given the location of the site in Flood Zone 3.