

BLAKENEY – PF/21/2711 Erection of new agricultural workers dwelling: New Barn Farm, Saxlingham Road, Blakeney: Jonathan Cubitt

Target Date: 9 June 2022

Case Officer: Jayne Owen

Full application

Extension of Time: 23 June 2022

RELEVANT CONSTRAINTS

LDF Tourism Asset Zone

Landscape Character Area

Mineral Safeguard Area

Public Right of Way

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Site of Special Scientific Interest

LDF - Countryside

C Road

Undeveloped Coast

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PO/20/1100 Construction of farm manager's dwelling (outline planning permission – all matters reserved) – Refused for the following reasons:

The proposed siting, is in a prominent elevated location within the designated landscape of the Norfolk Coast AONB, which includes the Norfolk Heritage Coast, and as such will incur significant adverse landscape and visual impact and will be detrimental to the defined special qualities of the AONB and the defined local landscape type, Rolling Heath and Arable, particularly 'a sense of remoteness, tranquillity and wildness' and dark night skies which are a stated feature of this quality and 'nationally and internationally important geology' contrary to Policies EN 1 and EN 2 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy and Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposed development by virtue of its siting would be detrimental to the open coastal character of this part of the undeveloped coast contrary to Policy EN 3 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

Policy EN 9 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy provides that development proposals that would cause a direct or indirect adverse effect to nationally designated sites or other designated areas, such as regionally important geological sites will not be permitted unless they cannot be located on alternative sites that would cause less or no harm; the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts on the features of the site and prevention, mitigation and compensation measures are provided.

The proposed siting is within the curtilage of Blakeney Esker SSSI, a dominant and highly significant geological landscape feature. The proposal contains insufficient information to demonstrate that there will be no significant harm to the geodiversity interests of this national designation or that it cannot be located on an alternative site that would cause less or no harm or that the development clearly outweighs the impact on the features of the site. The application therefore fails to comply with Policy EN 9 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

A Phase One Habitat Survey has not been provided with the application and therefore it has not been possible to determine the presence or absence of protected species or determine any suitable mitigation to ensure no adverse impacts on local biodiversity and habitats. The application, as submitted, therefore fails to comply with Policy EN 9 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

NP/13/0036

Land at New Barn Farm, Saxlingham Road, Blakeney

Prior Approval not required

NP/12/1268 NP
New Barn Farm, Saxlingham Road, Blakeney, Holt, NR25 7PB
Prior notification of intention to erect agricultural storage building
Refused 04/12/2012

96/1063 Demolition of existing bungalows and erection of replacement bungalow - Approved – 19/11/96

THE APPLICATION

The application is for the erection of an agricultural worker's dwelling at New Barn Farm, Saxlingham Road, Blakeney. The proposed dwelling would be a single storey three bedroom detached dwelling. Parking is proposed to be on an existing concrete pad in front of an existing agricultural building. Materials would comprise brick and flint and grey timber boarding for the external walls, with a clay pantiled roof.

The site is located at the northern end of the main complex of existing buildings which comprise New Barn Farm. The existing farm buildings comprise a traditional flint barn with red brick detailing and black corrugated sheet roof and there are also two general purpose farm buildings of steel construction, 100 m south of the site is an existing bungalow occupied by the applicant's parents.

The site is located in the corner of a cropped field, which slopes slightly in a northerly direction, cropped fields lie to the east of the site and to the west is a public Bridlepath known as 'Blakeney BR5' which is separated from the site by a hedge. There is a private farm access track which runs from the site south westerly for 60 m, until it meets the Blakeney BR5 Bridlepath, at which point Bridlepath BR5 runs along it to meet the highway at Saxlingham Road. Access will be from the existing farm track from Saxlingham Road.

The site lies within the rural area and within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Undeveloped Coast.

Summary of the farming business

New Barn Farm comprises approximately 140 acres of land, a traditional flint barn building, a grain store, a general purpose agricultural building, a polytunnel, and an existing dwelling occupied by the applicant's parents.

