

Parish:	Heacham Hunstanton	
Proposal:	Mixed Use Pied-a-Tier holiday accommodation with an integral Coastwatch and Coastguard observatory tower with monitoring station	
Location:	64 North Beach Heacham Norfolk PE36 5BA	
Applicant:	David Taylor Associates	
Case No:	22/01400/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Lucy Smith	Date for Determination: 27 October 2022

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called in by Cllr Dark and Cllr Parish

Neighbourhood Plan: Yes

Case Summary

The application seeks consent for the construction of a mixed use holiday accommodation with an integral Coastwatch/Coastguard Observatory tower at a site known as 64 North Beach Heacham. The site is within Flood Zones 3a and 3b of the Borough Council's SFRA (2018) and within the Coastal Hazard Zone outlined within the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016) and is therefore at significant risk of flooding.

Whilst in close proximity to South Beach Road at Hunstanton, the application site is within the parish of Heacham and the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan Policies therefore apply.

Key Issues

- Principle of Development
- Form and Character
- Flood Risk
- Highway Safety
- Neighbour Amenity
- Other Material Considerations

Recommendation

REFUSE

THE APPLICATION

The application seeks consent for the construction of a mixed-use holiday accommodation with an integral Coastwatch/Coastguard Observatory tower at a site known as 64 North Beach, Heacham. The site is wholly within the Coastal Hazard Zone outlined within the Borough Council's SFRA (2018) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016) and is therefore at significant risk of flooding.

Whilst in close proximity to South Beach Road at Hunstanton, the application site is within the Parish of Heacham and the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan Policies therefore apply.

A four-storey building is proposed, including the undercroft raised floor levels at ground level. The building has been designed in a contemporary style with areas of sedum/mixed planted roof, significant expanses of glazing and a combination of hardie plank cement boards and zinc cladding.

The coastal watch tower and open viewing terrace is on the top floor, accessed via a separate staircase. At the first and second floors, the residential accommodation consists of an open plan kitchen & dining space, utility room, large wrap around balcony, at upper ground floor, and two/three bedrooms and an additional balcony above.

SUPPORTING CASE

The Agent was given the opportunity to provide a condensed supporting statement for inclusion in this report however none has been provided.

PLANNING HISTORY

19/01029/F: Application Refused: 06/08/19 - Use of the land as a garden and retention of associated shed - 64 North Beach
Heacham

19/00393/F: Application Withdrawn: 17/05/19 - Use of the land for the parking of a motorhome only in the period 1st April to 30th September each year, retention of timber shed and hard surfacing to ramp - 64 North Beach

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Heacham Parish Council: OBJECTION with the following comments:

'Heacham Parish Council objects to this planning application on the basis that the description of a mixed use Pied-a-Tier Holiday home is:- A pied-a-terre (plural: pieds-a-terre; French for "foot on the ground") is a small living unit, e.g. apartment or condominium, usually located in a large city some distance away from an individual's primary residence.

Kevin Kent, District Emergency Planning Officer, in his email of 12th Sept 2022 at 13:14, mentions DM18 but DOES NOT mention the Heacham Neighbourhood plan policy 4 PRINCIPAL HOMES, this is going to be a second or holiday home and against the principles laid down in the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan.

It was Hunstanton Town Council who have replied support, probably because of the Tower. Even though they say it is a coastguard tower the Pied-a-terre is basically a second/holiday home.

It would be good to have a coastguard station on this part of The Wash, but not a second dwelling.

We object to the plan as presented but would not object to a Coastguard tower with toilets and kitchen facility for the coastguards, similar to but cannot recall whether it was Mundesley or Cromer'

Hunstanton Parish Council: SUPPORT - stating that they have considered flood risk

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION: in relation to highways issues only, as this proposal is remote from the adopted public highway, does not affect the current traffic patterns or the free flow of traffic, Norfolk County Council does not wish to restrict the grant of consent.

Environment Agency: OBJECT with the following comments:

'We have reviewed the information as submitted and we object to the grant of planning permission and recommend refusal on this basis for the following reasons:

The site is situated within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) in our Flood Map for Planning and falls within Flood Zone Category 3 and the Coastal Hazard Zone of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The proposals are contrary to Policy DM18 as the proposed site for the new dwelling is located within the Coastal Flood Risk Hazard Zone. The Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Plan, Policy DM18 states the following:

"The following developments will not be permitted within Tidal Flood Zone 3 (including climate change) as designated on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Maps:

- New dwellings;
- New or additional park homes/caravans."

The FRA (FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT - 01/09/2022) identifies the site as being within the Coastal Flood Risk Hazard Zone therefore it is clear contradiction of the SADMP policy.

The proposals would increase the amount of people and property at risk therefore we object on these grounds.

We do however acknowledge the benefits of a coastguard monitoring station and would have no objection in principle to the proposal of this structure if it was submitted without the associated new dwelling'

Emergency Planner: OBJECT with the following comments:

'I would object as it is contrary to the Site Allocations & Development Management Policies Plan section DM18 - Coastal Flood Risk

Hazard Zone (Hunstanton to Dersingham). This states that:

New Developments

The following developments will not be permitted within Tidal Flood Zone 3 (including climate change) as designated on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Maps:

New dwellings;

New or additional park homes/caravans'

Further to additional comments received by the Agent, the Emergency Planner responded as follows:

'The development is predominately a new residential accommodation in an area that is covered by a policy (DM18) that seeks to resist additional development which would increase the number of people at risk from flooding.

Moving onto its additional use. On its own, I would not object to this as flood evacuation for those carrying out this role have been addressed and the submitted flood evacuation plan is fit for purpose for this activity.

There are various technical aspects of its use as coast watch observation site which I would suggest could be clarified:

- There appears to be no external marine band antennas visible on the drawings. The handheld coverage of the intended frequencies would be limited so I would expect external antennas and a fixed set to be used.
- Observation sight lines from the tower should perhaps be considered- the coast is curved in various places in that location and the intended coverage of the beaches as indicated in the application may not work as intended. There maybe other more suitably located sites in the area.
- Access to the site from the byway seems quite restricted and there only appears space for one vehicle on the layout using this facility.'

PROW: NO OBJECTION

'We have no objection in principle to the application but would highlight that access to the site is via a Public Right of Way, known as Heacham Byway Open to All Traffic 3 and Footpath 1 is in the vicinity. There is no responsibility upon the Highway Authority to maintain the route of BOAT3 to facilitate private vehicular access. It would be expected that any damage caused to this Public Right of Way by the exercise of the private rights remains with the private rights holders to repair.

The full legal extents of these PROW must remain open and accessible for the duration of the development and subsequent occupation'

Natural England: NO OBJECTION Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites.

Environmental Health & Housing - Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION No potential sources of contamination are identified in our records, or in the information provided by the applicant.

REPRESENTATIONS

HM Coastguard Provided letter in support of watchtower, stating the following comments (summarised):

'The idea that a station might be possible at Hunstanton would certainly be looked upon favourably by me and my team here who cover that geographical area'

National Coastwatch Provided letter in support of watchtower, stating the following comments (summarised):

'Currently the operational surveillance in the Wash area is shared between Skegness and the new station at Brancaster. Neither is able to see into the Wash or along the Hunstanton/Heacham coastal strip and this leaves a gap for surveillance. The area encounters an exceptional number of RNLI and HMCG call outs and experience shows that having a well-equipped NCI station in a high incident location can, by early intervention, substantially reduce blue light call outs and risk.

It would not be possible in the short/medium term for NCI to establish a new facility along the Hunstanton/Heacham shoreline, due to the lack of appropriate sites and coupled with the current economic difficulties experienced by charities nationwide. Consequently, NCI is truly grateful to this public spirited benefactor with a social responsibility for the opportunity to create a state of the art facility, in a perfect location and at a substantial saving to the charity.'

Cllr Gidney: SUPPORT stating comments surrounding the safety benefits of the watch tower. The holiday home enables the look out to come forward.

ELEVEN letters of **SUPPORT**, summarised as follows:

- Opportunity to provide a needed lookout facility for Coastal Watch and the Coastguards free of charge
- Dwelling has been designed with consideration to flood risk
- Good/attractive design
- Improve current appearance of site
- Need for more holiday accommodation
- Flood warning systems have improved over time

FOUR letters of **OBJECTION**

- Closure of previous 'right of way'
- Request that Anglian Water are consulted as a result of potential impacts on Anglian Water assets
- Queries as to whether proposed tower is in most suitable location, beach in view from the tower is less used than elsewhere
- Tower could be built and not used or ultimately converted to further accommodation
- Overshadow existing properties
- Noise and disruption during construction
- Planning policy set to prevent increased people and property at risk
- EA flood warning information shows significant higher numbers of tides exceeding 4.1m AOD and spread more throughout the year
- Not just direct risk from flooding, but impacts of debris from other buildings impacted by tidal surge
- Unattractive proposed additional 1.2m flood barrier
- Highway safety due to position of access and hill

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS07 - Development in Coastal Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS12 - Environmental Assets

CS13 - Community and Culture

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM18 – Coastal Flood Risk Hazard Zone (Hunstanton to Dersingham)

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Policy 1: Small Scale *(windfall and infill) development

Policy 4: Principal Residence Requirement

Policy 5: Design Principles

Policy 8: New Business Developments Combining Living and Modest Employment

Policy 9: Holiday Accommodation

Policy 15: Settlement Breaks

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide 2019

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations are:

Principle of Development

Form and Character

Flood Risk

Highway Safety

Neighbour Amenity

Other Material Considerations

Principle of Development

The application proposes the construction of a 'Pied-a-terre' holiday home with a coastguard watch tower at North Beach Heacham.

The site comprises open land to the north of dwellings along North Beach, Heacham, immediately adjacent to the main built extent of Hunstanton. The site forms a currently open gap between these two settlements and is wholly within the Coastal Hazard Zone outlined on the policies map within the SADMPP.

The site is outside of the development boundary for Heacham shown on Inset map G47 of the SADMPP (2016), which excludes all development around North Beach and South Beach. The creation of a new dwelling on site is therefore contrary to Policy DM2 of the SADMPP (2016).

In relation to Policy DM11, 'Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites' the policy specifically resists applications for development within the Coastal Hazard Zone. The proposal therefore also fails to comply with this policy.

The Agent's primary argument in support of the principle of the application relates to the consideration that the building proposed does not meet the definition of a dwelling and therefore certain policies of the development plan do not apply.

Case Law commonly maintains that the distinctive characteristic of a 'dwellinghouse' is its ability to afford those who use it the facilities required for day-to-day private domestic existence. Within *Gravesham BC v SSE & O'Brien* [1984], the Inspector observed that the fact that a second home is not lived in all year does not prevent it from being a dwellinghouse.

The flood risk policies relating to new residential units therefore apply in this instance, regardless of whether the application is described as a dwelling or as a holiday home or 'pied-a-terre'.

The potential benefits of a coastguard watch tower is acknowledged and the comments from the HM Coastguard and the National Coastwatch are noted. Letters from both parties reference the benefits a watch tower may provide for Hunstanton, however do not justify or evidence an operational need or necessity. The principle of the construction of a watch tower along the coast is acceptable based on community facility policies and encouraging tourism (CS08, CS10 and DM9), however this application must be assessed with reference to the proposed residential unit.

The management and maintenance/availability of the coastguard tower would also need to be secured in perpetuity, and no mechanism has been put forward for this. There is therefore no guarantee that the observatory would come forward or be made available for community benefit alongside the creation of the holiday let/dwelling and this has an impact on balancing the harm vs the benefit of the proposal as a whole.

The application site is within Flood Zone 2, 3a and 3b of the Borough Council's SFRA (2018) and is within the Coastal Hazard Zone. Policy DM18 sets out the requirements for development in the Coastal Hazard Zone.

Policy DM18

The importance of protecting risk to life as a result of flooding is clarified within Policy DM18 of the SADMPP (2016) which is also referred to within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy DM18 states: 'The following developments will not be permitted within Tidal Flood Zone 3 (including climate change) as designated on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Maps:

- New dwellings;
- New or additional park homes/caravans.'

The policy later states the following in relation to changes of use:

'Any proposed Change of Use will not be permitted if, as a result of the change, the flood risk vulnerability (as defined in the National Planning Practice Guidance) would be increased.'

Whilst the holiday accommodation proposed would have an occupancy restriction and could be constructed with flood resilience and resistance measures in place, these factors do not entirely overcome the risk of flooding as required within the NPPF (2021) and the development plan. Irrespective of the occupancy restrictions, the creation of a new unit of residential accommodation is contrary to Policy DM18 of the SADMPP (2016). This policy position has been consistently upheld at appeal (LPA references 18/00414/UNAUTU, 19/00209/UNAUTU, 21/01529/F).

This section of the coastline is considered to be at very high risk of tidal flooding with only a one in 50 year (2% annual probability) standard of protection. The required standard of protection from tidal flood risk, as stipulated in the National Planning Practice Guidance is one in 200 years (0.5% annual probability).

The Wash Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) identified uncertainties over the future management of the flood defences between Hunstanton and Wolferton Creek (west of Dersingham) beyond 2025 – Heacham, and this application site falls within this stretch of coastline. The unpredictability of flood defences in the future suggests that new dwellings proposed in this position cannot be deemed safe for their lifetime.

This section of the coastline is considered to be at very high risk of tidal flooding with only a one in 50 year (2% annual probability) standard of protection. The required standard of protection from tidal flood risk, as stipulated in the National Planning Practice Guidance is one in 200 years (0.5% annual probability).

Section 14, para 155 of the NPPF clearly states that 'Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future).

The creation of a new residential unit would lead to an increase in people and property at risk in the event of a flood. The occupancy restrictions or structural elements proposed do not outweigh this risk and there are no wider benefits to the community that would make this development appropriate in the Coastal Hazard Zone. The application is contrary to Policy DM18 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan.

Heacham Neighbourhood Plan

Policy 1 of the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) refers to infill development within the development boundary for Heacham being supported. As noted above, the application site is outside of the Development Boundary and the application therefore conflicts with Policy 1 of the NP.

Policy 4 of the NP is the principal residence requirement policy, which states that due to the impact upon the local housing market of the continued growth of dwellings used for holiday accommodation (as second or holiday homes) new open market housing, excluding replacement dwellings, will only be supported where there is a restriction to ensure its occupancy as a Principal Residence. The applicant does not intend to occupy the dwelling as their principal residence.

Policy 5 requires development to deliver high quality design, making reference to development recognising and reinforcing the character of local areas in relation to height, scale, spacing and materials. The proposed development is equivalent to 4 storeys in height,

including the undercroft storage area at ground level. Whilst it is accepted that by nature, a watch tower would exceed the typical height of surrounding dwellings, the overall bulk of the proposed dwelling, including significant raised balcony/terrace spaces, is at odds with the mixed character of the street scene.

Policy 8 of the NP is not considered to apply in this instance, as the residential accommodation proposed will not be occupied directly in association with the coastguard watch tower (in regards to a business tied dwelling or similar).

The application site is outside of the 'existing tourist sites' map outlined in the NP. Policy 9 sets out criteria which new holiday accommodation must comply with. The policy states that new holiday accommodation beyond existing defined holiday areas will only be supported where the proposals:

- '1. Maintain the distinction between the contrasting holiday centres of Heacham and Hunstanton and do not diminish the physical separation between these centres; and
2. Do not have any unacceptable impact on local infrastructure, including green infrastructure; and
3. Minimise any visual and physical impact on the village by including, where appropriate, a landscaping plan incorporating the use of landform, native trees and locally appropriate planting; and
4. Are not directly adjacent to any residential areas; and
5. Do not need to be accessed through the village centre of Heacham; and
6. Incorporates high quality accommodation for which adequate parking and servicing arrangements are provided; and
7. Can demonstrate a link to wider tourism or land use initiatives that provide demonstrable benefits to the local area.'

Considering the wording of this policy, proposals must comply with each element in order to be supported by the NP.

The proposal site forms a current open and undeveloped gap between dwellings at North Beach and the south extent of Hunstanton. The LPA consider that the infilling of this gap will fail to maintain this physical separation between the settlements, consolidating the built form of the immediate vicinity. The LPA also do not consider that the scale of the proposal minimises any visual impact, neither does it incorporate sufficiently high-quality accommodation. The proposal is immediately adjacent to residential properties at North Beach.

Policy 15 of the NP further reinforces the need for development to not detract from the visual separation of Heacham and Hunstanton.

Overall, the principle of development is considered contrary to the overarching aims of the NPPF (2021), Policies CS01, CS02, CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM1, DM2, DM11, DM15 and DM18 of the SADMPP (2016) and Policies 1, 4, 5, 9 and 15 of the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan.

Whilst the construction of an independent coastwatch tower may be considered acceptable in the event an application were submitted, this application proposes a residential use outside of the development boundary and in an area where development of this nature is heavily restricted by reason of flood risk.

The application site also fails to comply with the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan, with the Applicant not intending to occupy the dwelling as a Principal Residence and by reason of the site's design and position, in a current gap between Heacham and Hunstanton.

Form and Character

The application site currently comprises a small gap between Heacham and Hunstanton, whilst individually the amenity provided by the open site is limited, the spacing it provides preserves the separation between the settlements of Heacham and Hunstanton, which is protected by Policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A four-storey building is proposed, including the undercroft raised floor levels at ground level. The building has been designed in a contemporary style with areas of sedum/mixed planted roof, significant expanses of glazing and a combination of hardie plank cement boards and zinc cladding.

The coastal watch tower and open viewing terrace is on the top floor, accessed via a separate staircase. At the first and second floors, the residential accommodation consists of an open plan kitchen & dining space, utility room, large wrap around balcony, at upper ground floor, and two/three bedrooms and an additional balcony above.

The character of this part of North Beach is mixed, with a range of materials and dwelling styles, including a mix of character however there is a degree of consistency when it comes to the scale and overall height of dwellings. The dwellings immediately to the south of the site are 2.5 storeys, including storage/non-habitable rooms at ground floor.

To the north, the dwellings closest to the site along South Beach Road, Hunstanton are on significantly lower land and are not experienced in the same way or in relation to the same setting. The site's prominent position on the top of the hill, combined with the increased scale of the proposed results in the design having a significant impact on the locality.

The contemporary nature of the design, including elements of zinc cladding, hardie plank boarding and large expanses glazing, combined with the scale of the building results in a building that will not integrate comfortably into the wider street scene and is considered contrary to Policy 130 of the NPPF (2021), Policy CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011) and Policy DM15 of the SADMPP (2016).

Flood Risk

In line with the NPPF (2021) applications in areas of flood risk must pass the sequential and exceptions tests.

The application site, as discussed above is within Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b and within the Coastal Hazard Zone. Whilst a coastguard tower is considered water-compatible development as per annex 3 of the NPPF, as a residential use is included, the development must be considered as a whole and is therefore more vulnerable.

Whilst the FRA submitted as part of this application states that due to the historic presence of a dwelling on site, the sequential test is not required, the LPA disagrees with this statement. In relation to a previous use, the agent has provided photos of a dwelling on site in the 1970s, the FRA states that this timber framed bungalow was destroyed as a result of severe damage during the 1978 flood. It is clear that no dwelling currently exists on site and that any residential use has been abandoned as a result of demolition and the passage of time. There is no extant fall-back position which would allow a residential use on site.

The LPA therefore considers that the sequential test is required, as the development of a residential unit and coastguard tower on site would increase the flood risk vulnerability of the site.

Limited information has been provided as part of this application to determine why alternative sites at a lower risk of flooding could not accommodate the proposed development. No information has been provided to ascertain why this site is the most appropriate location for the coastguard tower and without evidence to demonstrate why alternative areas which are not within the Coastal Hazard Zone are not suitable for the residential element of the development, the LPA cannot determine the sequential test to be passed.

In relation to the exceptions test, the FRA submitted as part of this application outlines resistance and resilience measures however as the site is within the Coastal Hazard Zone, the proposal would continue to put people and property at risk. With no mechanism to control the management and use of the Coastguard tower by the applicant, the LPA do not consider that the un-securable community benefit of the coast watch tower would outweigh the risk to people and property as a result of the new residential unit on site.

The application is therefore considered contrary to Paragraphs 159-165 of the NPPF (2021) and Policy CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011).

Highway Safety

North Beach coincides with Heacham Byway Open to All Traffic 3 however is not an adopted road and is not maintained by the Local Highway Authority who state no objections to the proposal. Whilst the construction of a new residential unit and coastguard tower will lead to net increase in traffic, considering the existing levels of traffic and properties served by North Beach, the proposed development is unlikely to lead to any adverse impact on highway safety of users.

The Public Rights of Way officer raises no objection to the proposed plans.

Parking and turning areas are provided in separate areas for the residential use and the coastguard tower. Hard landscaping details could be conditioned as part of any approval.

The application therefore complies with policies CS08 and CS11 of the Core Strategy (2011) and policy DM15 of the SADMPP (2016) in regard to highway safety and access.

Neighbour Amenity

An un-observed window is proposed on the third floor, facing south towards the existing residential dwelling No. 63 North Beach. Remaining windows on this elevation are obscure glazed. The unobserved window serves the staircase as well as adjoining second lounge/third bedroom. Whilst this window will provide a viewpoint towards neighbouring dwellings and their private amenity spaces, given the site topography and surrounding site characteristics and layout, the proposed window is not considered likely to lead to significant impacts on the amenity of this dwelling.

Comments were received relating to overbearing/overshadowing. Given the orientation of surrounding dwellings, no significant overbearing or overshadowing impacts are considered likely as a result of the proposal.

The application therefore complies with the NPPF (2021), Policy CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011) and policy dM15 of the SADMPP (2016) in regard to impact on neighbours.

Other Material Considerations

Previous Use - The agent has provided photos of a dwelling on site in the 1970s. It is clear that no dwelling currently exists on site and that any residential use has been abandoned as a result of demolition and the passage of time. There is no extant fall-back position which would allow a residential use on site.

Response to Representations – Neighbour comments refer to the closure of a 'public right of way' on site which previously provided access to the beach. There is no record of a formal right of way on site. Notwithstanding the length of time the access was used, the LPA has no power to require an application to reopen an unofficial right of way. The PROW team at Norfolk County Council raise no objection to the proposal.

A neighbour comment also requested Anglian Water were consulted as a result of potential impacts on Anglian water assets near the site. The application is below the threshold that Anglian Water provides comments on. Any impact on potential assets underground must be considered by the applicant and agent prior to commencement.

Neighbour comments also referred to noise and disturbance during construction. These comments are noted however given the scale of the application any noise is likely to be short-term only. It is not considered necessary to impose restrictive construction hours/times conditions.

Ecology and Protected Sites Natural England raise no objection to the proposal, stating no impacts on protected sites are likely. The proposed development site is currently vacant land and is not considered to meet the requirements for protected species surveys outlined in the PPG. The development is considered to comply with Policies CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2011).

Crime and Disorder There are no known crime and disorder impacts.

CONCLUSION

The application seeks consent for the creation of a 'pied-a-terre' holiday home outside of the development boundary for Heacham and on land considered to comprise an important gap between the settlements of Heacham and Hunstanton. The construction of a Coastguard Watch tower is also proposed.

No operational need has been established which would require a dwelling in association with the watchtower. Applications for new dwellings in the Coastal Hazard Zone are consistently refused and upheld on appeal.

The development proposes new residential accommodation in an area that is in flood zones 2, 3a and 3b and is covered by Policy DM18 that seeks to resist any development which would increase the number of people at risk from flooding.

Policy DM18 of the SADMPP (2016) recognises the significant risk to life associated with development in the Coastal Hazard Zone, which has a significantly higher risk of flooding than elsewhere in the Borough.

The proposed development is not considered to pose any public benefit to an extent that would warrant approval of an application where additional lives and properties would be at risk in a flood event. A watchtower/observatory could be considered acceptable subject to policy, however there is no need for a residential element alongside it.

As a result of the site's position outside of the development boundary and within the Coastal Hazard Zone, the application is considered contrary to the overarching aims of the NPPF (2021), policies DM2, DM11 and DM18 of the SADMPP (2016) and Policies 1 & 4 of the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan. The site's design and position also erodes the spacing between the settlements of Heacham and Hunstanton, contrary to Policies 9 and 15 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE for the following reason(s):

- 1 The proposal includes the creation of a new residential unit within the Coastal Hazard Zone as identified within Policy DM18 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016). The creation of new residential accommodation, irrespective of the flood resilience and resistance measures put in place would increase the number of people and properties at risk during a flood event. The application is therefore considered contrary to paragraphs 159-167 of the NPPF (2021), Policy CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM11 and DM18 of the SADMPP (2016).
- 2 The proposal includes the creation of a new residential unit on land which is outside of both the development boundary and the tourist site areas within the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan. The principle of the construction of a dwelling on site, irrespective of whether the proposal is for short stay accommodation or more permanent use is contrary to the provisions of the development plan. The creation of a new residential unit in this position is contrary to the overarching aims of the NPPF (2021), Policy CS02 and CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011), Policy DM2 of the SADMPP (2016) and Policies 1 and 4 of the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3 The proposal site forms a current open and undeveloped gap between dwellings at North Beach and the south extent of Hunstanton. The infilling of this gap will fail to maintain this physical separation between the settlements, consolidating the built form of the immediate vicinity. The proposal would infill a current open gap between the settlements of Heacham and Hunstanton, contrary to Policies 9 and 15 of the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan.