

IRSTEAD - PF/20/2368 – Erection of general purpose agricultural building with associated concrete hardstanding to front, soft landscaping and access; Land South of Car Park and Public Conveniences, Long Road, Irstead, Norfolk

Minor Development

- Target Date: 19 January 2021

Case Officer: Mr C Reuben

Full Planning Permission

CONSTRAINTS

Advertising Control

Areas Susceptible to Groundwater SFRA

Landscape Character Area

Landscape Character Assessment

Countryside LDF

NATS Application for Wind Turbines

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PF/20/0945

Land South of Car Park And Public Conveniences, Long Road, Irstead

Erection of a general purpose agricultural building including associated concrete hardstanding, soft landscaping and access improvements

Withdrawn 18/09/2020

THE APPLICATION

The application proposes a new agricultural building on a section of agricultural field adjacent to a small copse of trees along Long Lane, Irstead. A single point of access presently exists into the field which would be used to access the building. There are open views of agricultural land to the south, east and west, with the Barton Broad boardwalk car park located to the north with a footpath link across agricultural land to Barton Broad further to the east. This application follows a previous application (PF/20/0945) which was withdrawn owing to concerns regarding the visual appearance of the building. This current application seeks to address these concerns and provide further mitigation.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

At the request of Cllr N Dixon citing matters of landscape impact and traffic generation.

PARISH COUNCIL

Irstead Parish Council – Objection. Consider that the junctions at either end of Long Road are not suitable for large agricultural vehicles with the highway being too narrow with too few passing bays, being in close proximity to the boardwalk car park which has frequent visitors.

REPRESENTATIONS

Seven public representations have been received. All have objected and raised the following concerns:

- Long Lane is narrow with no passing places and tight junctions

- The peaceful location, and surrounding country lanes, are popular with visitors on foot and bicycles where there are no pavements/street lighting, where people access local facilities/services.
- There is other land available which would be more suitable.
- The building would be in a highly visible position on elevated ground and would spoil rural views enjoyed by residents and visitors
- Site is close to a conservation area
- Close to a busy tourist facility/car park and boardwalk and Grays Staithe which has a public mooring facility.
- Will result in increased noise levels for local residents.

CONSULTATIONS

Norfolk County Council (Highway) – No objection subject to condition.

Landscape Officer – No objection subject to conditions. The changes to the size of the building and the colour changes to Van Dyke Brown cladding and anthracite roof colouring does go some way to reduce the impacts slightly and while it is acknowledged that the site is less than ideal, all other locations and options have been explored therefore this appears to be the only solution and the best in terms of colour and size.

An indicative landscape scheme has been provided as part of the Proposed Site Plan which appears to illustrate a hedgerow around the entire boundary of the site (excluding visibility splays) together with proposed tree planting on all boundaries except the northern boundary. The Landscape section would be satisfied if the landscaping scheme were secured as a condition of planning, but the sooner the planting is implemented the sooner it can establish and start to screen the building.

Environmental Health – No objection subject to condition.

Broads Authority – Objection. This application is for a substantial building on the edge of an open field devoid of built form. Whilst there are trees screening the north of the site, there are numerous areas where the building will be an obvious presence, including on the well-used walk to Barton Boardwalk from the carpark. The proposals would alter key characteristics of the pre-development landscape by introducing a built element which would be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the landscape, namely a strong sense of tranquillity and sense of remoteness. Much of this area is characterised by an apparent lack of built development. Overall, the proposals are considered to have a moderate adverse effect on landscape character and the setting of the Broads. Adverse effects would be particularly felt by visitors to the National Park in terms of their perceptions and experience of the Park. The Broads Authority therefore raise an objection to this application. If minded to grant permission, this should be subject to a landscape condition requiring more substantial screen planting in order to mitigate to some extent the negative impacts.

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

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Principle
2. Design and amenity
3. Highway impact
4. Landscape impact
5. Environmental considerations

APPRAISAL

1. Principle (Policies SS 1 and SS 2)

The site in question lies within the Countryside policy area of North Norfolk, as defined under Policy SS 2 of the adopted North Norfolk Core Strategy. Within this area, proposals to erect new agricultural buildings are considered to be acceptable in principle and are subject to compliance with other relevant Core Strategy policies.