The farming business includes an arable enterprise that operates on approximately 110 acres at the property and involves growing malting barley, sugar beet, a wheat and pea intercrop producing milling wheat and peas, and naked barley and a horticultural enterprise that involves growing salad crops on approximately 7 acres and growing vegetables on approximately 4 acres. The applicant has explained that vegetables are sown and grown on in the polytunnel before they are planted out. Approximately 46 acres of cover crops are also grown to avoid leaving ground bare during the winter months, approximately 20 acres of the holding is grassland. Wheat is milled by a local mill and the flour is used by a local baker. Vegetables and salads are picked to order and supplied direct to 30 local restaurants, cafes, farm shops and retailers within a 20 mile radius of the farm. The business also supplies wholesale companies. Orders from farm shops and cafes are placed by 3 pm, orders from restaurants are placed by 9 pm. Orders are processed by picking during the late hours of the evening and early hours of the morning before being delivered by the applicant to customers. A selling point of the business is that produce is delivered so that it can be used within hours from it being picked to ensure quality and freshness. The horticultural season typically runs from February to December and that produce is typically available from April to December. In addition to the cropping enterprises, approximately 500 store lambs are reared on the farm from November to April. The lambs graze the grassland and cover crops at New Barn Farm and grass that is taken for grazing on short term agreements. In previous years, lambs have grazed the farm on a bed and breakfast basis, however, in 2021, lambs were reared on a 50:50 basis with a joint venture partner.

The current labour requirement of the business is met by the applicant, his father and an employee who works full time on the farm and the applicant's mother who works on a part-time basis as the farm secretary. Work is also undertaken by seasonal workers on a voluntary basis as and when required. The employee lives a 20 minute drive from the farm, the applicant previously lived with his parents at the farm but now lives approximately 13 miles away, a 20 minute drive from the farm. As far as the store lamb enterprise is concerned, the agent has

stated that the farming business provides 95% of the labour when the lambs are at the farm. The remaining 5% is provided by a business partner, who lives 45 minutes' drive from the property.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

The application has been called in by Councillor Holliday on the following grounds:

The application does not comply with Local Plan Policies EN 1, 2, 3 and Section 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

PARISH COUNCIL:

Blakeney Parish Council: Objects

The siting of this proposed building is most unsuitable and is too visible for this most sensitive location and their comments with regard to the previous application PO/20/1100 are still valid. Those comments were as follows:

Owing to its proposed location it is felt the proposal would have a negative impact in this sensitive landscape, i.e. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Blakeney Esker. Also of importance is the fact that this site sits within the Public Right of Way, known as Blakeney Bridleway No.5.

Consultation Responses

Landscape Officer: No objections

The Landscape section consider that the planting scheme now proposed is sufficiently robust and proportionate to mitigate the significant landscape and visual impact resulting from the siting of a dwelling in this open location within nationally designated landscape. Objections previously lodged by the Landscape section with regard to conflict with Local Plan policies EN 1 and EN 2 and paragraph 176 have therefore been satisfactorily addresses. This should be weighed into the overall planning balance in consideration of all aspects of the proposal. Conditions are recommended requiring a ten year management plan to ensure effective establishment of plant stock which should include replacement of plant failures and in relation to external lighting.

Norfolk Coast Partnership: Object

Without extensive mitigation through planting for this location the proposal would conflict with paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies EN 1 and EN 2 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

Norfolk County Council Highways: No objection

A condition with respect to parking and turning area is recommended.

Public Rights of Way: No objection

No objection in principle. However, access to the site will be via the Public Right of Way known as Blakeney Bridleway 5 which does not offer any means of public vehicular access and is not maintainable at the public expense to a vehicular standard. The applicant will need to ensure that they have an established private right of access to the land suitable for residential purposes. It would be expected that any damage caused to the bridleway by the exercise of the private rights remains with the rights holders to repair. The full extent of the bridleway must remain open and accessible for the duration of the development and subsequent occupation.

Natural England: No objection

The proposal is situated within 50m of Wiveton Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Based on the application documents submitted, the proposal will be situated adjacent to the SSSI but outside the boundary of designation. It is recommended that

the Local Planning Authority considers any potential impacts to designated features, specifically during construction. All works should be undertaken outside of the SSSI boundary and any potential impacts during construction, such as pollution and dust, should be appropriately managed to avoid any damage to designated interest features. A site method statement should be provided detailing how this will be achieved, including the use of heavy machinery, storage of materials, access routes for machinery, dust management and disposal of rubbish and hazardous materials such as oil. Subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation, Natural England is not concerned about the impact of the proposal on the designated interest features of the SSSI.

Protected Landscapes

Natural England are aware of the concerns about this proposed development scheme raised by the Norfolk Coast Partnership. Those concerns are based on direct knowledge of the site, its relationship to its wider landscape setting and the implications for this nationally designated landscape and advise that those concerns are fully considered in determining this application.

