

**THORPE MARKET - PF/20/1037 - Two storey detached dwelling and detached double garage; The Farm House, Hall Farm Barns, Station Road, Thorpe Market for Mayes Properties Ltd**

**Minor Development**

**- Target Date: 08 September 2020**

Case Officer: Mr D Watson

Full Planning Permission

**RELEVANT SITE CONSTRAINTS**

- Landscape Character Area
- LDF Tourism Asset Zone
- LDF - Countryside

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

The site is adjacent to a complex of barns known as Hall Farm, and the former farmhouse previously occupied the site. The barns are currently being converted to dwellings. Some have been completed and are occupied. The planning history relates to these barns. There is no relevant planning history relating to the site where the dwelling is proposed

PF/17/0112: Conversion of redundant agricultural farm buildings to 9 residential dwellings and garaging. Approved 13/09/2017

PF/16/0097: Change of use of redundant farm buildings to 9 residential units. Withdrawn by Applicant 23/03/2016

PF/15/1864: Variation of condition 6 of planning permission ref:08/0316 to permit residential occupation of 9 dwellings. Withdrawn - Invalid 20/06/2016

PLA/20080316: Conversion of agricultural buildings to twelve units of holiday accommodation. Approved 29/05/2008

**THE APPLICATION**

A two storey detached dwelling and detached double garage is proposed on a site adjacent to a complex of barns in the process of being converted to dwellings. The dwelling would be on the site of the dwelling that previously occupied the site up until sometime in the mid-1970s. Some of the footings and a section of the wall of what was an attached single storey outbuilding however, remain. The design/appearance of the proposed dwelling would be very similar to that of the former dwelling.

The site lies to the southeast of Thorpe Market village and is set back about 300m from Church Road. Access from Church Road is via a track which serves the complex of barns, some other dwellings near them and surrounding fields.

**REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

At the request of Cllr Nigel Pearce who considers that the fact that there was a building and living accommodation on this site until it appears the mid-70s, should not be lost. The remains of

the building show that it was standing in an area that is now termed as countryside, but Cllr Pearce queries whether it was at that time.

Thorpe Market is not a service village, but as the area is an eyesore as mentioned in the officer report, Cllr Pearce states “I find myself in a situation of wanting something to be done with it”. The access does prove problematical as pointed out, especially in the winter months, but to have a development half completed is not good policy either.

It is considered that the opinion of harm is a grey area and one of personal opinion, and as there is some harm mentioned in the report, this weighs the whole application very difficult to agree.

The fact that it contravenes policy SS1 and 2 has been constructively waived before on sensitive applications in other areas and Cllr Pearce feels that this is a situation in that category, and considers that the harm caused would be on the lower end of the scale, and there would be benefits from having a well maintained site for tourism which is vital to our economy and to NNDC. Therefore, Cllr Pearce considers the benefits outweigh the considered opinion of harm.

## PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL

Object as Thorpe Market is not a designated service village and the proposal is contrary to Core Strategy policies SS 1 and SS 2. The proposal is also considered contrary to policies HO 8, SS 4, EN 1, EN 2, EN 4, EN 5, EN 6, EN 8, EN 9, EN 13 and CT 5.

## REPRESENTATIONS

Two in support from occupiers of the recently converted barns adjacent to the site. Comments summarised as follows:

- the restoration and conversion of the barns is in keeping with the character of the area and matches the layout of the original barns. The farmhouse building was here previously so this application is key to completing the ongoing restoration of Hall Farm Barns. The current area of the proposed building is somewhat derelict and without approval of this application, it will continue to be an eyesore in what seems to be a sensitively restored site.
- based on research of the original layout of the barns, the proposal is in keeping with the layout of the original setting. Also very concerned that if the farmhouse is not re-built, this will leave a permanent eyesore and potential wasteland which, in these modern times, would not fulfil the Governments' requirements of trying to provide family homes in rural areas to provide needed income for the surrounding businesses.

## CONSULTATIONS

None considered necessary.

