

BLAKENEY – PF/24/0348 - Erection of two-storey front extension, raising of roof of single-storey side extensions, insertion of dormer windows on front and rear and external alterations at 29 The Pastures, Blakeney, Holt, Norfolk, NR25 7LY

Minor Development

Target Date: 4th June 2024

Extension of time: 4th June 2024

Case Officer: Miss Isobel McManus

Householder development

RELEVANT SITE CONSTRAINTS:

Norfolk Coast National Landscape (formerly AONB)

Glaven Valley Conservation Area

Blakeney Conservation Area

LDF Residential Area

LDF Settlement Boundary

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

PF/23/2642: Erection of two-storey front extension, raising of roof of single-storey side extensions, insertion of dormer windows on front and rear and external alterations – Refused on 1 February 2024 for the following reasons:

1. In the opinion of the local planning authority, by virtue of its boxy form and appearance, the proposed rear dormer would appear as an incongruous addition to the host dwelling as it would fail to 'plug' comfortably or naturally into the rear elevation and would instead hang awkwardly and heavily off the back of it resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the both the dwelling and the Blakeney Conservation Area in which it is located. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies EN 4 and EN 8 of the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy and Chapter 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).
2. The application is not supported by a Preliminary Roost Assessment. Therefore, the local planning authority cannot conclude that the development would not result in harm to protected species or to make an informed decision about the development proposals in accordance with its statutory duties under Regulation 9 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EN 9 of the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy.

THE APPLICATION:

Site Description

The site is occupied by a two-storey dwelling within the residential area of Blakeney. The site is situated within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape, Glaven Valley and Blakeney Conservation Areas. The application site is adjoined by dwellings to the north, east, south and west.

Proposal

To erect a two-storey front extension, raise the roof of existing single-storey side extensions, insert dormer windows on the front and rear elevations and other external alterations.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

At the request of Cllr. Holliday who considers that the proposed development would have a significant detrimental effect on the residential amenity of neighbours, along with concerns about the effect on the AONB's dark skies, contrary to Core Strategy policies EN 4 and EN 2.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL:

Blakeney Parish Council: Object on amenity grounds; overlooking of neighbouring property. Object on overdevelopment grounds in a conservation area.

CONSULTATIONS:

North Norfolk District Council Landscape: No Objection subject to securing a condition to secure the mitigation and enhancement measures specified in Section 4 of the Preliminary Roost Assessment and requiring Visible Light Transmittance (VLT) glazing of 0.65 or less for domestic windows and 0.5 or less for roof lights.

North Norfolk District Council Conservation and Design: No Objection subject to the attaching of conditions relating to external materials.

Norfolk County Council Highways: No Objection.

REPRESENTATIONS:

Five received **objecting** on the following summarised grounds:

- Amenity: the proposed dormer invites direct overlooking into the neighbouring property.
- Design: the proposed design is out of keeping with the surrounding properties. It would constitute overdevelopment which would undermine the historic character of the conservation area.
- Highways: increase in bedrooms at the property would lead to an increase in cars in the village

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.

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are not considered to be material to this case.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

North Norfolk Core Strategy (2008):

Policy SS 1 – Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk
Policy SS 3 – Housing
Policy EN 1 – Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Broads
Policy EN 2 – Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character
Policy EN 4 – Design
Policy EN 8 – Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment
Policy EN 9 – Biodiversity and Geology
Policy CT 5 – The Transport Impact of New Development
Policy CT 6 – Parking Provision

Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan (November 2023)

Policy 6 – Design of Development
Policy 12 – Dark Night Skies

Material Considerations:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
Chapter 9 – Sustainable Transport
Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
Chapter 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

North Norfolk Design Guide SPD (December 2008)
North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment SPD (January 2021)

OFFICER ASSESSEMENT:

This application essentially seeks to address the reasons for refusal of the previous application (PF/23/2642) by a redesign and reduction in size of the proposed rear dormer and the submission of a Preliminary Roost Assessment. The previous application was considered to be acceptable in terms of the principle of development, highway impacts and the effect on the surrounding landscape and therefore in compliance with policies SS 3, EN 1, EN 2, EN 4 and CT 5. There were no objections to the previous application from either neighbours or Blakeney Parish Council on residential amenity grounds and these were not a reason for refusal.

MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 1. The external appearance of the proposed development and its effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area**
- 2. The effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings**
- 3. Ecology**
- 4. Effect on Landscape**

1. External appearance of the proposed development and its effect on the character and appearance of the conservation areas

Policy EN 4 amongst other matters requires all development to be designed to a high quality, reinforcing local distinctiveness, ensuring appropriate scale and massing, whilst having regard to the North Norfolk Design Guide.

Policy EN 8 requires that development proposals, including alterations and extensions, should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of designated assets through high quality, sensitive design.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 requires that with respect to any buildings or other land within a conservation area, in the exercise of relevant functions under the Planning Acts, special attention must be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In the previous application (PF/23/2642) the design issue was the long boxy dormer proposed on the north elevation. Officers concluded this would be an incongruous addition to the host dwelling as it would fail to 'plug' comfortably or naturally into the rear elevation and would instead hang awkwardly and heavily off the back of it resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the both the dwelling and the Blakeney Conservation Area in which it is located.

The amended north elevation on this application proposes to retain the existing first floor dormer on the north elevation and add an identical one to the right. This amended design of the north elevation is considered to respect the form and character of the existing dwelling such that officers conclude that there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The representations relating to overdevelopment of the site are noted, – the main part of the application dwelling is two storey with single storey side sections. Firstly, the single storey elements would be increased by less than 1 metre as part of the proposal. This increase is considered acceptable because the single storey elements will remain subservient in height and scale to the two-storey centre piece. Secondly, the two-storey front extension is not considered to be out of scale with the host dwelling and its curtilage, nor would it be out of context with the surrounding built environment. This is because the wider development is host to similar gables on mainly two-storey buildings. Thirdly, the three additional dormers are considered to integrate well into the roof slopes and their addition would echo an existing precedent set across The Pastures development.

On balance, this application proposes an array of additions that are spread evenly across the four elevations. It is also noted that a similar recent scheme at No. 3 The Pastures was allowed on appeal which was for the whole building to be raised up a storey.

The Council's Conservation and Design team have no objections to the proposal.

Taking account of the above, the proposed development is considered acceptable and complies with Policies EN 4 and EN 8, paragraphs 135 and 203 of the NPPF, Policy 6 of the Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan and, the North Norfolk Design Guide SPD.

2. Living conditions

Policy EN4 requires that proposals should not have a significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers. Residents have the right to adequate privacy levels and to be kept free from excessive noise and unwanted social contact.

The representations relating to overlooking have been considered. The proposed dormer window on the north elevation would serve a bedroom. For the purposes of the North Norfolk Design Guide, this is a secondary window. The adjacent dwelling (32 The Pastures) has ground floor doors into a dining room as well as an upper floor window serving a landing on the southern elevation. This upper floor window is classed as tertiary for the purposes of the Design Guide. The separation distance from the proposed dormer window (secondary) on the application dwelling to the upper floor window (tertiary) on the southern elevation of the neighbouring property (32 The Pastures) would be approximately 16.6 metres. This well in excess of the Design Guide recommendation of 9 metres separation distance between a secondary and tertiary window.

It is also considered that significant weight must be given to the fact that there is an existing first floor dormer window on the north elevation serving a bedroom which allows for views across to neighbouring dwellings and their gardens. As part of the proposals, the upper floor bedroom window on the west elevation will be removed which currently allows overlooking of the dwelling to the west (30 Foxy Cottage). Whilst the concerns of the adjacent property about the perception of being overlooked are noted, given the existing site situation and well-established boundary treatment of a mature hedge and fence along the northern boundary it is considered there are no justifiable reasons for refusal on amenity grounds. In a recent appeal decision that was allowed where amenity was considered to be an issue, the inspector noted that *'it is not unusual to have bedroom windows at first floor level looking across the rear garden and having something of a view across neighbouring gardens'*.

For the reasons stated, it is considered that the proposed development would not have any significant harmful effects on the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties and therefore complies with Policy EN 4 in this respect and paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

3. Ecology

The application is supported by a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA). This found the dwelling to have very low/negligible potential for roosting bats. The mitigation and enhancements set out within Section 4 of the PRA include the removal of any roof tiles and lead flashing by hand, the installation of a number of bat and bird boxes and, any external lighting to be installed following Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night.

With the above mitigation and enhancement measures being secured via a condition, the application complies with policy EN 9.

4. Effect on Landscape

The application site is situated within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (AONB) where the impact of individual proposals and their cumulative effect, on it and its setting should be carefully assessed.

The concerns are noted regarding overdevelopment of the site and the impact this may have on dark skies. The application site is located within a relatively built-up residential area in The Pastures housing development where dormer windows and rooflights are the norm. In this context it is considered that the small-scale extensions proposed would not have any harmful effects on the designated landscape area

Furthermore, the Council's Landscape Team have no objection to the proposal subject to a condition requiring Visible Light Transmittance (VLT) glazing of 0.65 or less for domestic windows and 0.5 or less for roof lights. The agent has agreed to such a condition, but it would only be reasonable to require this for new windows and rooflights, not those existing.

With the above condition, it is considered that the proposal would not be detrimental to the special qualities of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (formerly AONB) and would therefore accord with Core Strategy Policy EN 1 and policy 12 of the Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan.

Other Matters

The application is for a householder extension. The objections received relating to the property in question being used as a second home or holiday let cannot be considered as part of this application. Whilst there is a policy (Policy 2), in the Blakeney Neighbourhood Plan relating to second home ownership this only applies to proposals for new open market housing.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The development is considered to be in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan. There are no material considerations that indicate the application should be determined otherwise. Approval is therefore recommended subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVAL subject to conditions to cover the following matters and any other considered to be necessary by the Assistant Director - Planning:

- Time limit
- Approved plans
- External materials
- Protected species mitigation and enhancement measures
- VLT glazing to new windows and rooflights

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