

Planning Committee

Meeting Date: 17 September 2024

Contact Officer: Graeme Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer

22 Nelson Street

[P24/S2725/HH](#)

Proposed two storey rear and side extension.

Reason for report:

- The officer recommendation is to object due to non-conformance with TNP/TNP2 policies, Local Plan, or national standards.
- There has been (or is expected to be) local objection

1. Officer Recommendation:

OBJECTS

- The proposal is contrary to Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) Policy ESDQ16 and Local Plan (LP) 2035 Policy DES2 in not relating well to its site and surroundings.
- The submitted Design and Access Statement fails to explain how the site and its surroundings have informed the design, contrary to TNP Policy ESDQ16 and LP 2035 Policies DES2 and DES3.
- The proposal is contrary to LP 2035 Policies DES2, DES8, ENV6 and ENV8 in affecting the significance of a Building of Local Note and by proposing a design that fails to conserve or enhance the special interest, character, setting and appearance of the Thame Conservation Area.

Call-In

If the recommendation is to object, or likely to be contrary to SODC's recommendation, the Town Council must agree whether to request that SODC Councillors call the application into SODC's committee. Thame's District Councillors are not bound to this request.

2. Key Issues:

- **Impact on Neighbouring Amenity**

The proposals are unlikely to give rise to any concern regarding the loss of privacy for the neighbouring property, number 21 Nelson Street. The depth and height of the proposed extension appears, however, to impact number 21 in terms of conflicting with the 45 degree test for habitable rooms. The extension is also likely to be considered overbearing. If the windows in number 21's rear wing that face the proposed extension serve non-habitable rooms, as believed, then these would not be subject to the test.

- **Parking and Access**

The number of bedrooms would increase from 3 to 4. Parking will likely be limited by the nature and function of Nelson Street, but the lack of parking is not inappropriate given the site's close proximity to the Town Centre's services.

- **Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area**

The July 2021 Thame Character Area Appraisal notes that among the strengths of the Thame Conservation Area:

“The roofscape is also particularly important, with handmade clay tiles, laid on steeply pitched roofs, being an important local feature characterised by a mixture of narrow and wide streets, with long terraces of varied brick or timber-frame properties on either side”.

Nelson Street typifies this character. The Appraisal notes that opportunities to improve the area includes ensuring that a consistent palette of high-quality materials is used along primary streets.

There would be views of the proposed extension available from Nelson Street and depending on the season, either glimpsed or partial views from the proposed public park to the immediate East. The scale, form, height and proposed first floor glazing would be particularly out of character. The choice of materials would visibly fail to respect the materials predominantly used within this part of the Conservation Area.

- **Impact on the Building of Local Note**

The submitted Design and Access Statement does not recognise that 22 Nelson's Street is a Building of Local Note, i.e., a non-designated heritage asset. It also fails to appraise the site and its surroundings and explain how the proposal has been shaped by the appraisal.

Applications to extend heritage buildings will be expected to respect, sustain and preferably enhance the original character of the building and surroundings. This does not necessarily rule out the use of modern or differing materials, but the design approach will be expected to explain how the proposal has taken the character and significance of the existing building and its surroundings into account. The proposal is considered unsympathetic to 22 Nelson Street and would cause harm to the significance of this non-designated heritage asset.

- **Design.**

It is a requirement of the SODC Design Guide that extensions are designed to be inferior to the dwelling as originally built, often through the use of set-back elevations and lower roof lines. While set back of the side elevation is not required for most rear extensions this is likely to be considered best practice for heritage assets. While the gap between numbers 21 and 22 is relatively narrow, the side elevation would clearly be visible from the street.

Two-storey extensions at neighbouring properties are relatively modest and their side elevations have been set back. For example, those at 20, 21 and 23 Nelson Street are 1.5, 1.75 and 3.5 metres deep, respectively.

Other matters contrary to the Design Guide:

- The proposed scale, mass, form and height are inappropriate.
 - The roof form does not follow the original building's, contrary to the Design Guide. It is flat and also projects beyond the existing eaves / roof lines.
 - The side elevation would be sizeable, yet featureless.
 - The proposed extension's eaves height would be greater than that of the existing building. The eaves are proposed as exposed eaves, rather than following the enclosed design of the existing house.
 - The rhythm of the proposed windows has no relation to those of the existing built form.
- The use of modern materials is not necessarily inappropriate for a rear extension, even when proposed on a heritage asset. The applicant's Design and Access Statement states that the proposed materials have been chosen to provide "a small scale carbon capture proposal". It is not felt this sufficiently warrants the choice of materials.

3. Planning History:

None.

4. Risk Appraisal

Dependent on the Town Council's recommendation to SODC is it likely that there would be a contrary decision by SODC? If so then a councillor should be nominated at the meeting to represent the views of the Town Council at the planning committee.

5. Policies Relevant to the Application

The following policies are of particular relevance when considering this application.

Thame Neighbourhood Plan

- ESDQ15 Developers must demonstrate in a Design and Access Statement how their proposed development reinforces Thame's character
- ESDQ16 Development must relate well to its site and its surroundings
- ESDQ17 Development must make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character of the town as a whole
- ESDQ19 The Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawings must provide sufficient detail for proposals to be properly understood
- ESDQ20 Building style must be appropriate to the historic context
- ESDQ26 Design new buildings to reflect the three-dimensional qualities of traditional buildings
- ESDQ28 Provide good quality private outdoor space

SODC Local Plan 2035 Policies

- DES1 Delivering high quality development
- DES2 Enhancing local character
- DES3 Design and access statements
- DES5 Outdoor amenity space
- DES6 Residential amenity
- DES7 Efficient use of resources
- DES8 Promoting sustainable design
- ENV6 Historic environment
- ENV7 Listed buildings
- ENV8 Conservation areas
- H20 Extensions to dwellings