Environmental Health: No objection

It is suggested that the proposed new dwelling is restricted in use to that of a manager's dwelling only. This should reduce any nuisance concerns associated with noise, odour and flies from farming activities.

Norfolk County Council Minerals and Waste: No objections

Economic Growth: No objections

REPRESENTATIONS:

Summary of Representations:

Four representations have been received **Objecting** raising the following issues:

- Impact on landscape within an AONB; The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment does not illustrate true impact, ignoring the many longer views from key paths, roads and village, there will be very clear close views from the bridleway which cuts through the farm; LVIA is silent on views of and appreciation of the Blakeney Esker and Wiveton Downs SSSI.
- The use of existing buildings within the site has not been fully considered, a suitable dwelling could be accommodated better within the site.
- Proposed building will be prominent because it is on land which rises about 120 ft above Blakeney village centre, existing registered footpath is well used by locals and visitors alike and the proposed property is situated just off this important resource.
- The farm is an arable farm and as such does not have animals which might need constant care
- The location of the new bungalow is in a visually highly damaging and intrusive location to the north of the existing farm development and situated on rising land overlooking the open countryside towards Blakeney and the Coast, no serious attempt has been made to ameliorate its impact
- Alternative siting suggested within the SSSI south of the existing bungalow or in the area of the polytunnel to the south of the existing older barn complex where disturbance to near surface geology due to farming operations and the presence of two former bungalows would not impact on geology, obvious balance in favour of protecting landscape over geology in relation to levels of harm
- The current location as proposed is contrary to a raft of local and national planning policies including the North Norfolk Local Plan, North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment and the National Planning Framework.
- It will introduce a suburban element to what is currently one of the most prominent and special landscapes in the country.

Eight representations have been received in **Support** raising the following issues:

- Living on site, avoiding unnecessary travel, growing produce locally is good for the environment; young people find housing in this area expensive; need to encourage young people into farming and to stay in the area and support the local economy.
- Crucial for the applicant and his family to continue the family business which is key to local food customers and based on sustainable farming techniques
- The proposed dwelling will augment an existing cluster of agricultural buildings at the centre of a working farm, the farm is already a well-established feature of the local landscape, visible from the Saxlingham Road, the Langham Road and Kingsway, as such the new building will not be particularly prominent or intrusive.
- The design of the proposed building is notably modest and low key, rather than straining to make some sort of statement at odds with its surrounding, it fits in with the site and context and is constructed from traditional materials, it is also rather compact in size and does not have huge expanses of glass windows, again, these features minimise its visual impact.
- The applicant and his business at New Barn Farm have been supplying many local pubs, restaurants and farm shops for a number of years, it allows local businesses to buy seasonal local quality produce with minimal food miles, a very positive benefit in these times where everyone is trying to reduce their carbon footprint and look after the future of the planet. This has become even more apparent with the Covid 19 pandemic and how we should support our food locally.
- The design of the property is very sensitive, made to look like a traditional rick and flint care shed, the design is single storey in nature and upon reviewing the plans appears to be set lower down in the landscape than the agricultural barn it sits next to, thereby having minimal effect on the surrounding landscape. From the distance photographs you can barely see the agricultural grain store which would tower above the property, so can't see the bungalow will have any additional impact.
- The proposed building would sit in the lea of a tall copse (to the south of the site) and on the edge of a group of already existing traditional and modern farm buildings, the dwelling would be in keeping with other buildings close to the site and its positioning would be very unobtrusive.
- Small farms are environmental assets when they are managed in a sensitive way, even though they can be economically challenging. The application comes from the next generation of a family farm who is aware of environmental issues and wishes to see the farm developed in a way that is sensitive to the environment. Since taking over the management of the farm, environmental gains are beginning to appear, in addition much of what is produced is fed into local markets, which is surely what we should be encouraging.
- Given a sensitive design and location a building could be accommodated here without materially affecting the landscape, also by helping a small farm survive, there would be a landscape gain compared to the possible alternative of the land being swallowed up in some large industrial farm managed by contractors who are one step away from environmental responsibilities.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to

Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest of the public, approval of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

RELEVANT POLICIES

North Norfolk Core Strategy (Adopted September 2008):

SS 1 - Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk

SS2 – Development in the Countryside
HO 5 - Agricultural, Forestry or other Occupational Dwellings in the Countryside

SS5 - Economy
SS 6 - Access and Infrastructure
EN 1 - Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and The Broads
EN 2 - Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character
EN 3 - Undeveloped Coast
EN 4 - Design
EN 9 - Biodiversity & Geology
EN 13 - Pollution and hazard prevention and minimisation
CT 5 - The Transport Impact of New Development
CT 6 - Parking Provision

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 - Decision making
Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 - Making effective use of land
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document – January 2021

MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. **Principle**
2. **Landscape/Impact on the Norfolk Coast AONB and Undeveloped Coast**
3. **Design and appearance**
4. **Amenity**
5. **Highway Impact**
6. **Contaminated Land**
7. **Ecology**

APPRAISAL

1. Principle (SS 1, SS 2 and HO 5):

Background

This application differs from the previously refused application (PO/20/1100) in that the proposed siting of the dwelling has been revised to a location which remains within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but outside of the SSSI as previously proposed. The previous application was an outline application whereas the current application seeks full planning permission and as such includes full details of all relevant matters and supported by an ecological impact assessment, landscaping proposals and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise. Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The previous application was not refused for reasons relating to principle and the site being within the countryside. That application was supported by an agricultural appraisal, which the Council's specialist consultant confirmed demonstrated that

there was a functional need for the dwelling and that the financial tests had also been met. This is a material consideration of significant weight. As the previous application was determined under delegated powers, the officer assessment of this issue is included below for completeness.

The site lies within an area designated as countryside by Policy SS 1. In areas designated as countryside Policy SS 2 states that development will be limited to that which requires a rural location and is one or more of a number of specified types of development which includes agriculture subject to compliance with all other relevant Core Strategy policies.

Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that:

'Planning policies and decisions should avoid development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of a number of circumstances apply. These include where:

(a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside'.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that considerations that it may be relevant to consider when applying paragraph 79a of the NPPF could include:

- evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24 hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products)
- the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future;
- whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process;
- whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context;

Core Strategy Policy HO 5 permits agricultural occupational dwellings in the countryside subject to a number of criteria being met and reflects advice contained within the NPPF and PPG.

The criteria are as follows:

- there is a demonstrated essential need for one or more full time workers to be readily available at most times for the enterprise to function properly, and
- the functional need could not be met by another existing dwelling on the site of the enterprise or in the immediate vicinity; and
- the enterprise has been established for at least three years and is, and should remain financially viable; and
- the proposal does not represent a replacement of another dwelling on the site that has been sold on the open market in the last five years; and
- the proposed dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the functional needs of the enterprise, nor would it be unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income that the enterprise could sustain in the long term.

In order to fully consider the previous proposal in this respect, an independent expert consultant was instructed to assess the application. Their conclusions are summarised below:

i) Is there a demonstrated essential need for one or more full time workers to be readily available at most times for the enterprise to function properly

This is a matter of judgment based on a number of factors such as the scale of the enterprise and the demands for the presence of staff out of hours as to whether or not there is a functional need for workers to live on site. From the information provided it is estimated that the overall labour requirement of the business may be between two and three full time equivalents.

Having established that the labour requirement of the business exceeds one full time worker, it is necessary to consider whether the proper functioning of the enterprise requires labour to live on site. In this regard, the applicant and agent explained various time critical activities relating to the vegetable and salad production enterprises, and that picking and various crop husbandry operations extend outside normal working hours. Taking these points into account together with the nature and scale of the business as a whole, it is considered that there is an essential need for one full-time worker to live at the property to be readily available throughout the year for its proper operation. To date, that need has been met by the applicant's parents who live in the existing property and the applicant staying, on many occasions, with them away from his home and young family.

(ii) Could the functional need be met by another existing dwelling on the site of the enterprise or in the immediate vicinity

The applicant is the fourth generation of the family to farm at New Barn Farm. His parents, who live on the farm, are approaching retirement age and they wish to retire from the business and are therefore, unable to meet the ongoing functional needs of the enterprises that operate at the property. It is understood they do not intend to leave their home and it is considered unreasonable to expect them to vacate it to make it available for the applicant and his family to live at the property. It has a gross external area of approximately 160 sq m and it is considered that it could not accommodate two households, it is therefore considered unable to meet the ongoing needs of the business.

