

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/3(e)

Parish:	Sedgeford	
Proposal:	Conversion to residential of existing barn including single storey extension to the east elevation	
Location:	Building S of Park Vue Heacham Road Sedgeford Norfolk	
Applicant:	Sedgeford Hall Estate	
Case No:	16/01127/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mr C Fry	Date for Determination: 23 August 2016 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 14 November 2017

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – The views of Sedgeford Parish Council are contrary to the Officer recommendation.

Case Summary

The application site lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within an area designated as Countryside according to Local Plan Proposals Maps for Sedgeford.

The application site can be described as paddock land, 44m south of Heacham Road, to the rear of Park Vue. Vehicular Access is achieved from Sedgeford Road.

The site contains a former cowshed building.

The application seeks consent to convert and extend the former Cowshed to provide a 2 bedroom property.

Key Issues

Principle of Development
 Impact upon the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 Impact upon the Conservation Area
 Highway Safety
 Impact upon Neighbour Amenity
 Impact upon Protected Species
 Flood Risk
 Other Material Considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The site lies within an area designated as Countryside and as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty according to Local Plan Proposals Maps for Sedgeford.

16/01127/F

Planning Committee
7 November 2016

The site is some 44m to the south of Heacham Road behind "Park Vue". "Park Vue" is a detached two storey carrstone and red brick property. The majority of the properties on this part of Heacham Road date from a Georgian period and are constructed from red/orange brick with orange pantile. The only exception to the form of development on Heacham Road is a single storey property between Park View and Victoria House which is finished in painted brick.

The site increases in height heading north and contains a former cowshed building constructed from red brick and carrstone. The site is part of a larger paddock. The larger parcel of land contains trees on its eastern and southern boundaries. The western boundary comprises of hedging and the northern boundary comprises of the different boundary treatments to the properties that front Heacham Road.

Access to the site is gained via an unmade tree lined track from Sedgford Road. The track is some 480m long.

The application seeks consent to convert the existing cowshed and extend it to provide a residential dwelling. The existing cartshed scales 12.5m (l) x 4.5m (d) x 4m (h) with its ridge line on a south – north axis. Its siting, at its closest point, is within 2m of the western boundary. When converted the original element of the cowshed will provide two bedrooms both served with bathrooms.

An extension will project from the western elevation by 7.1m (l) x 5.4m (w) x 3.8m (h) and facilitates a kitchen and living room.

The converted cowshed will use carrstone, timber cladding and pantiles. The windows will be constructed from timber casements.

The property will be served by onsite parking and will have soft landscaped eastern boundary to enclose the property's private amenity space from the paddock.

SUPPORTING CASE

The application has been supported with a Design and Access Statement which states the following:-

- The cowshed is to the south of the centre of Sedgford, although in an individual location the barn's setting is within the perimeter development formed by the village.
- Access is via a farm lane which runs from Heacham Road, beyond the barn to the west and south is a small copse and this gives the barn an attractive semi-sheltered setting. A feature of the location is the open views to the east looking over the adjacent field.
- The barn is single storey, no openings in the east elevation, with the north and south end elevations containing window and door apertures. The west elevation includes two wide door apertures and a window aperture.
- The barn is structurally sound.
- There is no social or economic impact arising from the proposal
- The proposal will provide an additional unit of residential accommodation which will support a rural settlement.
- The existing building is traditional in nature, setting and scale and makes a positive contribution to the landscape which will be retained and enhanced
- Non-residential use is not appropriate in this case due to the size and location of the barn.

- The accommodation to be provided is of a type which makes the conversion both viable and sustainable.
- The floor space can be considered to be a useable minimum when assessed against the investment required to viably refurbish and extend the historic barn
- The extension is proportional to the existing structure
- The works to the building can be completed without an effect on planting or landscaping of any kind.
- Public views of the building are distant.

PLANNING HISTORY

NONE

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECTION the development is in a flood plain and has poor drainage. The access road will exist on a bend that has poor visibility for traffic entering the drive from the village. Difficult for construction and general traffic in the future, the road will go across meadow land with significant inhabitants. There is a need to preserve green open space. There is a huge increase in the development from the footprint of the barn which is not structurally sound and would need to be demolished due to a lack of foundation. There is also the potential to disrupt nesting birds.

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION subject to condition

Arboricultural Officer: NO OBJECTION subject to condition

Environmental Health & Housing – Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION subject to conditions

Conservation Officer: NO OBJECTION

Coastal Partnership Manager (AONB) comments that there would be some change of local character in the parcel in which the building sits even from a well-designed and relatively modest conversion where light pollution was minimised (including external lighting) although I would not expect this to be visible in the wider landscape because of the existing plantations on three sides and housing to the north.

There is some question whether the proposal is suitable for conversion and it does not appear to comply with policy in the following respects.

- It would not appear to meet a local settlement needs or significantly support local services
- The existing building can hardly be said to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Because of the proposed access arrangement, the proposed dwelling would not be easily accessible to housing, employment and services.

REPRESENTATIONS

8 letters objecting to the application on the following grounds:-

- Inappropriate development of a grazing meadow
- Access to the building plot is difficult
- The application site is within land not in control of the applicant
- Interfere with wildlife
- No details on the foul water drainage system
- Access will be flooded
- The extension represents 80% of the present building
- The proposal is for a new house rather than a conversion and extension
- No public transport available in Sedgeford
- Affect on existing trees along the route.
- Detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area
- Access is from farm land which runs from Heacham Road
- Tree specialist needs to look at the trees.
- Protected species live in the barn
- The site is within a flood zone
- Precedent for further development
- Anglia Water sewerage works creates smells not acceptable for the future residents
- Affect local business we have many guests who enjoy the unspoilt views and wild life which visit the field.
- Outside of the development boundary
- Not an affordable house
- Non-residential use available, it can be used for horse feed

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS09 - Housing Distribution

CS11 – Transport

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PRE-SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations in regards to the application are:-

- Principle of Development
- Impact upon the Visual Amenity and the AONB
- Impact upon the Conservation Area
- Impact upon Neighbour Amenity
- Impact upon Protected Species
- Highway Safety
- Flood Risk
- Other Material Considerations

Principle of Development

The site lies within an area designated as Countryside and AONB according to local plan proposals maps for Sedgford.

Development in the countryside is strictly controlled for new dwellings in line with paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

The paragraph states that there has to be special circumstances to allow new homes in the countryside. One such special circumstance can be where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

Policy CS06 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy provides further guidance on the criteria by which conversions of buildings to residential will only be considered where:-

1. The existing building makes a positive contribution to the landscape
2. A non-residential use is proven to be unviable
3. The accommodation to be provided is commensurate to the site's relationship to the settlement pattern
4. The building is easily accessible to existing housing, employment and services

In light of this policy, the existing building is quite secluded from public vantage points. The building is modest in scale and does not dominate the field in which it is contained. Apart from the asbestos roof covering part of the shed, the building demonstrates good quality carrstone on its west and east elevations and the building and pantiles are retained on the extended brick part of the building. It can be said on balance that this building does provide some positive contribution to the landscape, albeit rather modest.

Third Party Correspondence raises concern about whether the structure is capable of being converted.

The walkover survey of the building, conducted by a structural engineer, appraised by the agent would indicate, contrary to 3rd Party correspondence, that the building is capable of being converted. Whilst, there may be some requirement for underpinning and some areas

of the existing walls may require strengthening, the roof timbers appear to be in sound condition, the roof construction is robust and the walls are in good condition, there appears to be little movement in the barn with little evidence of damp.

The cowshed is within close proximity to residential neighbours, accordingly an alternative business use could cause noise and disturbance issues. The building itself is not suitable for modern day farming activities, as its height and depth would not contain modern day farm machinery. The keeping of any farm livestock would require the building to be upgraded to EU farming standards. A commercial use to keep horses such as a livery would involve an intensification of the access track for larger vehicles which may not be suitable from a highways point of view. Accordingly, an alternative non-residential use is not considered to be appropriate.

The accommodation to be provided, a 2 bedroom property, is located in close proximity to existing built form in Sedgford. Sedgford is a "Rural Village" which can accommodate limited minor development such as this. The dwelling does not appear to be in an isolated position. The scale of the proposed works would not result in a cramped form of development nor does the development dominate the existing built form.

Whilst a long access track will serve the proposed property, it is an existing track, contained within the client's ownership. The access track leads towards Heacham Road, which serves both Sedgford and Heacham. Sedgford is classified as a "Rural Village" which can support limited minor development. Heacham is a "Key Rural Service Centre" which has employment and services to sustain larger scale development.

The proposal to convert this cowshed building could be supported in principle.

Impact upon the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The site is contained within an area designated as countryside and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The site is approximately 44m south of Heacham Road and forms part of a larger parcel of land within the applicant's ownership.

The land in the client's ownership increases in height heading in a northerly direction, towards Heacham Road.

The land has established trees on its southern, eastern and part of its western boundary. The remainder of the western boundary heading north comprises mostly of hedging. The northern boundary of the applicant's land comprises of hedging and low level brick walls.

The site is in the north-west corner of the applicant's land and comprises of hedging on the western and northern boundaries with no formal southern or eastern boundaries. The site contains a single storey building "cowshed" which is set inside the 2m the western boundary.

The cowshed is 12.6m (l) max x 4.6m (w) max. x 4m (h) and comprises of 2 different elements. The "store room" as described on the existing layout plan is constructed from red brick and carstone on its eastern, western and southern elevations. Its roof has been raised at some point by 2 brick courses and now has asbestos sheet roof covering. A later addition to the northern elevation of the barn comprises of a stable room, store and open area. This latter addition is constructed from red brick and has a pantile roof.

The proposed extension, to facilitate the conversion of the "cowshed" into a dwelling, will project from the west elevation of the later addition, described above. The extension will

scale 7.1m (l) x 5.4m (d) x 3.8m in height. The extension will be clad in timber with matching pantile.

Other alterations to the Cowshed include the raising of the roof to the original element of the cart-shed in order to tie in to the existing ridgeline of the latter addition. The alterations to provide windows and doors in the existing cowshed building are minimal.

The extension is considered to cause little impact upon visual amenity. Not only is its scale and appearance acceptable, the existing properties on Heacham Road would screen the site from the public realm. There are no other public view points available of the site.

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

The Coastal Partnership Manager comments that there would be some change to the local character in the parcel of land in which the building sits even from a well-designed and relatively modest conversion where light pollution was minimised (including external lighting) although The Partnership Manager would not expect this building to be visible in the wider landscape because of the existing plantations on three sides and housing to the north.

The ability to convert the building and its character has been discussed earlier.

The siting of the existing building is close to existing buildings in Sedgeford, the proposal would not result in an intrusion of the built form into the AONB to its detriment. Furthermore, the scale of the extension, being rather modest in relation to its setting and the site being well screened from public view, it is considered that the proposal will not adversely affect the intrinsic character of the Norfolk Coast (AONB).

Impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area

The Town and Country Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 (as amended) places statutory duties upon Local Planning Authorities. In determining applications that affect a Listed Building or its setting Section 66 (1) states that Local Planning Authorities “shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. Section 72 requires the LPA to pay special to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when determining applications affecting buildings or land within the Conservation Area or its setting.

Sedgeford Conservation Area boundary runs along the northern boundary of the site, whilst the site is not within the conservation area, the proposal is within its setting.

The Conservation Officer has no objection to the proposal, as the dwelling will not be seen from the public domain and will therefore have no impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

Impact upon Neighbour Amenity

The northern boundary of the site is shared with Victoria House, the nearest residential neighbour. The closest part of the converted cow shed is 10m away from the northern boundary. The site is on lower land than the neighbours to the north. Taking into account the single storey nature of the proposal, the separating distances and the site being on a lower level than the properties to the north it is considered that these neighbours would not be detrimentally affected by an overshadowing or overbearing issues.

The windows proposed in the northern elevation of the dwelling serve habitable rooms; these are set approximately 12m away from the shared boundary. Given the topography of the site, the single storey nature of the proposal and this separating distances involved it is considered that these neighbours will not be detrimentally overlooked.

A residential use of the site is acceptable in this location from a noise and disturbance point of view.

Impact upon Protected Species

The Parish Council are concerned about impact upon protected species.

The barn has a few cracks above the door to the original element of the barn and accordingly the barn has potential for bat and barn owl roosting.

Additionally vegetation could have the potential for nesting birds.

The Ecology report dated June 2016 carried out by Torc Ecology concluded the following in relation to protected species

Bats – a visual inspection (phase 1 survey – November 2015) and two dusk emergence surveys conducted 3rd May 2016 on the 24th May 2016 that covered the building and vegetation around the site. The surveys identified that there was some light bat activity, primarily associated with the wooded area to the west of the site. No bats were recorded emerging from roosts within the Cowshed during the surveys. No mitigation in the form of compensatory roosts is required.

Birds- the Cowshed is used by a barn owl for roosting, there is also the potential for a small number of niches in the building and the ivy growth to be used for nesting by bird species. Conversion works would have the potential to impact nesting birds and with the removal of some hedgerow, mitigation is advised in the form of a watching brief or works commencing outside of the main breeding bird season (1st March – 31st August), compensatory nesting for birds is not compulsory.

Great Crested Newts – the application site is approximately 140m north-east of a large pond, the pond was the subject of Great Crested Newts survey. The Survey concluded that the pond had a below average habitat for Great Crested Newts, given the absence of other potential breeding ponds in close proximity to the site, it is unlikely that the land surrounding the cowshed is being used by terrestrial phase newts. No mitigation required.

Reptiles – there is a potential for grass snakes given the wet/marshy habitats close by, however the small scale of the proposal limits the impact risk. No further surveys or mitigation is proposed.

No EPS mitigation licenses are required to be completed to allow the proposed development according to the protected species survey.

Highway Safety

The Parish Council are concerned that the access to the site, coming out onto a bend in Heacham Road is unsafe.

The highways officer has no objection to the proposal subject to conditions.

Flood Risk

The Parish Council raise issues in regards to flooding

The site contained the Cowshed and the majority of the land outlined in blue lies within Flood Zone 1, but part of the access to the site lies within flood zone 3, where it crosses over the Anglo Saxon settlement site.

No Flood Risk Assessment is submitted with the application, as the majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1 and the site area is less than 1ha in size. Additionally being a change of use of a footprint of less than 250m², the building is not required to be subject of a sequential and exception test.

It is worthy of note that there is a significant increase in the topography of the site from the Flood Zone 3 to Flood Zone 1 level, accordingly human lives are not put at risk.

Other Material Considerations

The Environmental Health and Housing – Environmental Quality team have no objection to the proposal subject to the safe removal of asbestos which is secured by condition.

There is no requirement to consult the Environment Agency as the proposal is not a waste facility.

The Arboricultural Officer has no objection to the proposal, following a receipt of the Arboricultural Report.

The Parish council are concerned that the proposal has poor drainage. Foul and surface water drainage conditions are to be imposed.

Anglia Water do not wish to be consulted on the application as their pumping station is more than 25m away from the residential property. Any smell caused by the pumping station would need to be accounted for in any future purchase of the property.

CONCLUSION

Members will need to consider whether the proposal has demonstrated compliance with Policy CS06 in relation to converting the building to a residential use.

It is your officer's opinion that the building demonstrates a positive contribution to the landscape; it doesn't dominate the wider landscape and is not seen from the public realm. On balance, the building is structurally capable of being converted following minor works. The building has limited commercial value, due to its reliance upon a narrow access route for commercial vehicles, its physical scale and its close proximity to residential neighbours. The level of accommodation that is to be provided is rather modest and in line with Sedgeford's designation as a Rural Village in Policy CS02. The building is accessible to services and employment in the locality.

The neighbours would not be unduly affected by the alterations, given their scale and siting and the site being on a lower land.

From a flood risk point of view, the property is in the least restrictive flood zone and the risk to human life from the part of the access being flooded is minimal as the site is on higher ground anyway.

There is no detrimental impact upon protected species that cannot be covered by way of condition.

The removal of asbestos and details of drainage will be secured by way of condition

The proposal is therefore recommended to be approved subject to the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:-
 - Drawing no.01/01 dated August 2016 received 24th August 2016
 - Drawing no.01/02 dated June 2016 received
- 2 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a survey specifying the location and nature of asbestos containing materials and an action plan detailing treatment or safe removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The details in the approved action plan shall be fully implemented and evidence shall be kept and made available for inspection at the local planning authority's request.
- 3 Reason To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, and to ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of land after remediation.

This also needs to be a pre-commencement condition given the fundamental details linked to asbestos containing materials which need to be planned for at the earliest stage in the development.
- 4 Condition Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved evidence of the treatment or safe removal and disposal of the asbestos containing materials at a suitably licensed waste disposal site shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.
- 4 Reason To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, and to ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of land after remediation.
- 5 Condition No development shall take place on any external surface of the development hereby permitted until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building(s) have been submitted to and approved in writing by

the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 5 Reason To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 6 Condition Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B and D of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house, the enlargement of a dwelling house consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof, or the erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwelling house, shall not be allowed without the granting of specific planning permission.
- 6 Reason In order that the Local Planning Authority may retain control of development which might be detrimental to the amenities of the locality if otherwise allowed by the mentioned Order.
- 7 Condition Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed on-site car and turning area shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.
- 7 Reason To ensure the permanent availability of the parking / manoeuvring area, in the interests of highway safety.
- 8 Condition No development shall commence until full details of the foul and surface water drainage arrangements for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage details shall be constructed as approved before any part of the development hereby permitted is brought into use.
- 8 Reason To ensure that there is a satisfactory means of drainage in accordance with the NPPF.

This needs to be a pre-commencement condition as drainage is a fundamental issue that needs to be planned for and agreed at the start of the development.

- 9 Condition No development or other operations shall commence on site until the existing trees and/or hedgerows to be retained have been protected in accordance with a scheme that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide for the erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree or hedge before any equipment, machinery, or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of development or other operations. The fencing shall be retained intact for the full duration of the development until all equipment, materials and surplus materials have been removed from the site. If the fencing is damaged all operations shall cease until it is repaired in accordance with the approved details. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any fenced area in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavations be made without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority.
- 9 Reason To ensure that existing trees and hedgerows are properly protected in accordance with the NPPF. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition given the potential for damage to protected trees during the construction phase.