

Impact Statement

**Camelot
9 Church End
Braughing
Hertfordshire
SG11 2QA**



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Introduction

This impact statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for extension and alteration of a detached house located in a Conservation Area and within 100m of several listed buildings in order to meet the requirements of Para. 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It has been commissioned by the home owner. In preparing this statement the following resources have been accessed :-

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- East Herts District Plan 2018
- Braughing Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals
- East Herts District Council on-line planning records
- Historic maps and Ordnance Survey Maps
- The Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk)

The Property

The property address is Camelot, 9 Church End, Braughing, Herts, SG11 2QA. It was originally known as “Little Hill” with the name changed some time between 1980 and 1982.

It is a detached private dwelling house built in the late 1950’s on previously undeveloped land (see Appendix Item 1). It was built prior to the designation of the Conservation Area in 1968 and before any of the nearby buildings were listed (the earliest date of listing is 1967 with this including The Church and The Old Rose and Crown, 13 Church End). The vast majority of the Conservation Area is designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance.

The online planning history for the property is as follows :-

3/80/0314 : Single storey rear and front extensions and alterations - Granted

3/80/1349 : Erection of replacement single garage - Granted

3/82/1425 : Garden store and toilet/washroom – Refused

3/85/0149/FP : Extension to master bedroom and library together with additional pitched roof and windows - Refused

3/85/1094/FP : Extension to master bedroom together with additional pitched roofs and windows - Granted

3/94/1381/FP : Proposed conservatory - Granted

3/94/1734/FP : Proposed Conservatory - Granted

3/03/2215/FP : Conservatory – Granted.

In 2013 an application for construction of a detached dwelling in the site was refused.

The front of the property faces North. It stands in a generous private site on the south side of the Church End roadway, which is a narrow sunken lane within the village's ancient street pattern, and is directly opposite St Mary The Virgin Church and its churchyard. The site wraps around the house. The site on which Camelot stands, and the site of the Church and its churchyard, are elevated and slope down from east to west to the river Quin, following the natural lie of the land.

The house was built in a style and using materials that were popular at the time and has mainly cement render finishes painted white with some black coloured weatherboard cladding. Appendix Item 5 is a photograph of the property taken shortly after it was built (taken from a Braughing Village Facebook page. There are areas of exposed red brickwork, in stretcher bond, to the rear and side extensions. There is mixed age and style fenestration (partly painted timber casements and some Upvc) and ridged and hipped roofs covered plain concrete tiled. The house is mainly of two storeys but has single storey projections/extensions to all sides of the two storey part (photographs 3-15).

It sits well back from the road frontage and is screened by the steep road-side bank and established natural vegetation and fencing along its northern boundary (photographs 16-17). There is also established vegetation on the site's east and west boundaries to adjacent residential sites. At the rear of the site the boundary is marked by timber fencing.

Internal accommodation is currently unbalanced and poorly interconnected which is resulting in parts of the property being under-used by the owners who have a young child. This is particularly true in respect of the east side extension which is not readily accessed from the existing kitchen and dining areas and has a narrow passage leading into it from the small entrance hallway. Appendix Item 4 shows the existing ground floor layout.

The Setting

The property lies in the historic core of Braughing within a Conservation area, the special character of which is a material consideration for planning purposes. The area is designated as “a Rural Area beyond the Green Belt” and Braughing a “Group 1 Village” in East Herts District Plan of October 2018.

The Conservation area was designated in 1968 and a Character Appraisal and Management Proposal (CA&MP) for it adopted in December 2016. Appendix Item 2 shows property within the Conservation Area boundary. In the CA&MP Camelot is classed as a ‘neutral’ element “that might be beneficially enhanced” or, alternatively, replaced by something that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. The CA&MP states that “greater attention to the prevailing grain, scale, design and materials of the local vernacular tradition and better contextual input would help to ensure that any future development makes a more positive contribution to the architectural special interest of the Conservation Area”.