Similarly, a dwelling at Joe's Hill which adjoins the agricultural holding is the applicant's grandmother's home and she has lived there for more than 50 years and there is no indication that she has any intention of leaving her home. On this basis, it is unlikely that it will become available and similarly owing to its size it is not considered that it would provide satisfactory living accommodation for the applicant and his family (or indeed any other worker and their family) and his grandmother. It is therefore also unable to meet the ongoing needs of the business.

The conclusion that the existing dwelling at New Barn Farm and the dwelling at Joe's Hill are unable to meet the essential need that has been identified for one full time worker to live at the property is consistent with Sir Graham Eyre QC's findings in the High Court in the case of John Keen v Secretary of State for the Environment and Aylesbury Vale District Council 1995. This case found that it was insufficient for accommodation merely to exist, rather it is necessary to determine whether or not it can reasonably be held to be available. The conclusions in Keen were reaffirmed in JR Cussons & Son v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and North York Moors National Park Authority (2008) EWHC 443 (Admin).

(iii) Has the enterprise been established for at least three years and is, and should remain, financially viable

The farming business is long established and profit and loss accounts submitted show that it has traded profitably in each of the previous three accounting years. It has been clarified that the applicant's parents will not draw from the business after they retire, although the business has recently employed a full time worker, on the basis that the applicant's parents will no longer draw from the business, it should remain financially viable.

(iv) Does the proposed dwelling represent a replacement of another dwelling on the site that has been sold on the open market in the last five years

It is understood that the existing dwelling at New Barn Farm replaced two bungalows more than 20 years ago. Whilst it has not been specifically clarified whether any dwellings have been sold on the open market in the last five years, a land registry search has revealed no property transactions having taken place within that timeframe.

(v) Would the proposed dwelling be larger than that required to meet the functional needs of the enterprise, or would it be unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income that the enterprise could sustain in the long term

The previous application was for outline planning permission and as such no detailed information was provided regarding the scale of the dwelling. The consultant was therefore unable to assess whether the size of the dwelling would be commensurate with the needs of the business or if it would be affordable to the business. However, he commented that the level of profitability in the farming business does show that it would be able to sustain the cost of an additional dwelling on the holding. The dwelling proposed is a relatively modest single storey three bedroom property and it is therefore considered that it is of an appropriate size and scale and would not be unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income that the enterprise could sustain in the long term.

In summary, the consultant's report concludes that:

- there is an essential need for the proposed dwelling to allow one full time worker to live at the property for the proper ongoing operation of the farming business;
- the existing dwellings at New Barn Farm and Joe's Hill are unavailable and unable to meet the needs of the business;
- the financial information that has been supplied together with clarification that has been provided by the agent is sufficient to demonstrate that the business should remain financially viable;
- the partners of the farming business have not sold any dwellings from the holding in the last five years and;
- the dwelling is of an appropriate size and sale to meet the functional needs of the enterprise and would not be unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income that the enterprise could sustain in the long term.

The development is therefore considered acceptable in principle and complies with Policies SS 1, SS 2 and HO 5.

2. Landscape/Impact on the Norfolk Coast AONB and Undeveloped Coast (EN 1, EN 2, EN 3)

The North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) classifies the site as within the Rolling Heath and Arable Landscape Type RHA1, Blakeney, Salthouse and Kelling. This area of the District is in an open elevated landscape with a strong coastal influence affording long views. The whole of this Landscape type lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. 'A strong sense of rurality, tranquillity and remoteness and dark skies' are one of the recognised valued features of this area (LCA p.200).

Policy EN 1 sets out that local and national policy dictate that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the AONB. The site is also located within the Undeveloped Coast where only development that can be demonstrated to require a coastal location and that will not be significantly detrimental to the open coastal character will be permitted.

Paragraph 176 of the NPPF requires *that 'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty'* which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited and development within the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

The proposed dwelling would be sited just north of the SSSI and introduces a dwelling into a corner of an arable field in an elevated open unpopulated rural location within the AONB. Given the highly sensitive open location, the aim should be to accommodate any built form into its rural setting as unobtrusively as possible. The form and appearance of any dwelling along with appropriate landscape mitigation are therefore key design elements in effectively limiting adverse landscape and visual impact on the nationally designated landscape.

Following negotiations with the applicant landscaping proposals have been put forward which will provide belts of trees to the north, north-west and east of the proposed dwelling. The trees within the belts are intended to be

a mix of native species planted in structured belts to achieve a copse with all year retention of leaves in some of the plants within the planting feature. To the outer side of the tree belts on the north and eastern side of the site four rows of native hedge planting will form a natural sized (i.e. not height managed) dense scrub hedge to buffer the new tree belts and assist in provide a dense year round screen to the site.

A native species hedge is proposed to surround the proposed dwelling on two sides to enclose the garden of the new property and to reinforce the western (existing) boundary hedge between the site and the Blakeney Esker, this latter hedge will also incorporate trees. The planting and ecological features are also intended to respond to the mitigation and enhancement items in the submitted Ecological Survey and Report which recommends bulb planting (snowdrop, wild daffodil and crocus) in addition to the provision of bird and bat boxes. The landscaping proposals also provide for the future management of the planting and form the basis of the Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan.

It is considered that these revised planting proposals present a proportionate scheme of mitigation planting appropriate to accompany the proposed new dwelling in this most sensitive of locations. The introduction of strategically sited layered planting belts comprising trees and shrubs, together with native hedgerows will not only assist in minimising the landscape and visual impact of the development but will also improve ecological connectivity through linkage to existing habitats. This is in line with landscape guidelines for the conservation and enhancement of the Rolling Heath and Arable Landscape Type set out in the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment.

Having consulted with the Landscape Officer it is considered that the planting scheme now proposed is sufficiently robust and proportionate to mitigate the significant landscape and visual impact resulting from the siting of a dwelling in this open location within a nationally designated landscape.

The landscaping mitigation now proposed means that the woodland that surrounds the existing farm dwelling occupied by the applicant's' parents and other buildings that make up New Barn Farm will in effect be extended to incorporate both the new dwelling and the existing large grain store building (located to the south of the proposed new dwelling) which is currently prominent in the landscape and the aim is that both buildings will then become better integrated into the farm complex and the wider prominent landform of Blakeney Esker.

In summary, the concerns previously raised by the Landscape Officer with regard to the application as first submitted have been satisfactorily addressed. Conditions to secure a ten year management plan to ensure effective establishment of plant stock including the replacement of plant failures and a condition to prevent any external lighting being erected without prior approval are recommended. The proposal is considered to comply with Core Strategy Policies EN 1 and EN 2 and paragraph 176 of the NPPF.

Undeveloped Coast

The site also lies within an area designated as undeveloped coast. Policy EN 3 states that in designated undeveloped coast areas only development that can be demonstrated to require a coastal location and that will not be significantly detrimental to the open coastal character of the area will be permitted.

The Undeveloped Coast designation is designed to minimise the wider impact of general development, additional transport and light pollution on the distinctive coastal area.

The farm as a whole is entirely within the Undeveloped Coast Area. As the essential need for a dwelling in connection with the existing farming enterprise has been demonstrated and accepted, the proposed development is deemed to require a coastal location.

Landscape mitigation in the form of a robust planting scheme has been successfully negotiated and it is considered also represents a betterment by virtue of helping to screen an existing farm building in this location as referred to above, such that there would be no significant harm to the open coastal character of the area. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy EN 3.

3. Design and appearance (EN 4)

Policy EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy requires that all development is designed to a high quality, reinforcing local distinctiveness. Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable.

The proposal is for a single storey three bedroom detached dwelling, parking is proposed to be on an existing farm concrete pad in front of an existing grain store building, a small garden area is proposed to the south of the dwelling enclosed by way of post and railing fencing.

The design of the dwelling takes cues from surrounding brick and flint buildings on the farm complex and is designed to give the impression of a cart shed conversion, materials would comprise flint detailing, a mixed red brick, oak framing and timber boarding.

Following minor amendments to the design and appearance of the proposed dwelling, the scale, design and appearance of the proposed dwelling is considered appropriate and in accordance with Policy EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

4. Amenity (EN 4 and EN 13)

Policy EN 4 requires that development proposals should not have a significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and new dwellings should provide an acceptable level of residential amenity.

Owing to the separation distance to the nearest dwellings being several hundred metres the proposal would have no impact in this respect. An appropriate level of residential amenity would be provided for the future occupants of the dwelling.

The property will be served by standard domestic waste and recycling bins with alternating weekly collections, and a bin storage area has been indicated on the site plan. This will ensure waste generated is stored and disposed of properly in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental protection Act 1990.

The proposal accords with the requirements of Policy EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

5. Highway Impact (CT 5, CT 6)

Access will be from the existing farm track off Saxlingham Road which serves the existing farming enterprise.