## 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, refusal 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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development  
Section 4 – Decision-making  
Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

North Norfolk Core Strategy Policies:

SS 1 - Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk  
SS 2 - Development in the Countryside  
EN 2 - Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character  
EN 4 - Design  
EN 13 - Pollution and hazard prevention and minimisation  
CT 5 - The transport impact of new development  
CT 6 - Parking provision

#### MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Whether the proposed development is acceptable in principle
- The design of the proposed dwelling and its effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- The effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby dwellings and whether the proposed dwelling would provide satisfactory living conditions for the future occupiers
- The effect on the surrounding road network and whether there would be adequate parking provision

#### APPRAISAL

##### Principle: policies SS 1 and SS 2

There has been a dwelling, (a farm house), which was probably built in the mid to late 19th Century, on this site previously. An undated photo has been submitted which clearly shows it, and the 1938-1952 OS mapping shows there was a building on the site. The Heritage Statement submitted with the application states the farm house was demolished sometime between the mid-1970s and the late 1980s when it was part of Norfolk County Council Farms Estate. The associated barns currently being converted were retained. The earliest aerial photo of the area held by the council is 1988 and confirms this as there was no building on the site at that time. Some of what appear to be the footings and a section of the wall of what was an attached single storey outbuilding however, remain and are clearly visible. It is therefore considered that the site is previously developed 'brownfield' land. Nevertheless, it is considered that as there is so little of the original building remaining, the proposal has to be treated as new build.

The site is within the area designated as Countryside under policy SS 1 of the Core Strategy. Policy SS 2 lists the types of development that can be acceptable in principle within this area, but new market dwellings as is proposed in this case are restricted in order to prevent dispersed dwellings that will lead to a dependency on travel by car to reach basic services, and ensure more sustainable patterns of development. Recent appeal decisions have confirmed that these policies remain broadly consistent with the NPPF in respect of setting and overall strategy for the distribution of sufficient housing and focusing significant amounts in locations which are sustainable, thus limiting the need to travel, offering a choice of transport modes and helping to reduce congestion and emissions, so as to improve air quality and public health.

The site is part of a former farm in a rural location about 1.6km from the main part of Thorpe Market village where there are no types of everyday services that would be needed to support residential development. It is a similar distance to Southrepps which has some facilities and is designated as a Service Village. The nearest Principal Settlement is North Walsham which is about 5.5km away as the crow flies. Furthermore, no bus service runs along Church Road (the nearest public road) and the site is about 300m from it off a shared private track. The site is however, relatively close (approx. 600m) to Gunton railway station from which there are regular services to Cromer (journey time 15 minutes) and North Walsham (6 minutes), both of which are Principal Settlements, as well as to Norwich (35 minutes). Monday to Saturday the service is generally hourly in the mornings and evening, and two hourly for the middle part of the day. On Sundays the service is generally two hourly, starting later in the day.

Whilst it is accepted that would potentially provide a sustainable transport option for the future occupiers of the dwelling, access to the station would be via the unlit track from the site to Church Road and then via Station Road which is similarly an unlit rural lane with no separate footways. It is considered that this would be likely to deter people walking to the station particularly during darker winter months. Therefore, it is considered very likely that the future occupiers would be dependent on the use of the car to reach the full range of everyday basic services. Whilst the site is not physically isolated it is considered to be functionally isolated.

As the site is not physically isolated paragraph 78 of the NPPF is relevant. This states that policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services and that where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. As referred to above there are no facilities within Thorpe Market (and the site itself is remote from it) and those within Southrepps are realistically only accessible from the site by car. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) notes that a wide range of settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas, so blanket policies restricting housing development in some types of settlement will need to be supported by robust evidence of their appropriateness. As referred to in a recent appeal decision (dated 17/09/2020) relating to a site in Erpingham where, unlike the current case, there were a number of facilities within walking distance of the site "policies SS 1 and SS 2 are firmly supported in this respect by the correlation between the locations for growth and the availability of an appropriate level of supporting services and infrastructure. This part of the PPG does not contradict the broader Framework principles for achieving sustainable development". It is considered that the proposal would result in significant harm with the introduction of a dwelling where there would be a relatively high reliance on private car use to access a full range of essential services, contrary to these principles.

There are dwellings in close proximity but they were built some time ago and it is likely they were formerly farm worker's accommodation. The new dwellings recently formed through the conversion of the barns which formed part of Hall Farm were permitted as the conversion of

redundant rural buildings is an exception allowed under policies SS 2 and HO 9 of the Core Strategy.

The Heritage Statement submitted with the application notes that the buildings (the barns) at Hall Farm are included on the Norfolk Historic Environment Record and concludes *"that they are considered to be a non-designated heritage asset of local significance because of their architectural and historic interest and the contribution of the rural setting to that significance"*. It considers that *"the reconstruction of the farmhouse in the form proposed, based on site and photographic evidence will restore the integrity of the locally distinctive collection of 19th century farm buildings as an important group"*. Whilst this has been accorded some weight, it is not considered to outweigh the harm identified above, particularly given the barns themselves are being converted and adapted for use as dwellings and, the significant passage of time since there was actually a dwelling on the site. Because of the site's distance from the nearest public road, the public would generally not be able to appreciate any benefits that reinstating a building on the site may deliver.

It is considered that the proposal is contrary to policies SS 1 and SS 2 for the reasons stated above.

#### Design, character and appearance: policies EN 2 and EN 4

The design of the proposed dwelling is essentially a copy of the dwelling that previously occupied the site, although as it has been taken from old photos, may not be exactly the same with regards to some detailed elements and eaves/ridge heights for example. The photo submitted suggests the original dwelling had a deep overhanging eaves whereas that proposed would not. Nevertheless, the scale, form and appearance of the proposed dwelling is acceptable. Its hipped roof would complement the existing barns and suitable materials and detailing could be secured by conditions. It is considered the proposed dwelling would sit comfortably within the context of the group of barns and would not have any harmful effect on the character and appearance or the surrounding area or wider landscape within which it would be located. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with policies EN 2 and EN 4.

#### Living conditions: policy EN 4

The proposals raise no concerns in this respect. It is considered there would be no material impacts on the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent barn (1) and the future occupiers of barn 9 when converted, in terms of overbearing or overshadowing impacts. With regard to privacy, there would be 3 first floor windows in the rear elevation that would face towards the garden of barn 1 to the east. Two of these would be to bathrooms so would be obscure glazed, the other would serve a small bedroom. Whilst this would allow for some overlooking of the neighbouring garden, it is not considered this would be significant and would generally comply with the amenity criteria in the North Norfolk Design Guide SPD with a separation distance of 15 m from the window to the middle of the garden. The private garden area would be of an adequate size and shape, complying with the requirements of the Design Guide in this respect. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of policy EN 4.

#### Highways and parking: policies CT 5 and CT 6

A single dwelling as proposed would be likely to generate 6 additional vehicle movements a day. Access to the main road network, in particular the A149 to the west, would be via Church Road which is a relatively narrow rural lane. The network of roads to the east is similarly rural lanes. It is however, considered that a single additional dwelling as proposed would not have a harmful

material effect on road safety or traffic movements on these roads. Access to the site from Church Road is via a drive / single vehicle width track (approx 300m long) that also serves the converted barns, other dwellings nearby as well as providing access to surrounding fields. There is adequate visibility at its junction with Church Road and there are conditions (nos. 12 and 13) attached to planning permission PF/17/0112 which require improvement of the access for the first 5m from the public road and the formation of two passing bays. The developer has been reminded of the need to comply with this condition and subject to these works being carried out, it is considered the access arrangements would be acceptable in terms of highway safety and traffic movement, in accordance with policy CT 5.

There is sufficient space within the site to provide parking in accordance with the current adopted standards, with a detached double garage also proposed. Because of the distance from the public highway, there are no concerns about any overspill parking affecting it. The proposal is considered to comply with policy CT 6.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, effect on the character and appearance of the area, living conditions and highways related matters. It would also make use of previously developed land. This does not however outweigh the conflict in terms of the principle of the development and policies SS 1 and SS 2. The contribution to the district's supply of housing would be minimal and the economic benefits derived from its construction would similarly be minimal and again not sufficient to outweigh the identified harm. The development is not considered to be in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations which would outweigh the policy conflict. Therefore, refusal of the application is recommended.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Refuse for the following reason:

- The District Council adopted the North Norfolk Core Strategy on 24 September 2008, and subsequently adopted Policy HO9 on 23 February 2011, for all planning purposes. The following policy statements are considered relevant to the proposed development:

SS 1 - Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk

SS 2 - Development in the Countryside

The proposed dwelling would be within an area designated as Countryside where there is a general presumption against residential development and in a location with no services and poor access to a full range of basic services. The future occupiers would therefore be dependent on the car to be able to reach such services. The proposal would therefore not be sustainable development. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority there is no justification to permit the erection of the additional dwelling in the Countryside contrary to policies SS 1 and SS 2 of the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy and paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019).

Final wording of reasons to be delegated to the Head of Planning