The distinctiveness of the Conservation Area is reinforced by the raised level within the Churchyard, the prevalence of listed buildings, historic street patterns, close-packed houses with a lack of uniformity in frontage widths, roof pitches and heights, and the use of a variety of local vernacular materials and finishes which include red brickwork, painted and treated weatherboard and shiplap cladding and render in a variety of heritage colours with mainly clay tiled roofs and timber windows.

Camelot stands on land that was un-developed until the 1950’s but within Braughing’s historic core which has intimate, visually enclosed areas to the east and west of The Church with the Church and churchyard dominating the more open space between. Good views have been identified in the CA&MP with the most significant of these being those east and west across the open valley (see Appendix Item 3) which link the two settlements of Green End and Braughing together and “underline the rural character and appearance of the Conservation Area”.

Camelot's site is directly south of St Mary the Virgin, a Grade I listed Church with churchyard. The list entry for the church is as follows :-

"GRADE I Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin (Church Of England), Church End. Early C13 chancel (consecrated 1220); early C15 nave, aisles, S porch and W tower; NE mortuary chapel 1638 for Simeon Brograve; restorations: 1838 (nave roof), 1852-3 by Mr Savill (tower and spire), 1855-61 (porch, clerestorey and windows), 1866 by Mr Perry (S aisle), 1872-3 (chancel refaced, nave roof repaired, and tower arch opened); thorough restoration completed 1888 by Edmund Buckle. Flint rubble faced in coursed field flints with stone dressings."

In the Churchyard there are two Grade II listed Monuments : the Paltock Monument (11m NNE of the brick chapel) and the Wren Monument (23m WSW of the east gate to the churchyard) and a Grade II listed Tombchest (2m SE of the Wren Monument).

Other listed buildings within 100m of the site are :-

Bridge over River Quin : Grade II. This cannot be seen from the site or adjacent areas in the public realm nor is the proposal site visible from the bridge.

Outbuilding at No.3 Church End : Grade II. This is not visible from the site.

8 Church End : Grade II. This is located downhill from the site and cannot be seen from the site as it is screened by established vegetation.

Causeway Cottage, 5 Church End & Barn at No.5 Church End : Grade II
These are located downhill to the west of the site and cannot be seen from the site.

The Old Rose and Crown, 13 Church End : Grade II*. This has no view of Camelot, as the Church stands between them.

18,19,20 & 21 Church End : Grade II. These have no view of Camelot, as the Church stands between them.

17 Church End : Grade II. This has no view of Camelot, as the Church stands between them.

14 & 15 Church End : Grade II. These have no view of Camelot, as the Church stands between them.

Causeway House, 3 Church End : Grade II. Only a glimpse of Camelot's west elevation can be seen from the road at the front of this building, through the site access.

No.6 and Forecourt Wall, Church End : Grade II. Only a glimpse of Camelot's west elevation can be seen from the road at the front of this building, through the site access. The first floor west-facing roof terrace cannot be seen from this vantage point.

10 & 11 Church End : Grade II. Photograph 1 was taken from the south-east corner of 10 & 11 Church End looking East. The front section of the west-facing slope of Camelot's

roof is just visible above the boundary vegetation. This view would remain unchanged if the proposal was implemented. Photograph 2 was taken from the roadway at the south-west corner of the churchyard. From here the proposed new first floor window to the existing two storey section of the house would be visible but the west-facing roof terrace is not.

The NPPF requires that “positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment should be sought, including replacing poor design with better design. It is considered proper to reinforce local distinctiveness.”

It's siting is such that there are very limited views of the house from the public realm, including from the churchyard. Photographs 18-25 were taken on 23rd March 2023 and show views towards the house and it's site from adjacent public areas. It should be noted that these were taken before new Spring growth and therefore when the views into the site from adjacent areas are at their clearest. Photograph 26 shows the view from the south west rear corner of the house to the Church. Photograph 27 shows the rear of the site and the recently extended property abutting to the rear (Magdalens, The Street). Photograph 28 shows the view towards Red Stacks, The Square (a Grade II Listed building) from the north east corner of the site.

The Proposal

The proposal is carry out external and internal alterations and modest extension to the house. The proposals have been designed to :-

- create cohesiveness between the differing parts of the building to provide accessible, family-friendly, liveable and free-flowing internal spaces that are adaptable and flexible to the needs of occupiers, both now and in the future;
- enhance the appearance of the building externally both within it's site and in the wider Conservation Area to present more than a 'neutral' contribution to it's setting in a manner that respects nearby listed buildings, existing patterns of development and the local context, and promotes local distinctiveness;
- reduce the environmental impact of the building by the use of sustainable materials for enhancement and extension;
- improve the thermal efficiency of the existing building to give enhanced environmental performance and reduce energy consumption.

These design objectives comply with relevant policies in the NPPF and East Herts District Plan 2018.

The property owners are struggling to use parts of the property due to the poor inter-connectivity between the internal spaces. The east side extension, in particular, has a detached feel from the remainder of the house and is under-used as a result with this including the existing conservatory can only be accessed from the room to the front. The conservatory is in poor structural condition and is approaching the end of its natural life. The original section of the building underperforms in respect of energy efficiency and suffers from internal dampness and condensation issues as a result, which impact on internal comfort levels and are a health concern.

The use of the existing loft space in the east side extension section would allow for the creation of additional floor space without further spread of the building footprint to the east or an increase in roof height to the majority of this extension. The proposed gable would be east facing to receive the morning sun but completely screened from the site to the east (and will be throughout the year) by existing vegetation on the boundary.

Visually the existing building has a stark appearance with black coloured timber cladding contrasting with bright white render. These finishes do not reflect the variety of materials and render/timber cladding colours which run through the village and the Conservation Area and the proposal seeks to provide more of a range of material and colour finishes to add contrast and to enhance the building within its setting.

A summary of the proposed works is as follows :-

- Demolition of the existing front porch and construction of a replacement porch and entrance door opening positioned further to the east of the existing porch. The replacement porch would be of similar scale to the existing but positioned over the centre and left-hand windows of the section linking the main house with the east side extension. This more central position would give this elevation a more balanced and cohesive appearance when seen from in the site and from the public realm and churchyard. The ridge height of the replacement porch would be very

slightly lower than the existing porch ridge. The roof pitch will be similar to that of the east side extension and the roof tiled to match existing roofs;

- Formation of a new window opening, to match those existing in the two storey section of the building, where the porch currently exists;
- Alteration of existing north and east side extension arched window openings to form rectangular openings similar to those of the original section of the building;
- Replacement of existing windows with painted timber double glazed casements;
- Demolition of the existing rear single storey link between the main house and rear outbuilding;
- Demolition of the existing conservatory at the rear of the single storey east side extension;
- Formation of new high level window opening at first floor level to the front (north elevation) of the two storey section;
- Raising the existing roof between the two storey section and east side extension to form both ground and first floor links between the two sections. The proposed ridge height would be lower than the ridges of the two storey section and very slightly higher than the ridge of the east side extension. The roof would be tiled to match the existing roofs and have its finished eaves level in line with that of the east side extension. A black metal Conservation roof light is proposed in the front slope (North) of this roof to provide natural light at first floor level. The size and nature of this roof light, which would be black-coloured and sit flush to the roof tiles, is such that it would be unobtrusive and it's provision would not result in any overlooking. This alteration would allow internal extension into the existing roof of the east side extension to form a bedroom with en suite accessed over a galleried landing area over the relocated and enlarged entrance hall. The top apex of this proposed section of roof would be just visible above the existing ridge of the east side extension when viewed from the east. The roof pitch would be similar to the existing roof pitches. This proposed roof would not block existing or important views through the site from either the north or south;
- Formation of a new pitched dormer window to the eastern roof slope of the east side extension and installation of high level fixed lights in the existing weatherboard finished small gables at the front and rear of the east side extension

giving additional natural light to the first floor area. These lights are positioned in such a way as to ensure no overlooking is possible;

- Construction of a new part two storey and part single storey extension to the rear of the main building and east side single storey extension. The two storey section of this has been designed to enclose the existing chimney to the east side extension and make the rear part of the roof match that of the front part making it more balanced and visually attractive when viewed from the east. To the rear (south) of the main house the two storey extension roof would be hipped and tiled to match the existing. The new south east hip would balance this roof when viewed from the south with the pitch of the new hip lining up with the pitch of the existing hip at the south-west corner. The ridge to this extension would be at a slightly lower level to the existing ridge line, respecting existing levels. New first floor walls to be finished with weatherboards and all replacement windows are to be painted timber casements. The single storey section will have a mono-pitched roof covered either with natural slates or clay pantiles and it's walls finished with red brickwork. Red facing brickwork is also proposed for the finishes to the proposed extension ground floor elevations to add contrast and interest;
- Reconfiguration of the internal space to improve the flow and interconnection between the rooms. At first floor level this includes forming a bedroom with ensuite in the loft room of the east side single storey section, forming an additional bedroom at the rear of the two storey section, converting the existing landing area into a bedroom and relocating the bathroom into an existing rear bedroom. At ground floor level the existing study and cloakroom is to be removed to create a more spacious entrance hall with gallery over and the staircase repositioned. A new study and cloakroom will be formed on the west side of the new entrance hall, the kitchen and dining rooms extended to the rear and a utility room formed at the west end of the existing kitchen and a garden room formed at the rear of the east side single storey extension.
- Replacing the existing vehicular gate at the site access with a replacement timber gate. The present gate has horizontal rails which the property owner's child can readily climb and through which loose dogs can (and do) access the site. They wish to replace the gate with a timber gate with vertical sections with small gaps

between to maintain the visually open view in and out of the vehicular access but improve security from dogs and reduce it's climb-ability from inside the site.

- Provision of a glass balustrade to the existing small west side first floor roof terrace. This would allow this existing terrace to be used safely for it's purpose.

The thermal efficiency of the existing building will be enhanced through the provision of double glazed timber casement windows and Conservation roof lights, provision of double glazing to existing external doors, replacement of the existing rear flat roof with an insulated mono-pitched roof and replacement of electric storage heaters with a more efficient and sustainable form of central heating. It is also proposed to replace an existing coal-burning stove with a stove meeting the Ecodesign requirements under the Government's Clean Air Strategy to reduce environmental pollution and improve air quality.

Impact Assessment

The proposals would not alter existing boundary treatments or existing trees/vegetation in the site.

The proposals would not affect any of the identified vistas within the Conservation Area and would not result in any loss of open land or significant loss of views into or across the site.

The proposals do not alter or interfere with views of the Church or any nearby listed building from within the site. Views from adjacent public areas, the Church and Churchyard and from the boundaries of nearby listed buildings would be substantially unaffected by the proposals.

The proposed new window at first floor level to the two storey section of the building and the fixed lights to the gable ends of the east side extension would create a more friendly and open feel to the house when viewed from the public realm, and improve the inter-connectivity between the house and it's wider setting. The proposed dormer to the single storey east side extension would be substantially concealed from the

public realm and from the residential site that abuts to the east. The provision of additional first floor fenestration and the balustrade to the roof terrace would not result in any loss of privacy to adjacent properties. The proposal will result in an additional first floor window to the south elevation but the angle of this elevation when compared to those properties that abut the site to the rear, and the distance between the buildings, is such that this would not result in overlooking in either direction. The proposal would not result in any loss of light or result in any sense of enclosure to neighbouring properties.

No changes are proposed to the site access or hard surfacing to the west end of the site other than to replace the existing gate with one that retains the open views in and out of the drive but has vertical timbers with gaps between rather than horizontal rails. This would be similar to other gates to vehicular accesses in the village and Conservation Area (Photograph 30 shows the existing gate to Number 5 Fleece Lane, to the west). Retaining the open views both ways through the gate would retain the openness of the view and be in keeping with the prevailing nature of site accesses in the Conservation Area.

The existing entrance porch is underwhelming in its design and its location of the north elevation emphasises the existing un-balanced and poor connectivity between the two storey and single storey elements. Moving this to the centre of the link section and creating a raised roof to the link section creates a far more balanced and connected overall appearance to the house when viewed from the north. Similarly it is considered that the overall impression of the building when viewed from the east and south sides would be positively enhanced by the proposals with these reflecting the scale, height and design attributes of the original building while remaining respectful and subservient to it.

Although the proposed extensions to the south are relatively modest in size they have been carefully designed to improve the balance and visual appeal of the building externally as well as providing the additional accommodation and improvement in flow and interconnectivity of the internal spaces. Proposed finishes will reflect the prevailing grain and materials of the local vernacular. It is considered the proposed

addition of windows to the east side single storey extension and the front of the two storey section will result in a friendlier, more open aspect to the property from public areas, and make the property more inclusive of it's setting within the Conservation Area.

The proposals would have little visual impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of the Grade I listed Church and other nearby listed buildings. The mass, height and scale of the proposals would not result in the property dominating or visually detracting from it's immediate or wider setting. The height of the proposed roof link between the two storey and east side single storey sections allows the building to continue to reflect the lack of uniformity in roof heights that has been identified as part of the distinctiveness of the Conservation Area.

Proposed re-arrangement and extension of the internal space would provide far more cohesive and balanced accommodation to allow it to meet the current and future needs of a growing family in the 21st Century.

The proposals put forward would, in my opinion, enhance and improve the external appearance of the property both from within it's site and from the wider Conservation Area, improve the connectivity between the house and it's wider setting and improve the contribution of this 'neutral' building to the character of the Conservation Area. Internal reconfiguration would create far more balanced and connected internal spaces to allow the building to be better used as a family home both now and in the future.

The proposals would not cause harm to, or loss of, the significance of nearby listed assets or the wider Conservation Area and would enhance the appearance of the property from the public realm and Conservation Area. The proposals are consistent with the advice and policies of the NPPF and I am pleased to fully support them.



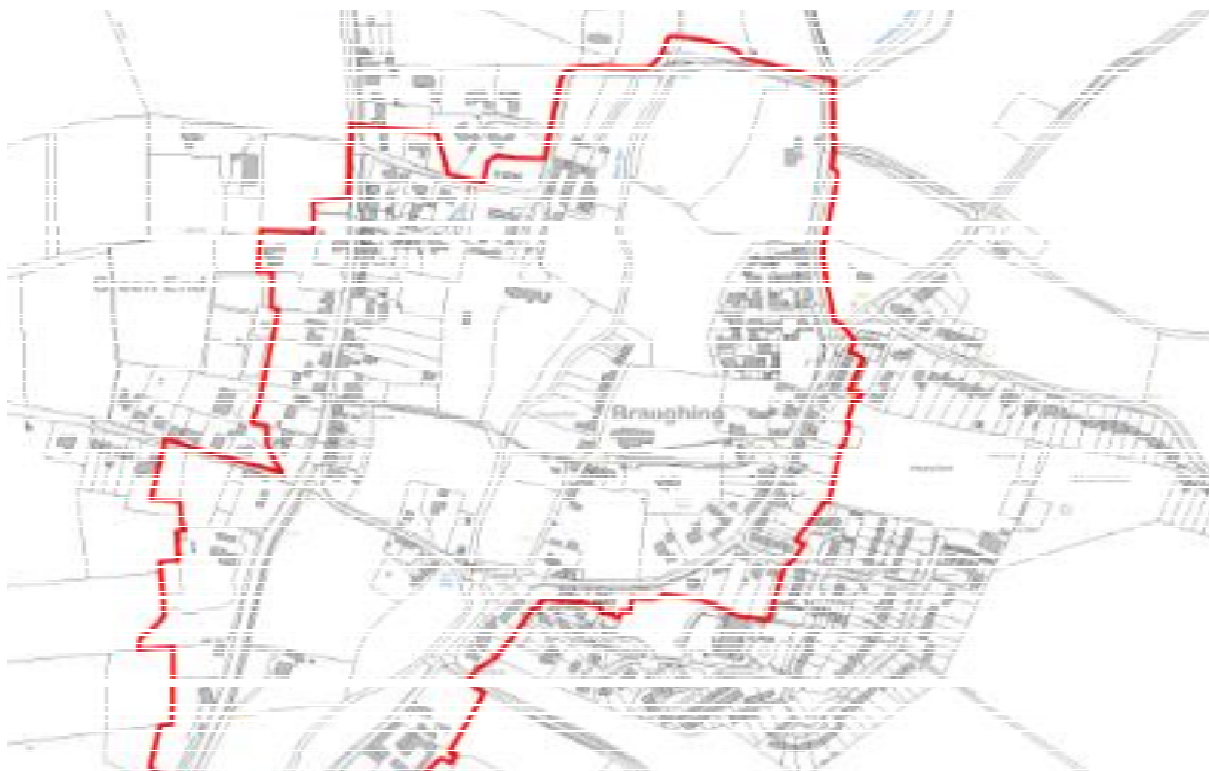
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Appendix

Item 1 – Extract of Ordnance Survey map of 1878 showing the undeveloped site south of St Mary’s Church and churchyard.



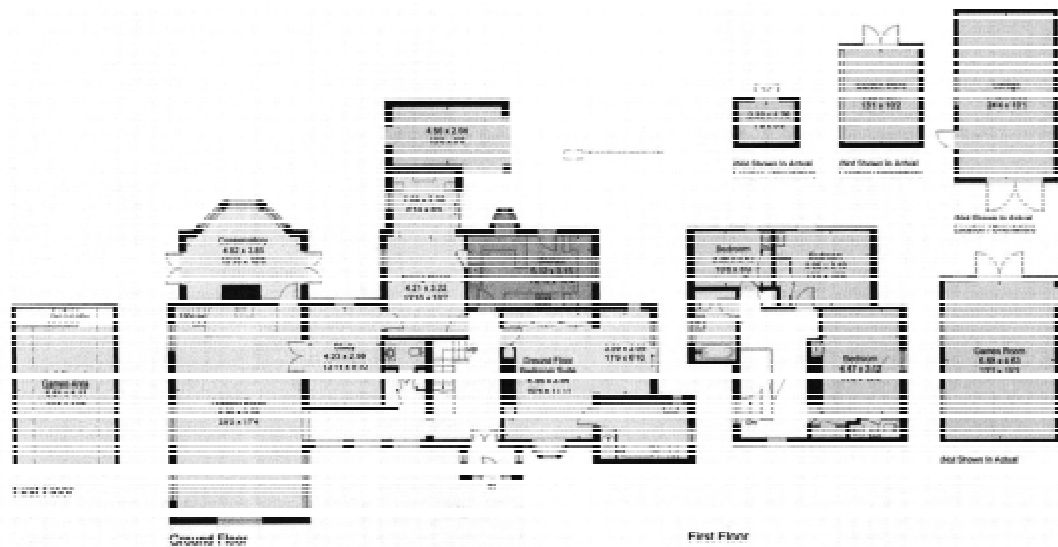
Item 2 – Extract of Ordnance Survey Map 2016 showing the majority of the Conservation Area boundary, the proposal site and the Church and Churchyard



Item 3 – Extract of Braughing Parish Conservation Area Appraisal Character Analysis Map showing nearby listed buildings, important views and focal points



Item 4 – Existing floor layout (extract from Selling Agents details 2021)



Item 5 – Extract of 1950's photograph of Camelot (taken from Braughing Local History Society's Facebook page).