The Highways Authority have raised no objections to the proposal subject to the local planning authority being satisfied of the agricultural need for the dwelling and a condition restricting the dwelling as such. A condition relating to on-site parking and turning provision is also requested.

Subject to this condition it is considered that the proposal will accord with Policies CT 5 and CT 6 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

6. Contaminated Land (EN 13)

There is a nearby 'potentially contaminated land' record referring to 'unknown filled ground' at New Barn Farm. However, this area is directly northwest of the existing dwelling at New Barn Farm and does not extend to the position of the proposed dwelling, which will be well outside the potentially contaminated area. Together with the submitted contamination questionnaire and historic aerial imagery accessed through Norfolk County Council's Historic Map Explorer, which shows the proposed location of the dwelling has been consistently used as arable land, it is considered that further contamination investigation is not necessary. However, it is recommended that an advisory note relating to contamination is added to any planning permission granted.

The application accords with Policy EN 13 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

7. Ecology (EN 9)

The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) which concludes that the loss of arable land and damage to small areas of amenity grassland that would be incurred by the development is of low ecological significance. Appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are recommended which include timing of works, construction working practices, minimal lighting and the incorporation of bat, bird and barn owl boxes into the development along with bulb planting.

Subject to a condition requiring compliance with the submitted PEA it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy EN 9 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

8. Other matters

The development is qualifying development with respect to the Norfolk wide Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS). The GIRAM strategy is a strategic approach to ensure no adverse effects are caused to European sites across Norfolk, either alone or in combination from qualifying developments.

All new net residential development is required to mitigate the effects of the development and show how this will be achieved before approval of planning permission. In this instance, a contribution towards GIRAMS is required prior to any planning permission being granted.

This application has been assessed against the conservation objectives for the protected habitats of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation and the Broads Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site concerning nutrient pollution in accordance with the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations). The proposal will result in additional overnight accommodation, however it is located outside the catchment areas of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation and the Broads Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site, and does not involve foul or surface water drainage into those catchment areas. As such, it is not likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives either alone or in combination with other projects and there is no requirement for additional information to be submitted to further assess the effects. The application can, with regards nutrient neutrality, be safely determined with regards the Conservation of Species Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended).

9. Conclusion and planning balance

An independent expert consultant advised that there is an essential need for the proposed dwelling to allow one full time worker to live at the property for the proper ongoing operation of the farming business; that the existing dwellings at New Barn Farm and Joe's Hill are unavailable and unable to meet the needs of the business; that the financial information that has been supplied together with clarification that has been provided by the agent is sufficient to demonstrate that the business should remain financially viable; and that the partners of the farming business have not sold any dwellings from the holding in the last five years. This has been accepted previously in respect of application PO/20/1100 and this was not a reason for refusal of that application.

The design and appearance of the proposed dwelling is considered acceptable and will not give rise to any impacts with regards to the residential amenity of any nearby dwellings, the Highways Authority have raised no highway safety concerns.

It is considered that the landscaping mitigation proposed will be sufficiently robust and proportionate to mitigate the landscape and visual impact resulting from the siting of a dwelling in this open location and also represents an enhancement in that the landscaping mitigation proposed will extend the existing woodland surrounding the existing dwelling to include both the new dwelling and an existing grain store building which is currently prominent in the landscape resulting in both buildings becoming integrated into the existing farm complex.

The previous reasons for refusal relating to the effect on the SSSI have been addressed through the revised siting of the dwelling now proposed. The Ecology reports submitted with this application have demonstrated that

there would be no significant effect on protected species with mitigation and enhancement measures proposed, which have dealt with the previous reason for refusal relating to this.

In the light of the demonstrated essential need for a dwelling, the landscape mitigation proposed and as the proposal is acceptable in all other respects, it is considered the planning balance weighs in favour of the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

Subject to the payment of the required GIRAMS mitigation payment **APPROVE** subject to conditions relating to the following matters and any others considered necessary by the Assistant Director for Planning.

- Time limit for implementation
- Approved plans
- The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture by Messrs G Cubitt and Sons or a widow or widower or surviving civil partner of such a person, and to any resident dependants.
- External materials
- Implementation of soft landscaping scheme
- A ten year landscape management plan
- The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the submitted Preliminary Ecology Appraisal.
- Remove certain permitted development rights
- Parking and turning area
- External lighting

Final wording of conditions to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning.