

Parish:	Thornham	
Proposal:	Construction of new holiday let and car park to serve holiday lets	
Location:	Land To The East of West End Cottages High Street Thornham Norfolk	
Applicant:	J Thompson	
Case No:	24/01121/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Lucy Smith	Date for Determination: 27 August 2024 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 8 November 2024

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Referred by Sifting Panel as the officer recommendation is at odds with the views of the Parish Council.

Neighbourhood Plan: Yes

Case Summary

The application seeks full planning consent for the construction of a one-bedroom holiday let on land to the east of West End Cottages, Thornham. The application site currently comprises an area of cleared land/hardstanding with parking bays provided immediately adjacent to High Street which serve the existing terrace of dwellings known as West End Cottages.

The application site is within the Thornham Conservation Area boundary and West End Cottages (within red line) are marked as important unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area Character Statement.

Key Issues

- Principle of development
- Form and character
- Impact on neighbour amenity
- Highway safety
- Other material considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The application seeks full planning consent for the construction of a one-bedroom holiday let on land to the east of West End Cottages, Thornham. The application site currently comprises an area of cleared land/hardstanding with parking bays provided immediately adjacent to High Street which serve the existing terrace of dwellings known as West End Cottages.

The application site is within the Thornham Conservation Area boundary and West End Cottages (within blue land) are marked as important unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area Character Statement.

West End Cottages is a terrace of four dwellings positioned with gable end facing High Street. The application site comprises an area of bare earth/hardstanding, split east-west by close boarded fencing and with a mix of other boundary treatments (trellis topped, hit and miss boarding, wicker weave etc.) along boundaries. The area was historically used as residential land associated with the dwellings at West End Cottages however in recent years vegetation has been cleared and the use of the site as garden land has ceased. The terrace of dwellings maintain individual garden spaces on the other side of the properties, to the west.

The building is proposed with a ridge height of 4.6m and eaves height at approximately 2.7m. The land levels on site, which decrease by around 0.5m from the road edge into the site would further reduce the impact of the building when viewed from the road.

The single store building would be constructed in brick with areas of chalk and flint as well as a small section of timber cladding between windows on the front elevation. Traditional clay pantiles are proposed on the roof, with inset roof lights on both roof slopes.

The holiday let would provide one double bedroom, with a kitchen/lounge/diner and en-suite, positioned along the east boundary of the site approximately 15m from the east elevation of West End Cottages. A parking court, providing a total of 6 spaces is proposed within the site, alongside space for bin storage and will serve all units.

Hedges are proposed to form the front (south) boundary as well as to soften the edges of the parking areas and provide definition to retained/proposed amenity spaces and garden areas.

Surrounding buildings are mixed in age and character, with the large, detached dwellings immediately north providing a significant contrast compared to modest character and traditional proportions of the donor dwellings known as West End Cottages.

SUPPORTING CASE

None received at time of writing.

PLANNING HISTORY

21/00157/F: Application Withdrawn: 15/04/21 - Proposed construction of a dwelling with associated parking and rearrangement of existing parking - East of West End Cottages

20/00110/O: Application Refused: 02/04/20 - Proposed construction of duplex apartment with associated parking - West Hatch Cottage

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07/01356/F: Application Refused: 23/08/07 - Two Storey extension to dwelling - 4 West End Cottages

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT to the application on the grounds of overdevelopment and overcrowding. The car parking area is also inadequate. This is contrary to the neighbourhood plan policy H1.

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION, recommending conditions, with the following summarised comments:

- The proposal revises the current parking arrangement to facilitate turning and re-entry to the public highway in a forward gear, which is beneficial to all users, however visibility remains below the current guidance.
- Whilst there is an increased use attributable to the new dwelling, the removal of reversing onto the public highway at this location would be considered to weigh in favour of approval, allowing all cars to turn within the site.

Environmental Health & Housing - Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION regarding contaminated land

Conservation Officer: Provided comments in **SUPPORT** of the application, recommended materials and joinery detail conditions are appended to any consent. The comments can be summarised as follows:

- West End Cottages are an important part of the street scene and are non-designated heritage assets.
- The scale, design and materials proposed for this scheme are all appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the area, and could feasibly be interpreted as a row of outbuildings, serving the cottages.
- Design would benefit from being repositioned immediately adjacent to the roadside to completely reflect the plan form of the village.

