

Parish:	Thornham	
Proposal:	Construction Of Five Houses	
Location:	The Castle High Street Thornham Hunstanton	
Applicant:	BRLN Property Investments LTD	
Case No:	18/00593/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs K Lawty	Date for Determination: 8 June 2018 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 6 July 2018

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Parish Council objection.

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of five x 3 No. bed properties on land at the Castle, High Street, Thornham.

The site is located to the southern side of High Street, Thornham at its junction with Castle Cottages which is a cul-de-sac development of 25 homes (see location plan). The site has residential development on 3 sides and is within the settlement of Thornham which is a Rural Village.

To the east of the site is a short row of 3 pairs of semi-detached 2 storey dwellings which, along with the homes on the eastern side of Castle Cottages, form the eastern edge of the defined village.

Within this part of the village the High Street forms the village edge, with open countryside and the salt marshes to the northern side of High Street.

The site itself is currently side garden associated with property known as ‘The Castle’ which is a 2 storey stone house with red brick detailing and a pantile roof.

The site is within the AONB and the Thornham Conservation Area.

The Castle (including the application site) also forms the eastern boundary of the Thornham Conservation Area. Both the Castle and the adjacent building Castle Bungalow are noted on the conservation area map as ‘important unlisted buildings’.

Planning permission was previously approved on the site for three dwellings in 2017 (ref: 17/00661/F) and a revised scheme for three dwellings on the site has also recently been approved (ref: 18/00592/F).

Key Issues

- Principle of development
- Form and character and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Impact on landscape amenity
- Boundary treatment
- Highways
- Residential Amenity

Recommendation APPROVAL**THE APPLICATION**

The application is made for full planning permission for the erection of five No. 3 bedroom dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.

A short terrace of three properties is proposed to the northern part of the site, facing the High Street. These are shown to be stone faced with red brick and pantile roofs. These have two bedrooms at first floor with an additional bedroom within the roof space.

A pair of semi-detached properties is to the southern part of the site. Again, these are stone faced with red brick and pantile roofs. All bedrooms are at first floor.

Vehicular parking for the terraced properties is shown to be within an open cart shed behind the dwellings, with vehicular access from Castle Cottages. Each unit has one covered and one parking space.

Vehicle parking for the proposed semi-detached properties is shown to be in front of each dwelling. Access is from the single vehicular access point into the site from Castle Cottages and each unit has two open spaces.

The application includes details of boundary treatment which ranges from 1.2m black wrought iron railings and gates to the northern roadside boundary, 1.2m brick and flint wall with 0.6m willow fencing above to the north east corner of the site, 1.2m red and flint wall to the east and 1.8m close boarded timber fence to the private rear garden areas.

SUPPORTING CASE

The applicant has submitted the following supporting statement:-

The proposed development is for the construction of 5 dwellings, comprising 3no. terraced cottages and 2no. semi-detached dwellings. The site is situated on the southern side of High Street, on the corner with Castle Cottages in the village of Thornham. The site comprises of a large side garden of a dwelling known as The Castle. The site is within the AONB, and the Thornham Conservation Area.

Principle Of Development

The settlement hierarchy (policy CS02) in the Core Strategy identifies Thornham as a 'Rural Village' where limited minor development which meets the needs of settlements and helps to sustain existing services will be permitted. Thornham is a sustainable location and the site is within walking distance of a range of services including a public house, pub / restaurant, and

a deli / café. There is a bus stop outside the site with an hourly service running between Hunstanton and Kings Lynn. Permission was recently granted for the construction of three houses (17/00661/F) on the site in October 2017 and the recent approval demonstrates that the Council consider the principle of development to be acceptable on this site, subject to the following material considerations:

Design & Heritage Impacts

There is a common pattern of development within Thornham of properties fronting onto the High Street, and the village presents a strong built form across its length. The proposal includes a terrace of cottages consistent with the grain of development in the village and common in other villages along the North Norfolk Coast. The proposal will utilise the same architectural style to the approved scheme and will create traditional cottages in a vernacular style utilising locally distinctive materials. It will relate to the surrounding development and fit in with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The consultation response from the Conservation Areas Advisory Panel considers the scheme to be acceptable and states their preference for the scheme of five dwellings over the previous scheme of three dwellings as the smaller house sizes are more appropriate for the Conservation Area.

Residential Amenity

The proposed layout has been designed so that there will be no detrimental impact on the amenity of the existing and proposed dwellings in terms of overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing. The layout provides for appropriate levels of private amenity space.