2. Design and amenity (Policy EN 4)

Under the previous application (ref: PF/20/0945), concerns were raised by officers in respect of the visual impact of the building. The applicant has since sought to try and address these concerns, primarily through a reduction in the size of the building in terms of overall length by 6m, a change in the colour of the external appearance from grey cladding with two roller shutter doors to brown cladding and just a single roller shutter door, along with proposing a substantial landscaping scheme, all of which whilst trying to maintain the required functionality of the building. These changes have helped to mitigate the visual impact of the building, though it is recognised not fully, as further discussed below.

However, in terms of the overall design of the building, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy EN 4.

3. Highway impact (Policy CT 5)

The new building would be served by a single access point onto Long Road. The concerns of the Parish Council and Local residents have been considered, however, the Highway Authority have not raised any objections to the proposed single building, with the conclusion that it would

not generate a significant volume of agricultural traffic. There is no reason for officers to disagree with this view, particularly noting that the rough access point into the field already exists and as such, could already generate the movement of agricultural vehicles into/out of the field. In addition, it is recognised that the junction at either end of Long Lane is tight and with Long Lane being frequented by walkers/cyclists (residents and tourists) but again, there is nothing to restrict agricultural vehicles from using these junctions and Long Lane already. It is further recognised that this is characteristically a rural/agricultural district with agricultural vehicles typically using narrow country track/lanes.

As such, on balance, the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy CT 5.

4. Landscape impact (Policy EN 2)

The proposed building would be situated on a site bordered on one side by a small copse of trees, thus providing some visual screening from a northerly direction and a soft backdrop when viewed from the south. Notwithstanding this, it is recognised that, without mitigation, there would be open views of the building, particularly from an easterly and southerly direction, and it would be visible from the public right of way and Irstead Road to the east/north-east. From the east, it would be seen against the backdrop of another small woodland copse within the agricultural field to the west.

Along with the design alterations made, in order to partly mitigate this visual impact, the applicant has proposed a comprehensive landscaping scheme along the eastern, southern and western site boundaries. This would include new hedgerows and a significant level of tree planting to act as a buffer and which would link to the existing copse of woodland. This landscaping can be secured through planning conditions.

It is noted that the applicant has provided a map depicting other land within their ownership, however, much of this land is similarly open and accessed via narrow rural lanes. The submitted Landscape Assessment has identified an alternative site which would not require mitigation, however, the applicant has ruled this site out for operational/accessibility reasons. Notwithstanding this, there is no requirement in policy to adopt a sequential approach and as such, each application is to be judged on its own merits.

This is a finely balanced judgement and the views of both local residents and the Broads Authority are acutely recognised, as is the need for time to allow the proposed planting to establish itself. However, it is considered that the applicant has done just enough, upon further consultation with the Council's Landscape officer, to mitigate the visual impact to the extent that would be, on balance, acceptable. It is further recognised that the demands of modern agricultural practices require the need for new, modern agricultural buildings, with such features not wholly uncommon within a rural landscape. The toned down colour scheme and significant mitigation planting can help to soften this visual impact.

As such, the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy EN 2.

5. Environmental considerations (Policy EN 13)

The site does not present any significant environmental concerns, with no objections raised by the Environmental Protection Officer. The building would be positioned sufficient distance away from the nearest residential properties so as to not raise any overriding noise concerns. As such, the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy EN 13.

6. Conclusion

It is considered that, although concerns regarding highway and landscape impacts are recognised, on balance, with sufficient mitigation planting being provided, the proposed building is compliant with the relevant Core Strategy policies.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the application be APPROVED subject to conditions relating to the matters listed below and any others considered necessary by the Assistant Director for Planning:

- Time limit for implementation
- Constructed in accordance with the approved plans
- Materials as approved
- Provision of a detailed landscaping scheme to be carried out during next available planting season
- Landscape Management Plan
- Replacement of new planting if fails
- Access construction details to be agreed
- Prior agreement of any ventilation/air conditioning/refrigeration/mechanical extractor systems or any other plant and equipment
- Prior agreement of any external lighting
- Restrict use to agricultural purposes only
- No external storage of vehicles/equipment/machinery

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