REPRESENTATIONS

ONE Letter of **SUPPORT** comments summarised as follows:

- High quality design and improvement to this part of the Conservation Area
- Improved parking provision (and thus highway safety)

ONE letter of **OBJECTION** comments summarised as follows:

- Further noise and traffic to this part of the village which has grown rapidly in recent years
- On-street parking causes traffic hazards
- Noise impacts during construction

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LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS10 - The Economy

CS11 - Transport

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM11 – Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM19 - Green Infrastructure/Habitats Monitoring & Mitigation

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Policy HA1 Development Affecting the Conservation Area

Policy HA2 Unlisted buildings and features of historic interest

Policy D1: Design principles for new development

Policy H1: Housing development within the development boundary

Policy EMP1: Existing and new businesses

Policy EMP4: Tourism Related Development

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide 2021

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations are:

- Principle of development
- Form and character
- Impact on neighbour amenity
- Highway safety
- Flood risk
- Other material considerations

Principle of Development:

The application site comprises an area of residential curtilages belonging to the row of terraced dwellings known as West End Cottages and is surrounded on all sides by residential development of various designs.

The application site is wholly within the development boundary for Thornham which is categorised as a Rural Village within the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy (2011).

Holiday accommodation within existing settlements is controlled by Policy DM11 of the SADMPP (2016) which supports proposals for new holiday accommodation where they can demonstrate:

- A suitable business plan demonstrating how the site will be managed and how it will support tourism or tourist related uses in the area;
- A high standard of design in terms of layout, screening and landscaping ensuring minimal adverse impact on visual amenity and the historical and natural environmental qualities of the surrounding landscape and surroundings;
- The site can be safely accessed.
- It is in accordance with national policies on flood risk & is not within the Coastal Hazard Zone indicated on the Policies Map, or within areas identified as tidal defence breach Hazard Zone

The application site is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore in a suitable location in regards to flood risk policies.

Policy DM11 goes on to state that small scale proposals for holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (*Note: AONBs are now known as National Landscapes*) unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not negatively impact on the landscape setting and scenic beauty of the AONB or on the landscape setting of the AONB if outside the designated area. Proposals for uses adversely affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or European Sites will be refused permission.

A detailed business plan has been submitted in support of the application which details how the site will operate alongside existing holiday lets at West End Cottages and would provide tourists small-scale accommodation in proximity to the Norfolk Coast and its wildlife and historical sites as well as in easy access to Hunstanton, Kings Lynn and Fakenham.

Access has been detailed and has been agreed by the Local Highway Authority, discussed in additional detail below. The GIRAMS fee has been paid upon submission of this application and the proposal would not be considered likely to lead to significant adverse impacts on the Norfolk coast RAMSAR/SAC/SPA/SSSIs which are in proximity to the site. This is in line with Policy EMP 4 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan.

Thornham Neighbourhood Plan does not have a principal residence policy or similar, and the policies are silent on principle of holiday let accommodation. It is evident that there is potentially some economic benefit would comply with Policy EMP 1 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan as well as policies CS08 and CS10 of the Core Strategy (2011).

The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable and complies with Policies CS01, CS02, CS08 and DM11 of the Local Plan. Full consideration of the design of the proposal and impacts on the form and character of the area including the Conservation Area and National Landscape takes place in the section below.

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Conditions are recommended to ensure that the holiday let is held in association with the existing cottages & that the parking areas are made available for the use of the group of dwellings and at no point separated.

Form and Character:

The application site is within the Thornham Conservation Area and the Norfolk Coast National Landscape. The existing cottages are considered to be non-designated heritage assets/important unlisted buildings and the plaque on the West End cottages is specifically listed as an undesignated heritage asset in Policy HA2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Thornham Parish Council objected to the application, considering that the proposal represents overdevelopment and overcrowding of the site which is at odds with Policy H1 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan. Policy H1 of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out that proposals for residential infill development will be supported where, amongst other things 'The proposed development is of a scale, density, layout and design that is compatible with the character and appearance of the part of Thornham in which it would be located and does not result in a cramped or urbanised form of development;'

Thornham Conservation Area Character Statement discusses the alignment of High Street which changes frequently along its length. The change in orientation of buildings and walls along High Street and gives the space between buildings a sense of enclosure & a somewhat urban quality when compared to the village's intensely rural surroundings. The continuity of the street scene and roadside frontages is maintained through use of linking walls and the use of a limited palette of local building materials.

The proposal includes the positioning of the building with gable end fronting the roadside. The proportions and style of the building give the impression of an ancillary outbuilding which accords with the tight-knit grain of development in Thornham discussed above. Furthermore, there is a benefit provided to the street scene as a result of the rearrangement of the existing parking area as part of the proposal. The immediate front boundary would be softened by the planting of a hedgerow to define visibility splays, and this would shield the view of parked vehicles which is of some benefit to the street scene compared to the harsh appearance of the existing site conditions.

There are various examples of traditional properties within Thornham which have smaller gardens & which are often perpendicular to the highway. There are further examples of buildings set around more intimate courtyard spaces. The provision of a new building in this position is not therefore considered to lead to any significant divergence away from the traditional layout, spacing or character of this part of Thornham.

The Conservation Officer supported the application, stating that the scale, design, and materials proposed for this scheme are all appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the area, and could feasibly be interpreted as a row of outbuildings, serving the cottages. Whilst comments regarding relocating the plot to be immediately adjacent to the roadside edge are noted, this would impact on visibility splays and is not therefore feasible.

Conditions are recommended to ensure that sample panels of the proposed stonework are provided prior to external materials being constructed on site. Conditions are also recommended to ensure that full details of proposed hard and soft landscaping to ensure that boundary treatments and hard surfacing details are appropriate for the locality.

Overall, whilst comments from the Parish Council are noted, given the existing density and grain of development across the High Street in Thornham, the proposal is not considered to constitute overdevelopment of the site and is considered to comply with the NPPF (2023), Policies Cs08, Cs12 and DM15 of the Core Strategy (2011) and Policies H1, D1, EMP 4, HA1 and HA2 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity:

The application proposes the construction of a single storey building adjacent to the access track/driveway serving a dwelling known as West Hatch. Given the single storey nature of the proposal, no significant impacts in regard to overbearing, overshadowing, or overlooking of this dwelling are likely. The angles involved between the proposal and this adjoining dwelling (north) are such that any privacy impacts are unlikely, and existing close boarded fencing along this shared boundary would further mitigate any impacts.

Distances between the proposed holiday let and the dwellings are approximately 15 metres which is sufficient given the single storey nature of the proposals, and the positioning of the parking area etc immediately adjacent, to limit adverse privacy impacts on the donor dwellings.

The application would result in the loss of historic garden area for West End Cottages; however, these dwellings retain gardens commensurate to their accommodation to the west and of a scale which is suitable for the character of the area. Conditions are recommended to ensure that the holiday let, and the additional parking proposed as part of this application are linked in ownership & management to the existing holiday lets to the west of the site.

A third-party representation was received which raised concern surrounding increased noise and disturbance associated with the proposed use. The holiday let proposed under this application is a single bedroom unit and given the scale of the proposed use and the existing density of development in the vicinity, any significant increase in noise and disturbance is considered unlikely – either during construction or post-occupation. It is not considered necessary to control the submission of a construction management plan for a scheme of this size, however an informative can be used to ensure the applicant is aware of the separation legislation controlling noise nuisance.

Overall, the impact on neighbours is considered acceptable and the proposal complies with Policies CS08 and DM15 of the Local Plan and Policies H1 and D1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Highway Safety:

The existing site layout includes a total of three marked parking bays on site - immediately adjacent to High Street, requiring vehicles to reverse onto the highway to enter/exit each bay. The Local Highway Authority has responded to consultation stating that the proposed scheme provides an overall highway safety benefit through the provision of a formal turning area off-highway. The proposal also increases the total number of parking spaces available to 6 in total, which further provides a highway benefit of off-road parking.

The proposal therefore complies with the aims of the NPPF (2023) in regard to highway safety, as well as Policies CS08, CS11, DM11 and DM15 of the Local Plan and Policy EMP 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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Other material considerations

Specific comments and issues:

Biodiversity Net Gain

The application is considered to be exempt from BNG under the de minimis exemption given the existing site conditions & development area.

Flood Risk

The application site is within flood zone 1 and flood risk impacts are therefore unlikely.

Contamination

The Environmental Quality team raised no objection regarding contaminated land. The subject site is considered suitable to cater for the proposed use in line with Policy DM15 of the SADMPP.

Planning History

Application reference 20/00110/O was refused in 2020 proposed the construction of a large two storey independent residential dwelling along the north boundary of the application site. The application was ultimately refused due to concerns of scale and inappropriate design as well as lack of amenity space. It is considered that there are fundamental differences when compared to this application, and as discussed above, the scale & design of the proposed holiday let are considered acceptable.

CONCLUSION:

The NPPF reiterates the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application proposes the construction of a holiday let unit within the development boundary for Thornham and within close proximity to various services and tourism-related uses.

The scale, design and materials proposed for the scheme are all appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the area and accord with the requirements of the NPPF (2023), Policies CS08, CS12, DM11 and DM15 in regard to street scene character, heritage assets and the National Landscape and would provide highway safety benefits through the provision of off-road parking spaces that do not require vehicles to manoeuvre within the public highway.

Overall, the proposal is therefore recommended for approval and is considered to accord with NPPF (2023), Policies CS08, CS12, DM11 and DM15 of the SADMPP, and Policies H1, D1, EMP1, EMP4, HA1 and HA2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

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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:
 - TH003.02.02 B
 - TH003.02.03 A
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition: Prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted the vehicular access indicated for improvement on Drawing No. TH003.02.02 Rev B shall be reduced to a minimum width of 4.5 metres in accordance with the Norfolk County Council residential access construction specification for the first 2 metres as measured back from the near channel edge of the adjacent carriageway. Arrangement shall be made for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway
- 3 Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory access and to avoid carriage of extraneous material or surface water from or onto the highway in the interests of highway safety and traffic movement, in accordance with the NPPF (2023) and Policies DM11 and DM15 of the SADMPP (2016).
- 4 Condition: Prior to the first /use 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, in association with the proposed dwelling and the existing dwellings shown in red on dwg no. TH003/02/02 Rev B.
- 4 Reason: To ensure the permanent availability of the parking/manoeuvring areas, in the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety, in accordance with the NPPF (2023) and Policies DM11 and DM15 of the SADMPP (2016).
- 5 Condition: The holiday let (identified in red on Dwg No TH003/02/02 Rev B) hereby approved shall be used for short stay accommodation (no more than 28 days per single let) only and shall at no time be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence. The owners shall maintain an up-to-date register of lettings/occupation and shall make the register available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.
- 5 Reason: This permission is granted because accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF and Policy DM11 of the SADMPP (2016). The condition is necessary to ensure that the site is not occupied as a permanent residential dwelling where the requirements for external amenity space etc may have different implications for the development.

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- 6 Condition: No development shall commence on any external surface of the development until sample panels 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.
- 6 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF, Policies CS12 and DM15 of the Local Plan and Policies H1, HA1 and D1 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7 Condition: No development over or above foundations shall take place on site until full details of the window style, reveal, cill and header treatment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 7 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF, Policies CS12 and DM15 of the Local Plan and Policies H1, HA1 and D1 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8 Condition: Prior to the first use/occupation of the development hereby permitted, 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 hard surface materials, boundary treatments, any refuse or other storage units etc. Soft landscape works shall include planting plans, including the provision of a front boundary hedgerow, 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.
- 8 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance of the proposed landscaping in accordance with the principles of the NPPF, Policies CS12 and DM15 of the Local Plan and Policies H1, HA1 and D1 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9 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.
- 9 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance of the proposed landscaping in accordance with the principles of the NPPF, Policies CS12 and DM15 of the Local Plan and Policies H1, HA1 and D1 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan.