

**WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA - PF/19/0642 - Demolition of existing toilet facilities, erection of replacement toilet block including changing places facility; NNDC Car Park and Public Conveniences, Freeman Street, Wells-next-the-Sea for North Norfolk District Council**

**Minor Development**

**- Target Date: 30 July 2019**

Case Officer: Mr D Watson

Full Planning Permission

**CONSTRAINTS**

- Conservation Area
- Listed Building Grade II (two listed buildings adjoin the west side of the car park; there are listed buildings on The Glebe to the east and Blackhorse Yard to the west)
- LDF - Town Centre (only the north end of the car park, the building is not within it.)
- LDF - Settlement Boundary
- LDF - Residential Area (this adjoins the south, east and west sides of the car park)
- LDF - Public Realm
- LDF - Public Car Park Provision
- LDF Tourism Asset Zone
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- SFRA - Flood Warning Area (only a strip of land along the north side of the car park is with this and the flood zones below. The building is not within them)
- SFRA - Flood Alert Area
- SFRA - Flood Zone 3A
- SFRA - Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3
- EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water 1 in 1000
- SFRA - Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding
- Public Right of Way (this runs along the west boundary of the car park)
- SFRA - Tidal 0.5% AEP +CC
- SFRA - TDL 0.1% AEP + CC
- Landscape Character Area
- C Road
- Unclassified Road

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

None.

**THE APPLICATION**

It is proposed to demolish the existing toilet block and replace them with a new building with a slightly larger footprint. The building would have a double pitch roof, which along with the front and rear elevations, would be clad in Corten steel. The east and west gable ends would be clad with flint. As well as male and female WCs, the building would include a 'changing places' facility, three accessible toilets and a family room.

The site is located within the Stearmans Yard car park on the west side of the town centre which is accessed off Freeman Street to the north and Theatre Road to the south. The site sits centrally within the car park, properties surrounding the car park are mainly dwellings with some commercial uses. There are a number of listed buildings (grade II) set within the local context. There is extant permission to demolish the public house known as "Harleys" which adjoins the northeast part of the car park.

## REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

Because the applicant is the District Council and a representation has been received

## PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL

Wells Town Council: object. Whilst they agree better toilet facilities are needed, the design of the building, in particular the cladding, has no place in the conservation area. The proposed building would does not fit in with nearby buildings and would make for an unacceptable precedent.

## REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

## CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health: no objection. Request advisory notes relating to demolition and asbestos removal.

Norfolk Coast Partnership: understand the need for the toilet block to be refurbished, but would prefer to see traditional materials in line with the more traditional buildings in the locality and conservation area. Make suggestions regarding external lighting to minimise light pollution to preserve dark skies.

Conservation and Design Officer: no objection following receipt of amended plans which address earlier concerns. The proposed Corten steel cladding should differ in texture/profile between the walls and roof.

## 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.

## POLICIES

North Norfolk Core Strategy (Adopted September 2008):

SS 1 - Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk

EN 1 - Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and The Broads  
EN 4 - Design  
EN 8 - Protecting and enhancing the historic environment  
EC 6 - Public Car Parking Provision

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development  
Section 4 – Decision-making  
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places  
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Principle
- Effect on the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area

## APPRAISAL

### Principle

There is no Core Strategy policy that directly relates to the type of development proposed, which as such needs to be considered on its own merits in this respect. The replacement of an existing public facility within the settlement boundary of a designated Secondary Settlement under policy SS 1, with an enhanced facility is considered to be acceptable in principle.

The proposal would not result in any loss of spaces within the public car park. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy EC 6.

### AONB

The site is located within a built up area surrounded by existing development. The proposed replacement building would be the same height as the existing with only a very modest increase in it's footprint. There would be no detrimental material effect on the special qualities of the AONB.

Currently external lighting for the building comprises floodlights mounted on poles attached to the east and west gable ends. Notwithstanding the fact that the site is within an urban area, the proposal would incorporate more sensitive lighting with two wall mounted lights providing downward lighting fixed to the wall of the building, together with recessed LED spotlights under the covered entrance area. This can be secured through a condition and would reduce light pollution within this part of the AONB. The proposal therefore complies with Policy EN 1.

### Character and appearance

The design of the building has been amended since the application was first submitted with alterations to the roof shape which is now a double pile/M shape design instead of the multi-pitch saw tooth/industrial design first proposed. The roof, front and rear elevations would be clad in Corten steel, with the side gables clad in flint, whereas perforated timber cladding was originally proposed.

The proposed building would be no higher than the existing (approx. 3.9m to the ridge), but would have a slightly larger footprint being about 2m wider and 3m longer to enable additional facilities to be incorporated. It is considered this very modest increase in scale would not result in any materially adverse effects on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Wells Town Council object to the proposed cladding. The existing building has red brick walls with panels in English bond (alternating header and stretcher courses) with every other header in a course replaced by a similar area of small flints/pebbles. The roof is covered with red pantiles. Corten cladding as proposed for the roof, north and south elevations, is a weathering steel that naturally rusts over time, producing a soft oxide/orange finish. Its use has been accepted in sensitive locations elsewhere in District, including in Wells Conservation Area itself.

The cladding proposed is considered to be acceptable. Whilst the building would be seen in the wider context of the surrounding, generally traditional buildings, it sits alone rather than being directly adjacent to them. For much of the time it is also seen within the context of parked cars. The cladding would give the building a contemporary appearance and visual interest, and with its eventual subtle orange finish, the building would satisfactorily assimilate into the area. The use of flint on the other elevations would help to ground the building on the site whilst reflecting the traditional materials used in the surrounding area. The building similarly would have a more traditional roof form following the amendments to the roof design similarly.

It is considered the proposal would not result in any material harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area or the setting any nearby listed buildings. Further, there are significant public benefits in terms of improved facilities which would result from it. The proposal is considered to comply with policies EN 4 and EN 8.

#### Other considerations

As the proposed building would be in the same location and of a similar height and scale as the existing facility, it is considered that there would be no material impacts on the living conditions of surrounding occupiers. The proposal therefore complies with Policies EN 4 and EN 13.

#### Conclusion

The proposed development would not result in any harm to either the AONB or the character and appearance of the Well Conservation Area. It would deliver much improved facilities, including a 'changing places' facility, for the town and its visitors.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE subject to conditions relating to the following matters and any others considered necessary by the Head of Planning

- Time limit for implementation
- Approved plans
- Materials as specified in application
- External lighting to be agreed prior to installation

Final wording of conditions to be delegated to the Head of Planning.