Landscape Impact

The site is surrounded by residential development on three sides and the proposal is in keeping with the character of the area and is not considered to cause any harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Highways

The development will be served by a new access point from Castle Cottages. In comparing this scheme to the previous scheme for three dwellings, the Highways consultation response states that this scheme “allows for a much cleaner design, with a single shared point of access to a shared parking and turning area, which accords with current requirements, suitable visibility splays, and an improved frontage onto A149 High Street.”

Housing Mix

The approval for three units is a good quality scheme but the applicant considers that market signals are indicating a need for smaller open market dwellings in the locality. The proposed scheme for five dwellings will make a better contribution to the local housing stock by providing smaller units which are more affordable to local people. There is some support for the scheme of five dwellings in the public consultation response for the reasons stated above. We therefore consider that this is a logical change to the approved scheme.

The Planning Balance and Conclusions

It is our opinion that on balance, given the acceptance in principle, no issues arising in terms of the proposed design, and no harmful impacts being identified, planning permission should be granted.

PLANNING HISTORY

18/00592/F - Construction of three houses – Approved.

17/00661/F - Construction of three houses - Approved: 02/10/2017

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT- Thornham Parish Council would like to recommend refusal on the on the grounds of over development and vehicular access. The council believes that the block of three houses in this design are better than the agreed and proposed and are more in keeping with the area.

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION – conditionally.

Conservation Area Advisory Panel: NO OBJECTION– conditionally. The Panel considered that they preferred the scheme for five dwellings above the approved scheme for three dwellings as they are a more appropriate size of house for the Conservation Area.

Conservation Officer: NO OBJECTION – conditionally. Concur with views of CAAP, but request sample panel condition.

Arboricultural Officer: NO OBJECTION – conditionally; would like to see planting details.

Environmental Quality: No comments re: contaminated land or air quality.

Environment Agency: No comments

Natural England: NO OBJECTION - suggest further consultation with the AONB and Norfolk Coastal Partnership.

Norfolk Coastal Partnership: NO OBJECTION – support; prefer to see more affordable, smaller dwellings

REPRESENTATIONS

2 representations received (1 objection and 1 in support) referring to the following:-

- 5 dwellings is too much for the space
- Two storey properties will intrude on my privacy
- With 5 properties there will be extra traffic trying to gain access from a small road onto the main road which would have an effect on the current estate
- Could result in 10 extra cars
- The fencing could have an effect on light entering my property causing an effect on my wellbeing
- My first reaction to this planning application was that 5 houses would be too many. However on studying the plans carefully I have come to the conclusion that this proposal would result in a much more suitable development than the one previously granted planning permission.
- The three terraced houses to front Main Road replace the one very large house on the previous plan and the other two houses, on Castle Cottages, are smaller and lower in height than the two originally allowed for this position.

- 10 parking spaces are now required whereas 8 were allowed previously but the arrangement of a courtyard for parking and turning for all 5 dwellings with one wider opening onto Castle Cottages would seem to be an improvement.
- All the existing properties on that part of Castle Cottages have adequate off street parking so there should not be a problem with accessing the road.
- The improved vision splay from Castle Cottages to Main Road already demanded will improve the current situation as the overgrown hedge makes the left hand view greatly restricted.
- Although the number of houses has increased the size of each unit is much smaller and in my opinion is far more in keeping with the surrounding area.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS09 - Housing Distribution

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

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

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- Principle of development
- Form and character and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Impact on landscape amenity
- Highways
- Residential Amenity

Principle of development;

The site lies within the village boundary of Thornham, which is identified in the Core strategy settlement hierarchy (CS02) as a 'rural village'. Policy CS02 goes on to confirm that within rural villages limited minor development will be permitted which meets the needs of settlements and helps to sustain existing services in accordance with Policy CS06 Development in rural areas.

There is already planning permission for three dwellings on the site (ref: 17/00661/F & 18/00592/F) and this is a material consideration.

The principle of residential development on this site has therefore already been considered to be acceptable.

Form and character and Impact on Heritage Assets

The proposal is for the construction of five dwellings on garden land associated with the property known as The Castle, an existing detached, two storey property set on the southern side of High Street, Thornham.

All new vehicle accesses into the site are from Castle Cottages to the south east of the property.

The site lies at the eastern most end of the Thornham conservation area and is significant when viewed entering the village from the east, marking the transition from more modern housing to more traditional.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), specifically paragraphs 131 and 132, state that: "When determining planning applications, local authorities should take account of: the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting".

The Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) places statutory duties upon Local Planning Authorities. Section 72 requires the LPA to pay special attention 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.

Furthermore, Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy states that "The historic and built environment play a crucial role in delivering environmental quality and well-being. Therefore the Council will preserve and where appropriate enhance its qualities and characteristics.

Policies CS08 and DM15 of the development plan require new development to be well designed and to have due regard to the surrounding built form and local environment. This is derived from the NPPF which emphasises the importance of good design as an important aspect of sustainable development. CS08 also promotes the optimising of site potential, whilst protecting and enhancing the historic environment.

The design of the proposed dwellings takes reference from the more traditional properties and incorporates the use of traditional design elements and building materials. There are

also examples of more recently constructed terraces of three dwellings to the west of the site, further along the High Street.

The proposed design is of a simple, traditional cottage style form, to be constructed of traditional, local materials. The widths of the properties and the depths of the two storey parts of the proposed dwellings are of a similar dimension to the existing buildings that adjoin the site.

In terms of the amount of development the previously approved scheme for 3 larger dwellings provided 13 bedrooms on the site. This scheme for 5 smaller dwellings provides 15 bedrooms i.e. just two more on the site.

In terms of physical scale the terrace of three dwellings at the northern part of the site is taller, wider and deeper than the previously approved single dwelling previously approved, but the pair of semi-detached cottages to the southern part of the site is markedly lower and shorter in width and depth than the previously approved detached properties.

Accordingly whilst numerically the number of dwellings on the site is greater than the previously approved schemes, because each unit has a significantly smaller floor area, the amount of building mass across the site appears less than the schemes already approved.

Additionally there is more spacing around the proposed two blocks of buildings than the approved scheme for three, separate dwellings. The scheme therefore results in a design that retains more of the characteristics of the conservation area.

A single access point on Castle Cottages means that the remainder of the roadside boundary can be demarked by appropriate boundary treatment. This is shown to be a mixture of railings, walling and woven willow fencing with planting behind. Details of the landscaping scheme can be secured by way of planning condition.

The need for ten parking spaces and the appropriate amount of turning means that a significant proportion of the site would need to remain open. Hard landscaping details for the parking areas can be secured through condition if necessary.

The concerns of the Parish Council relating to the vehicular access are noted. However, the position and details of the access and the parking arrangements for the development are acceptable in highway safety terms and in accordance with policy.

The concerns of the Parish Council relating to overdevelopment are noted. However, the applicant has demonstrated that the proposed development can fit within the site with an appropriate amount of private amenity space, parking and turning areas and spacing around the buildings.

The CAAP and Conservation Officer raise no objection to the proposal, subject to planning conditions being imposed regarding materials. They also state that they prefer this scheme for five dwellings as this is a more appropriate size of house for the conservation area.

Accordingly it is considered that the proposed development adequately relates to the surrounding development and that the character of the conservation area would be preserved.

Impact on Landscape Amenity

The whole site is within the AONB. The NPPF states, nationally designated areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), have been confirmed by the Government as

having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside should therefore be given great weight in planning policies and development control decisions in these areas. Any development on this site would need to comply with these provisions.

The site is surrounded by existing development on three sides and is seen in the context of its surrounding built development. Accordingly it is not considered to have a significant impact on the amenity of the area or to the wider landscape of the AONB, and as such is considered to accord with the provision of Core Strategy CS12 and NPPF policy.

The Norfolk Coast Partnership raises no objection to this application, noting that they prefer to see smaller more affordable units.

Highways

The proposal would result in some improvement to the use of this existing access with the removal of the hedge and its replacement with a wall set back along the northern boundary. This arrangement has already been approved through the historic permissions.

The proposed scheme will result in improved visibility for all users of Castle Cottages when turning onto the A149. The scheme also proposes improvements to the footpaths along the road frontage of the application site. These benefits are a material consideration.

The previously approved scheme for 3 No. 4/5 bedroom properties required a total of 9 parking spaces to satisfy parking standards set out in Policy DM17. This current proposal for 5 No. 3 bedroom smaller properties requires 10 parking spaces i.e. just one more. The applicant has demonstrated that these can fit within the site without dominating the streetscene, with adequate turning facilities.

The Highways Authority has no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions.

Parish Council concerns regarding vehicle access are not shared by the Highways Authority. Third party concerns regarding extra traffic are noted but the Highways Authority does not raise this as an issue, particularly given the improvements to the road junction.

