

PLANNING COMMITTEE
13th September 2021

**SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED SINCE THE
PUBLICATION OF THE AGENDA AND ERRATA**

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Agent: I've spoken to the applicant, and confirm that we would like to defer the application to the following Planning Committee Meeting. This will give us sufficient time to respond to the late representations submitted by the Parish Council.

Holme Parish Council:

- There have been a number of iterations of the proposals for the redevelopment of Westfield, none of which address the Parish Council's fundamental objections to the scheme.
- It is the strongly held view of the PC that the proposals are contrary to the basic objectives and key policies in the adopted Holme-next-the Sea Neighbourhood Plan as well as policies in the Local Plan, the AONB Management Plan and the NPPF. Those of particular relevance to our objections are referenced below.

Scale of development

- The house substantially exceeds the 40% limits set out in NDP Policy HNTS 16. The basis for NDP policy and this calculation is the current RICS standard for measuring buildings. The applicant's claims that components of the building (balconies, rooftop dining area etc) should be excluded from the calculation are not consistent with the standard and are incorrect (see Technical Note on floorspace measurement).
- The garden room (habitable living space) exacerbates the problem. Taken alone it is more than one-third the size of the original bungalow
- The windows are huge and those facing west (to the lane) and east (to the paddocks which form part of the village open space) are almost equal in size to the west and east facing walls of the existing bungalow (see scaled diagram below).
- The 40% size limit in HNTS 16 is not just a pedantic rule. It aims to prevent exactly the sort of implausible claims on size of replacement dwellings that are a feature of many planning applications seen by the PC. The limit is based on research which shows that proposals exceeding 40% normally introduce a range of knock-on, unwelcome impacts which are contrary to policy. This application is no exception – see the following points.

Breach of development boundary

- The consequence of trying to accommodate such a large development on the >0.25 acre plot is that it breaches the development boundary which guides the location of development in the village and protects the central open space which defines the historic form of Holme. This is contrary to HNTS 2.
- The PC can see no justification for non-compliance with this policy or indeed, for non compliance with Class E of the GPDO which applies to sites in the AONB where great weight is afforded to conservation and enhancement of landscape (NPPF para 176). In assessing the planning balance there are no material considerations which justify overriding these policies.

Impact on the street scene

- The proposals are contrary to Policy HNTS11 which requires "all development enhances local character and distinctiveness taking account of the sense of place and the AONB designation." This policy is strongly supported by the AONB Management Plan and Landscape Character Statements (see NCP objections).
- This is not a question of personal preference – it is a question of whether the design elements in the proposal reflect AONB vernacular style in line with planning policy.

- These design features introduce an urban feel to a rural location and the NDP consultations have revealed that the vast majority of the community feel they are unacceptable. The proposals take their reference from the neighbouring property. Members' are invited to make their own judgement whether this is reflective of vernacular architecture and will conserve and enhance the rural street scene of Holme in accordance with policy (CS12, DM11, HNTS11).
- Cantilevered structures of this size with flat roofs, massive windows and vertical batten wall cladding are not characteristic of North Norfolk's AONB vernacular architecture. They do not conserve and enhance AONB settlement character (NPPF 176) which, in line with recent changes to the NPPF (Para 134), the NDP style guide is designed to promote. No suggestion is made that this is not good architecture. It is simply inappropriate at this location and will damage the street scene and AONB setting.

Additional AONB impacts

- The NCP has put forward strong objections to this proposed development based on policies in the AONB Management Plan and their Character Statement. Their position is supported by the PC. AONB's have the highest level of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
- The huge east and west facing windows are designed to enjoy the benefits of views over the AONB countryside to the west and the central open space at the heart of the village. The Officer's report suggests that these windows are comparable in size and hence light spillage to the windows in the existing bungalow.
- No scale drawings of the west and east elevations of the bungalow were available at the time the Planning Committee Agenda and Information Pack was published. The PC only acquired these drawings on the afternoon of the 9th June – a few hours before the deadline for this correspondence.
- These drawings are central to judging the size of the property and the associated light pollution impacts. Photograph 3 below shows the *glazed area* of the first floor, west facing window of the proposed property superimposed on the west elevation of the bungalow.
- The proposition in the Officers report that this is acceptable because the neighbouring (reference) property to the South has large windows is untenable and if accepted would be a recipe for ongoing degradation of the AONB environment and its Dark Night Skies. National, Local and NDP policy requires conservation and enhancement of the AONB landscape not the introduction of additional light pollution and associated cumulative degradation is contrary to Policy (DM15, HNTS20, NPPF 176, NPPF 185c).
- Members are invited to draw their own conclusions on both the size of the new property and its potential for light spillage.

Impact on the local community

- The Officer's report argues that because the development is compliant with the 40% cap on size increase (according to the applicants) it can be concluded that it will not exclude first time buyers, downsizers and retirees from the housing market.
- The comments on size included above under scale of development demonstrate that the applicant's claims are factually incorrect based on the recognised building measurement standards used in the NDP. When the correct building components are included it is clear that the house fails the policy test for HNTS16.
- Even if this were not the case it is abundantly clear that the proposed dwelling (plus garden room) will not be relevant to those sections of the community that this policy is designed to protect. It will simply be beyond their reach. The proposal is not policy compliant.
- The PC has already stated that it has no objection in principle to the redevelopment of Westfield. However, the base position is that the bungalow remains as it is and no redevelopment takes place. This ensures that the property will be within the market reach of those sections of the community Policy HNTS16 is designed to help by reducing the speculative purchase of small homes for redevelopment and driving up their prices.
- The PC can see no justification for cutting across this policy and indeed three of the most basic objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan beyond the claim that this is a very well designed, high quality house.

Conclusion

- It is now accepted that Borough Wide planning policies cannot be expected to address the very specific problems of the northern coastal villages like Holme.
- The evidence shows that the traditional, modest properties that provide homes for the resident community have been systematically demolished and replaced with dwellings that are largely irrelevant to their needs. This process is cumulative and is leading to social exclusion. It is creating an unhealthy imbalance and damaging the well-being of declining resident communities.
- The NDP is trying to address this problem. The question before Members therefore is not just about whether they think *'this two storey dwelling of contemporary design in place of a modest single storey dwelling is suitable in this locality'*. Rather, it is about whether they are going to support the community's efforts to bring about change for the better. This is a much more important issue.
- The PC maintains that the proposed development is not policy compliant for the reasons set out above and those explained in previous objections. Members are respectfully urged to refuse it.
- The majority of the local community's comments support the view of the Parish Council that the proposed dwelling far exceeds the 40% limit set out in HNTS16. The Applicant's claim is based on a technical argument concerning the definition of GIA and whether or not some components of the building should or shouldn't be included in the floorspace calculation. These include – but are not restricted to – internal and external balconies, a rooftop dining area and external stairs. They argue that these elements should be excluded from the floor area calculation and that the PC has erroneously included them thereby overestimating the size of the proposed building.
- This is a basic misunderstanding which should have been resolved prior to a recommendation being reached. The PC believes that debating technical issues is not good use of valuable Planning Committee time. We have therefore prepared the following note to explain the basis for floorspace measurements underpinning NDP policy prior to the Committee Meeting.

Measurement of floorspace for the Neighbourhood Plan

The gold standard in the UK for measuring buildings is the *Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Property Measurement (2nd Edition, 2018)*. In addition to providing a rigorous, standardised approach to building measurement it is very closely aligned with the emerging International Property Management Standards (IPMS). It provides a widely accepted definition of what should and shouldn't be included in the measurement of all types of buildings. NDP policy follows this guidance and should be implemented accordingly when determining planning applications.

Table 6 of the guidance (see below) sets out the building components that should be included or excluded in the three definitions used for residential property. In this case the column headed 'IPMS 3b – Residential' applies. It is clear that garages, verandas, *enclosed walkways between buildings, internal and external balconies and accessible rooftop terraces are all included in the measurement of floorspace (highlighted green)*. Inclusion of these components in this application places it way over the 40% limit for HNTS 16 – even after excluding the substantial garden room (itself subject to HNTS17).

It should further be noted that:

- (1) 'Footprint' as referred to by the Applicant is not relevant to the measurement of GIA in the guidance.
- (2) The basis for the Applicant's calculation of the increase in floorspace includes two rear extensions to the bungalow. This is incorrect. The Policy is specifically based on the floor area of the *original dwelling*.

The PC's previous comments wrt [sic] to floorspace calculations have been generous in an effort to demonstrate the obvious – i.e. the building is huge in relation to the existing bungalow. A strict audit based on the RICS standard, including all the relevant size components in the new building and correct measurement of the original building would make this absolutely clear.

Finally, the purpose of HNTS16 must be stressed. It is to protect the dwindling number of small homes relevant to local families, downsizers and retirees in a village where the resident population is being excluded. It would be very disappointing if the policy is trivialised by an argument over floorspace and sight of its basic objectives is lost as a result.

Members need to see scaled drawings of the front and rear elevations so that they can compare the existing property with the scale drawings of the proposed redevelopment and properly consider the impacts

Applicant: The applicant has submitted existing elevation plans as requested.

Third Party: 2 additional letters of OBJECTION and 2 letters of SUPPORT have been received. Their expressed concerns can be summarised as follows:

OBJECTIONS:

- The proposal fails to accord with the requirements of the Neighbourhood Development Plan specifically regarding the scale, design, impact on neighbours, local form and character, loss of smaller affordable housing stock to significantly larger properties, light spillage and the incremental erosion of the special qualities of the AONB as a result of modern design.
- The NDP allows for a 40% increase of the GIA with reference to replacement dwellings, but requires a common sense approach. The new dwelling is significantly more than double the size of the existing; proposing a 2 bedroom bungalow be replaced with a 4 bedroom, two storey house.
- For many years, the north coast of the Borough has continuously experienced the purchase of smaller dwellings and their redevelopment for much larger and grandiose properties, well out of financial reach of local residents and those local to the area wishing to get on the housing ladder whilst staying to retire there.
- Fundamental principle of the redevelopment of the site based on the scale of the proposal and its affordability within the local context (Policy CS02, CS06, CS12 and DM3 and NPPF housing advice).
- Scale, design and materials are inappropriate and incongruous features
- The flat roof dwelling next door is the reason this should be rejected as it is conspicuous and out of character
- The NP sets out the form and materials required
- There are many good examples in the locality of local vernacular and more traditional built form
- This would be more in keeping within a town or city centre location or even isolated plot in the countryside
- It is considered by NCP and the PC that the design will detract from the open and generally rural character of the AONB and the design will result in significant light spillage in a 'dark skies' environment.
- Vegetation between the boundaries is limited and will continue to be so.
- Members are respectfully requested to note that this proposal tests a number of

principal issues: affordability of housing stock in the local area, redevelopment principles, support and weight to be attached to the NP and the views of the PC and community responsible for that plan and design principles including impact upon the AONB and the village itself.

- The neighbouring flat roofed dwelling was previously granted permission prior to the adoption of the current Local Plan and NP and the publication of the NPPF.
- The application is fundamentally against the spirit and letter of the Holme-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan which has now been approved by a referendum in which some 60% of residents voted and some 90% voted in favour.
- Substantial increase in size: The Neighbourhood Plan states the importance of preventing "the replacement of small homes with substantially larger ones". The volume of this home and outbuildings within its wrap-around cladding which defines its external size is more than double that of the existing dwelling. The applicant suggests that the footprint has only "slightly increased" whereas, including new outbuildings and overhangs, the area of the plot covered by buildings has also more than doubled.
- Increase in gross internal area: The Neighbourhood Plan limits the increase in Gross Internal Area ("GIA") of applications to 40% based on carefully defined parameters which were explicitly approved by the Council Examiner. The Application results in an increase in GIA of 150% based on these parameters and the Applicant has not challenged this calculation.
- This enlargement has been further increased in the latest iteration through the considerable increase in size of the garden room which has added another 20% extra GIA.
- Impact on neighbours: The Plan suggests that Permission should be refused for applications which are "overbearing or detrimental to the amenity of its neighbours by virtue of overlooking resulting in loss of privacy".
- The building will loom over our property in the same way that its neighbour looms over the existing bungalow. The photograph in the "Owner Response" implying that it will not do so, is deliberately taken from the far side of the garden and is not at the roof height which is the element which will loom over us.
- The rear balcony overlooks our garden from the upper floor- the fact that it does not face directly in our direction and is not open around the sides will not prevent people turning their heads towards our garden if anything interests them
- There will be light pollution over all neighbouring properties from the wall-to-wall glass windows at the front and rear of the upper floor of the new building and there will be light emanating from the sides regardless of any reduction in the gaps between the slats.
- None of the changes made in this latest iteration has created any real benefit from this perspective - indeed the transfer of the dining terrace to our side of the house will now expose us to what the Applicant admits will be noise pollution.
- This is exactly the type of development that made the Council go to the time and trouble to produce a Plan which the Council's own Examiner declared as "an exemplar approach" which "fulfils the potential of neighbourhood planning".
- The only justification that the applicant makes for the style and size of the building is the size and style of its neighbour which was approved under previous planning guidelines and is such an aberration that it drove local residents to protect themselves from a repeat by producing the Plan.

SUPPORTING COMMENTS:

- We have lived in Holme for over 30 years for 10 of these we were lucky enough to have our house as a second home - we completely loved it, Norfolk/ Holme/our house and still do.
- There have been changes in that time, mainly to the property market in this area, which as with all the coastal villages has seen the arrival of a lot of large second homes.
- Progress happens and having a Village Plan addresses some of the fears people have -It would be wonderful to have some more affordable housing and possibly something we should look at is when two cottages are made into one - as that is surely questionable.
- The houses on Peddars Way are in my opinion, a mixed bunch many of no architectural merit (I include my own although it's much improved on the original!)
- I see no reason why another contemporary house shouldn't fit in, so many of us live in houses built before more restrictive planning laws, in the 60's 70's and 80's etc- we already have an eclectic mixture.
- The bungalow in question is not attractive (my opinion) so perhaps with a sympathetic nod to the local architecture and hopefully planning doing their job, yes we may get another modern house which will be like Marmite. (love or hate)
- The current building has no architectural or local significance at all. It cannot be described as a traditional "Norfolk" style building and could have been erected anywhere in the UK. The state of the building is also "tired" so it seems perfectly reasonable to knock it down and start again.
- Some of the comments objecting to the application allude to having "affordable" properties available in the village. The fact is that the property was on the open market for 9 months before a sale was concluded and could have been purchased by anyone who wished to relocate to the village. Whether they preferred to renovate the existing bungalow or to start again should be a matter for them (within reason).
- The style of the proposed plans happens to suit our personal tastes, but we are aware that everyone is entitled to their own views which may differ from ours. The design and materials appear to be of a high quality which should enhance the neighbourhood.
- the new property will be set back from Peddars Way and sits centrally on the plot
- there is no discernible detrimental impact to us as neighbours
- there is no adverse impact on the AONB or on any biodiversity issues
- the roof height is inferior to other neighbouring properties
- We believe that everyone in our lovely village would wish to protect it for future generations to come. There is no doubt in our minds therefore that the Neighbourhood Plan is well intentioned.
- There are some strong views on the aesthetics of certain buildings in the village - and we understand why some would argue that an existing bungalow should either remain as such or be limited to a certain size based on the former footprint.
- In the spirit of openness, we have no desire for any new buildings to be erected either to the east or west of Peddars Way, so we make no apology for our own NIMBY views. However, this does not extend to preventing one of our neighbours from being able to build a two storey property on the existing housing line.
- The result of the Holme-next-the-sea Neighbourhood Plan referendum was published in the local Norfolk LINK magazine, in which the Parish Council issued "a big thank you to all of the residents and second home-owners who voted to support the Neighbourhood Plan...." Unfortunately, as second home-owners, we were unable to vote as we were informed that only people who were on the electoral roll were entitled to vote. Given that we pay council tax, this felt unfair as we would have liked to have been able to participate - and I'm sure other second home-owners would have liked to have been able to vote too.

- Whilst there is much to admire about the Neighbourhood Plan, one (possibly unforeseen) consequence is that the supply of houses in Holme will remain low. With demand currently high and likely to remain so, prices of all properties will continue to rise.
- We love the village - not least because we have wonderful neighbours at number 31. We also got on famously with Roy (the last owner of number 27). We've met the new owners on a couple of occasions and we are looking forward to them becoming our neighbours.
- Although this will be a second home for them, they intend to move to Holme full time at some stage. We have no reason to disbelieve them - but in any event, we believe they should be free to build a property to cater for their family of 4.

Assistant Director's comments:

The majority of the third party concerns raised by the additional objections, including design, neighbour amenity and policy principals, have already been considered and addressed within the Officer report. The supporting comments of third parties are noted.

The majority of the comments raised by the Parish Council have also already been addressed within the Officer's Report.

In response to the Parish Council comments with regard to fenestration and light spillage, reference is already made within the Officer's report on page 42 that 'there is already a degree of artificial light emanating from this site. The existing bungalow has large windows and a conservatory from which light spillage already occurs.' The proposed large glazed areas are recessed within the building which will reduce the degree of spillage.

Comments have been made regarding the 'affordable' nature of the dwelling. Policy HNT16 restricts the size of units, it does not specifically refer to affordability and valuation although the intention is noted.

The PC refer to the scale of the proposed outbuilding. However, the site already contains a shed and a greenhouse which will be removed as a result of this development proposal. This has already been addressed in the Officer's report on pages 45 -46. It should be noted that within an AONB current permitted development rights restrict buildings of a larger footprint sited 20m away from any wall of the dwellinghouse to 10 sqm. However, there are no restrictions on the area of ground which may be covered by buildings in the rear garden within a distance of 20m from any wall of the dwellinghouse.

In response to the Parish Council comments relating to Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA), as stated in the Officer's Report at the bottom of page 44 and the top of page 45, the LPA has used the definition of the GIFA quoted within the glossary of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

The PC state that GIFA should be calculated using the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Property Measurement document or emerging International Property Management Standards (IPMS). However, these are not standard planning policy documents and there is no reference that one or either of these documents should be used for calculations purposes within the NP or any of its supporting documents.

Your officers maintain that the calculations have been taken into consideration using the relevant planning policy and definitions contained within the documentation of the NP.

Policy HNTS16 states that 'proposals for replacement dwellings will be permitted provided that they ... do not result in a net increase of more than 40% of the Gross Internal Floor Area of the

original dwelling excluding any outbuildings.' The glossary within the NP provides a definition of 'original building' which is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

In this case planning permission was approved in June 1965 for the bungalow (ref: DG 3754 outline & DG 3770 full planning permission), which also included the garage and all but one of the rear projections (conservatory). The GIFA of the conservatory added on since originally built has been measured as 7sqm.

The conservatory is not therefore an original feature and therefore should not be included within the GIFA. As a result, the floor area calculation for the original dwelling is 142.8sq.m. The 40% increase in floor area would therefore be 199.92sq. m and given that the GIFA of the proposed dwelling amounts to 209.7 sq.m., the proposal does not comply with Policy HNTS16.

The issue has been raised with the Agent who has requested that the application be deferred to address the issue.

Given the fundamental circumstances outlined above, it is recommended that the application be **DEFERRED** to allow thorough assessment of the GIFA calculations.

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Agent: Amended Arboricultural Report submitted. Due to re-siting the dwelling in Plot 1 the Cedar tree is now to be removed and additional tree planting is proposed in mitigation.

Arboricultural Officer: No objections, condition in accordance with the report and plans authored by Dan Yeomans.

Amended Condition:

As a result of the submission of the amended tree report condition 9 of the Planning Committee report should be amended as follows.

9 Condition: The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Tree Protection Scheme (Addendum to Kairoan Pentney) by Dan Yeomans Tree Work and Surveys Ltd and received by the Local Planning Authority on 9th September 2021.

9 Reason: To ensure that existing trees and hedgerows are properly protected and the development landscaped in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with the NPPF.