Residential Amenity

The relationship between the proposed dwellings and neighbouring properties has been examined and the impact upon the amenity of the occupants of these properties has been assessed. Consideration has been given to overlooking, overshadowing and whether the proposed dwellings would be overbearing.

Given the orientation of the dwellings, the spacing between them and the location of windows, it is not considered there will be a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of the existing occupants of neighbouring dwellings in terms of overlooking, being overshadowed or the proposed works being over bearing, as a result of this proposal. Similarly this opinion extends to the future occupants of the three dwellings on examining the relationship between the properties.

Third party concern regarding loss of light from boundary fencing is noted but this is some distance from the windows of adjoining properties. Additionally it is worth noting that fencing could be installed along the garden boundary up to a height of 2.0m without the need for planning permission.

Other matters

The site lies within 2km of a SSSI. The proposed development would not have a significant adverse effect on the features on which the SSSI is designated.

Third party concerns have been addressed above.

The third party supporting comments are noted.

CONCLUSION

The site is within the settlement boundary of Thornham and, as such, is in principle suitable for residential development. It is considered that the development is of appropriate design, scale and layout for the site and locality, particularly with regards the duties in relation to development within a Conservation Area.

Given that the site contains no buildings or structures, the proposal will increase the amount of built form upon it. However, the planning history approvals for three larger dwellings on the site are material considerations.

The amount of built form for five smaller dwellings appears less due to the reduction in the number of building blocks (one single terrace of three dwellings and one pair of semi-detached dwellings), which allows more spacing around the buildings to be retained. This, combined with the traditional design and use of local materials, results in a scheme of good design appropriate to the Conservation Area. The positioning of the units within the site also gives a more open aspect to the eastern part of the site.

The proposed development is an efficient use of the land and will be seen against other existing development. It is not considered to result in conflict with landscape policies to protect the special qualities of the AONB.

It is considered that having regard to neighbouring uses the proposal is acceptable in visual terms and does not cause visual harm or significant harm to neighbour amenity.

Conditionally the proposal is acceptable in highway safety terms and brings about improvements at the junction of Castle Cottages and the main A149, which is a benefit that can be given weight in the overall consideration of the application. The scheme raises no landscaping or ecology issues.

Accordingly your officers recommend that the application is approved subject to appropriate 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. D1.3-01176, Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections (Units 1-3)
 - Drawing No. D5.2-01176, Proposed Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections (Units 4 & 5)
 - Drawing No. D3.10-01107, Site & Location Plan
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition: No development shall commence on any external surface of the development until a sample panel of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building(s) and/or extension(s) hereby permitted has been erected on the site for the inspection and written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The sample panel shall measure at least 1 metre x 1 metre using the proposed materials, mortar type, bond and pointing technique. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
- 3 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 4 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.
- 4 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 5 Condition: The boundary treatment shall be completed before the occupation/use hereby permitted is commenced or before the building(s) are occupied or in accordance with a timetable to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 5 Reason: To ensure that the development is compatible with the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 6 Condition: Notwithstanding the provision of Class A of Schedule 2, Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, (or any Order revoking, amending or re-enacting that Order) no gates, bollard, chain or other means of obstruction shall be erected across the approved access unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6 Reason: In the interests of highway safety.
- 7 Condition: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted visibility splays shall be provided in full accordance with the details indicated on the approved plan. The splays shall thereafter be maintained at all times free from any obstruction exceeding 1.05 metres above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.
- 7 Reason: In the interests of highway safety.
- 8 Condition: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed access, on-site car parking / turning area shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.

- 8 Reason: To ensure the permanent availability of the parking / manoeuvring area, in the interests of highway safety.
- 9 Condition: Notwithstanding the details indicated on the submitted drawings no works shall commence on site unless otherwise agreed in writing until a detailed scheme for the off-site highway improvement works (Footway and Accesses) as indicated on the approved plans have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.
- 9 Reason: To ensure that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and to protect the environment of the local highway corridor.
- 10 Condition: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the off-site highway improvement works referred to in condition 8 shall be completed to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.
- 10 Reason: To ensure that the highway network is adequate to cater for the development proposed.
- 11 Condition: Prior to the first use or occupation of the development hereby approved, full details of both hard and soft landscape works shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include finished levels or contours, hard surface materials, refuse or other storage units, street furniture, structures and other minor artefacts. Soft landscape works shall include planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers and densities where appropriate.
- 11 Reason: To ensure that the development is properly landscaped in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 12 Condition: All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation or use of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species as those originally planted, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.
- 12 Reason: To ensure that the work is carried out within a reasonable period in accordance with the NPPF.