

Parish:	Great Massingham	
Proposal:	Overflow car park (retrospective)	
Location:	The Dabbling Duck 11 Abbey Road Great Massingham King's Lynn PE32 2HN	
Applicant:	The Dabbling Duck	
Case No:	25/01974/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Lucy Smith	Date for Determination: 26 January 2026

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called in by Cllr Beales.

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

Members may recall that application reference 25/00323/F for the retention of an overflow car park to be utilised in association with The Dabbling Duck public house was considered and ultimately approved by the Planning Committee on 28th July 2025 . Since this date, it has become evident that, despite the retrospective nature of that application, the boundaries of the site had not been accurately shown on the approved plans. As a result, at Discharge of Condition stage when considering the additional landscaping around the fire break and hedgerow, the proposed landscaping works were outside of the approved red line and therefore not able to be controlled.

This application seeks planning permission for a scheme with a revised site area. All other details are the same as the approval, bar for the increase in site area from approx. 902m2 to 1530m2, allowing some 555m2 area around the perimeter of the application site to be landscaped with a proposed hedgerow and 2m fire break and fencing, as per the arrangements of the extant approval.

The application comprises part of a wider agricultural field, the north boundary to which runs parallel to the edge of a Public Right of Way known as Great Massingham FP7 to the north. Access to the car park has been created through the existing car park at the rear of the public house, where a single width access is provided between the main building and an adjoining dwelling.

The application site is positioned just outside of the Conservation Area, the boundary to which runs along the back of houses to the east and to the north. Existing dwellings across the field at Abbeyfields to the north, are within the Conservation Area.

Key Issues

Principle of Development
Form and Character and Impact on the Conservation Area
Impact on Neighbours, including Fire Safety
Crime and Disorder
Highway Safety
Other Material Considerations

Recommendation**APPROVE****THE APPLICATION**

Members may recall that application reference 25/00323/F for the retention of an overflow car park to be utilised in association with The Dabbling Duck public house was considered and ultimately approved by the Planning Committee on 28th July 2025. Since this date, it has become evident that, despite the retrospective nature of that application, the boundaries of the site had not been accurately shown on the approved plans. As a result, at Discharge of Condition stage when considering the additional landscaping around the fire break and hedgerow, the proposed landscaping works were outside of the red line and therefore not able to be controlled.

This application seeks planning permission for a scheme with a revised site area. All other details are the same as the approval, bar for the increase in site area from approx. 902m² to 1530m², allowing some 555m² area around the perimeter of the application site to be landscaped with a proposed native species hedgerow and 2m fire break and fencing, as per the arrangements of the extant approval.

The extant consent is a material planning consideration, and the principle of development on site has previously been deemed acceptable.

The application comprises part of a wider agricultural field, the north boundary was revised during the course of the temporary application to ensure a reasonable set back from the edge of a Public Right of Way known as Great Massingham FP7 to the north. The boundary for this application remains set back from the PROW and would not facilitate access to/from.

Access to the car park has been created through the existing car park at the rear of the public house, where a single width access is provided between the main building and an adjoining dwelling.

The application site is positioned just outside of the Conservation Area, the boundary to which runs along the back of houses to the east, and adjacent to Abbeyfields to the north.

The proposed plans indicate the creation of a hedge around the car parking area, with a 2m wide 'fallow strip' of mud/soil strip between this boundary and the car park in order to prevent fire spread between the car park and the adjoining agricultural land. Fencing is proposed immediately around the car park to prevent cars parking on the soil strip. Gaps at corners are provided for maintenance purposes.

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The application has again been supported by a revised Management Plan which provides enforceable measures for the operators of the public house to implement when the car park is in use. The measures include ongoing maintenance of the land including removal of litter, the provision of fire extinguishers, CCTV monitoring, and signage advising no access is available via the public right of way to the north.

APPLICANT/AGENT SUPPORTING CASE

None provided.

PLANNING HISTORY

25/00323/F: Application Permitted: 05/08/25 - Overflow car park (retrospective) - The Dabbling Duck – COMMITTEE DECISION

23/00173/F: Application Permitted: 12/02/24 - Proposed overflow car park (retrospective) - The Dabbling Duck – COMMITTEE DECISION

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: SUPPORT comments summarised as follows:

Benefits to the community -

- Reducing vehicle parking on the greens, helping to prevent damage to these valued community assets.
- Easing congestion around the front of The Dabbling Duck Public House, Village Stores and St Mary's Church, thereby improving safety and accessibility for both pedestrians and vehicles

Recommended conditions:

1. Hedge Planting as a Multi-Functional Boundary Treatment (Fire break, privacy, defining boundary)
2. Secure boundary fencing
3. Restricted Operating Hours

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION with the following comments (summarised):

- The current plans show an increased perimeter, increased capacity and ultimately, increased use of the access, which needs to be considered against the increased parking provision/potential reduction in on-street parking, which provide no real improvement to the overall situation, given the shortcomings of the site access.
- Whilst the potential amenity issues are noted, these would not be highway related and would not substantiate a highway safety objection to the overspill parking area, on the basis that it could provide an occasional provision to prevent increased on street parking in the vicinity.

Fire and Rescue Service No objection, with the following comments and advice (summarised):

- The proposed 2m fire strip should remain 'fire sterile' and be maintained to ensure no combustible items compromise its purpose.

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- If the ground is to remain grassed then it is strongly advised that this grass is kept as short as practicably possible.
- These steps in junction with the sterile 2m wide strip will assist in reducing and or limiting the fire spread to just the car park.
- The car park should be inspected daily and any litter removed, particularly during the summer

Secured By Design - Designing Out Crime Officer: Provided detailed advice as to the operation of the car park. This full response has been provided to the Agent for their ongoing consideration.

REPRESENTATIONS

FIFTEEN letters of **OBJECTION**, summarised as follows:

- Visual impact on countryside
- Impacts from engine noise, lighting
- Request for hedge to have no gaps and evergreen content to reduce disturbance
- Other mechanisms exist for restricting parking on the green
- Difficult to monitor site for signs of fire
- Gaps in hedgerow would allow access to wider field (*Officer Note - The proposed fencing inside the fire break would prevent access to the wider field*)
- Previous discharge of condition application not submitted within the timeframe
- Request for more robust mitigation measures, preventing use of the wider field (or access to it) preventing maintenance access to within the red line area only, request for an evergreen hedge,
- No hedge is shown on the east boundary despite concerns for crime for the nearest properties

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

- The Dabbling Duck have gone to in order to appease the relative few villagers which have continued to have issues and criticism towards these proposals.
- Economic benefits
- Signage has been implemented to discourage parking on the green
- Hedgerow would improve local habitat

ONE Neutral Letter

- a hedge would aid in reduction nuisance and disturbance impacts

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK LOCAL PLAN 2021-2040

LP01 - Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy Policy (Strategic Policy)

LP02 - Residential Development on Windfall Sites (Strategic Policy)

LP06 - Climate Change (Strategic Policy)

LP07 - The Economy (Strategic Policy)

LP13 - Transportation (Strategic Policy)

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LP14 - Parking Provision in New Development

LP18 - Design & Sustainable Development (Strategic Policy)

LP19 - Environmental Assets - Green Infrastructure, Landscape Character, Biodiversity and Geodiversity (Strategic Policy)

LP20 - Environmental Assets- Historic Environment (Strategic Policy)

LP21 - Environment, Design and Amenity (Strategic Policy)

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 and Impact on the Conservation Area
- Impact on neighbours, including fire safety
- Highway safety
- Crime and Disorder
- Other material considerations

Principle of Development:

The principle of development was confirmed as part of 25/00323/F. The increase in site area does not alter the principle of development, notwithstanding a slight uptake in use of countryside/agricultural land.

Great Massingham is categorised as a Key Rural Service Centre (Tier 4) in Policy LP02 of the Local Plan.

The application site is outside of the development boundary shown on the Policies Plan and is considered to be in the wider countryside.

Whilst the expansion and retention of rural enterprises is supported by planning policies at both a local and national level, this is subject to compliance with other policies of the NPPF and Local Plan.

Paragraph 88c and d of the NPPF (2024) states that planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and enable the retention and development of accessible local such as public houses.

Policy LP07 of the Local Plan is supportive of development to enhance visitor economy.

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The car park is intended to be utilised as an overflow carpark for the public house. An increase in capacity of parking to the rear of the public house has the potential to both reduce parking on the green space to the front of the public house, which currently detracts from the Conservation Area setting, whilst also minimising vehicle movements into the site where vehicles currently enter and immediately exit the site itself when no parking is available.

As part of the temporary application on site, Members gave limited weight to the impact on the Conservation Area associated with the proposed use. Whilst the site is visible from Abbeyfields and the PROW to the north, as well as in gaps in housing and hedging to the southwest, it is considered that subject to suitable landscaping details, the principle of development in this location would not be harmful to the current rural setting to the Conservation Area.

The proposal would benefit users of the Public House through additional on-site parking, and subject to detailed form and character consideration below, would not lead to adverse impacts on the Conservation Area. No highway safety concerns were raised by the Local Highway Authority. It is considered that subject to conditions controlling the use of the site as parking in association with the public house known as the Dabbling Duck only, the principle of development is acceptable and would comply with the NPPF (2024) and Policy LP07 of the Local Plan.

Form and Character and Impact on the Conservation Area

The application site is outside of the Conservation Area however the application site is considered to form part of the wider setting.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

Paragraph 187 requires planning decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2024) states that in determining planning applications, the LPA should take account of:

- 'a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

As per what was ultimately agreed at Planning Committee last year, the proposed plans indicate the creation of livestock fencing immediately surrounding the car parking area, followed by a 2 metre fire break and then a proposed hedgerow.

The application form identifies that 35 parking spaces could be provided on the field (this is an increase of 5 from the extant consent). As with the previous application, it is considered that the specific number of parking spaces provided is not necessary to control through additional demarcation; on the basis that the principle of an overflow car park is acceptable, subject to suitable screening, irrespective of the specific number of spaces within it.

As a result of its position on the edge of an open and undeveloped agricultural field, the application site is visible from viewpoints along the PROW to the north, as well as from the rear of houses in the immediate vicinity. Some viewpoints are also provided on approach along Lynn Lane from the south, by virtue of the gaps between hedgerows and sporadic dwellings. Whilst the site area is larger, this impact would not be substantially different than the extant consent.

Whilst the existing field is a somewhat irregular shape, the use of the land could be considered to lead to some harm both to the countryside and the setting of the Conservation Area, as a result of the projection into the field as well as the long views available of the site from the north, west and south. The impact of car parking during periods of wetter weather will lead to loss of grass cover which will have further impacts which could not be mitigated against. No surfacing of the field is proposed as part of this application and was not proposed or deemed necessary previously – the lack of hard surfacing reduces landscape and conservation area impacts.

An amended management plan, received 20th January 2026, sets out that the hedgerow will be comprised of a mix of native species plants (50% Hawthorn, 25% Hazel, 25% Maple). At the time of planting, the plants will be between 90-120cm tall, and will thereafter be managed to 2 metres high. 5 plants are proposed per metre.

As a native species hedge, it will take time for the hedgerow to fully mature.

Once established, the hedge would screen some of the infrastructure from view, however, is unlikely to fully screen the views of parked vehicles themselves. This is considered acceptable and was acknowledged by Planning Committee previously.

Section 16 of the NPPF (2024) requires any harm to designated heritage assets, including from development in their setting, to be balanced against public benefits. The proposal has not been identified as additionally harmful to the Conservation Area compared to the extant consent.

The Parish Council continue to support the scheme and its highway benefits in principle. If the car park works as intended, and the management plan provided to alleviate issues is suitably implemented, the proposed parking area has the potential to decrease the number of vehicles parked on the public highway to the front of the pub. This could lead to some gain in terms of Conservation Area impacts and the setting of Great Massingham as a whole.

Whilst the car park is and will continue to be visible from the rear of houses in the vicinity, as well as from the PROW to the north and gaps in frontage dwellings to the south, it is considered, subject to compliance with the submitted management plan and proposed plans (including the native hedgerow planting) that the visual impacts of the development on the Conservation Area would be acceptable.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would comply with the NPPF and Local Plan, in particular Policies LP07, LP18, LP20 and LP21 in regard to adverse impacts on the Countryside and the setting of heritage assets.

Impact on Neighbours, including Fire Safety:

As with the previous approval, there is potential for some noise and disturbance impacts to occur as a result of vehicle movements to/from site – including from people using the site, entering exiting their vehicles etc. It should however be noted that planning permission would be granted for the site to be utilised as parking area only, and not for typical ‘pub garden’ space or other uses where people are more likely to congregate.

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Any dis-amenity caused by the use of the land of the car park is likely to be limited and would not warrant refusal of this application on those grounds. The applicants should be aware that there are separate controls and legislation in place to control nuisance in relation to the use of the site, outside of the realm of planning.

The majority of concern raised to the Enforcement Team during the period of temporary consent related to overnight parking and use of the overflow car park whilst spaces are available in the existing car park within the site.

The Management Plan has been updated as part of this application and covers Fire Risk (fire extinguishers, site inspections, no smoking signs, fire sterile fire break), and Monitoring (via CCTV). This is in line with the extant consent.

The management plan also sets out details for the implementation and management of the native hedgerow.

The Parish Council and third parties have requested the car park is only utilised during 'business hours'. As discussed, and agreed by Members at the previous committee, the pub has overnight accommodation, and such a control would not have any bearing on the use of the site. Secondly, it would be unreasonable and unnecessary to expect the operators of the pub to advise these patrons to move their cars partway through their visit if a space in the 'main' car park becomes available.

As also noted during the previous approval, it is not considered that impacts of vehicle movements and headlights would lead to such detrimental impacts on neighbours as to warrant refusal of this application. The land immediately east of the car park, separated from the site by mature hedgerows is set out with a polytunnel and planting beds and provides screening and separation between the proposed use and this neighbouring dwelling.

By nature, the proposed use will not lead to overbearing or overshadowing impacts, and no extensive physical works are proposed in excess of those approved under the previous application. Whilst the car park may be visible from rear gardens and this has been noted by neighbouring residents within consultations, the appearance of the site would not lead to detrimental impacts on neighbour amenity.

Fire Safety

No changes are proposed to the fire strategy/management plan previously approved.

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF (2024) states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which are safe and accessible. Paragraph 102 goes on to state that public safety should be promoted as part of planning decisions, including through appropriate and proportionate steps to improve public safety, decrease vulnerability and increase resilience.

Neighbour objections have, over the course of numerous applications on site, been received which relate to fire safety and the potential risk involved with the use of the site during dry weather. The Building Regulations process, where applicable, sets out various measures to ensure access and facilities for the fire service are appropriate.

The proposed plans indicate the creation of a 2m wide 'fallow strip' of mud/soil to form a fire break between the car park and the adjoining agricultural land. The Norfolk County Council

Fire Safety Inspector has provided advice on the application, and this has been incorporated into the proposed management plan for the avoidance of doubt.

The revised management plan (as discussed above) sets out that the measures suggested by the Fire Officer can be complied with.

Subject to compliance with the proposed plan and maintenance plan, which can be controlled via condition, the proposal would comply with Paragraphs 96, 102 and 135 of the NPPF in regard to public safety and neighbour amenity, and Policies LP18 and LP21 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 117 of the NPPF (2024) states that applications for development should create places that are safe, secure and attractive, which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter and respond to local character and design standards. This is reiterated by Policy LP13 which states that development proposals should provide for safe and convenient access for all modes.

The application form states the car park would provide around 35 spaces for customers. Given the Conservation Area concerns discussed above, it is possible that a lack of demarcation of individual spaces will limit the maximum number in use, however opportunities for clear demarcation of each space without detriment to the rural character of the area are limited, and it is not considered necessary in this instance to require a specific number of car parking spaces are provided and retained.

Neighbour objections have previously referred to the use of the adjoining PROW by vehicles gaining access to the site. The red line area was altered as part of the previous application to ensure the car park is set back away from the PROW to the north of the site, which will help to prevent any vehicle movements in this direction.

The provision of additional parking could alleviate some existing on-street parking issues which occur on and around the green to the front of the public house, however with no parking restrictions on the green, the provision of a larger car park may not be of any significant benefit to neighbouring residents. Customers could continue to choose to avoid the restricted width entrance way - being better located for the main portion of the pub's facilities which are to the front of the site. However, additional car parking space to the rear would prevent additional trips through the access point for those vehicles who previously would be unable to park due to a lack of parking space availability.

The known highways benefits of the proposal are therefore limited; however, no highway safety objection has been raised by the Local Highway Authority and it is considered, on balance, that the highways implications of the development are acceptable and comply with the NPPF (2024) and Policy LP13 of the Local Plan.

Crime and Disorder

There are no specific known crime and disorder impacts. Neighbour objections have referred to an increase in crime in the area following the beginning of the unauthorised and temporary consented use, however the LPA has no evidence to suggest that this has any association with the use of the land proposed under this application.

Paragraph 96(b) of the NPPF aims to healthy, inclusive and safe communities which are *'safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion...'*

The neighbouring property to the North has raised concern over the lack of 2m high fencing (or a hedge, or both) along the east boundary of the car park. It should be noted that the east boundary of the application site does not coincide with the west boundary of this property. The installation of a hedge or fence along the site boundary would not prevent access into the neighbouring garden. Were a fence to be required along the west boundary of this dwelling's curtilage, it could be provided under permitted development rights and would not require an application. It should be noted that no significant change has occurred to this side boundary compared to the previous approval which was found to be acceptable by the Planning Committee.

Comments regarding anti-social behaviour and the lack of CCTV or monitoring of the site are noted. The proposed plan shows the position of CCTV which can be used to monitor the site. Comments from the Secured By Design Officer have been forwarded to the Agent and largely relate to issues outside of the scope of this application.

Other material considerations:

Policy LP06 – the addition of hedgerows would accord with the general aims of Policy LP06 in regard to green infrastructure. Given the scale and nature of this application, this is considered sufficient to comply with the requirements of LP06 in regard to climate change mitigation.

Ecology and BNG - As a retrospective application, the application continues to be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. The continued use of land for car parking is considered unlikely to lead to any adverse impacts on protected species given the nature and scale of the application. No external lighting is proposed, and conditions can be used to restrict lighting within the car parking area.

Response to Neighbour Representations

Neighbour consultation responses have been addressed throughout this report and generally reiterate concerns raised under the previous application. As discussed throughout this report, whilst the concerns are noted, the proposed development can be made acceptable through the imposition of conditions relating to compliance with the management plan and landscaping details.

CONCLUSION

All applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations allow otherwise.

The application seeks consent for the retention of a car parking area adjacent to the Conservation Area and outside of the Development Boundary for Great Massingham as defined in the Local Plan. Whilst the use is retrospective, the fallback position of the extant 25/00323/F with the smaller site area is a strong material consideration. The principle of development has previously been considered acceptable and the site area proposed to be increased as part of this application would not materially alter the considerations at hand.

The submitted management plan continues to set out measures to control the use of the site, including measures to minimise fire risk.

Landscaping conditions would ensure that the proposed hedgerow, fencing and fire break are implemented within the next 2 months and retained and maintained as such thereafter.

As with the most recent application, it has been established, the additional car parking proposed could have some wider benefit to Great Massingham by removing cars from the adjacent highway and may also provide some minor economic benefits to the business itself. It is however of note that the existing access is of limited width, and there are no current plans to restrict parking on the green itself.

Subject to conditions controlling full detailing of the proposed soft landscaping details as well as compliance with the management plan, it is considered that the proposal complies with Paragraphs 88, 96, 102, 135, 187 and 203 of the NPPF (2024) and Policies LP07, LP13, LP14, LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

- 1 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
*22183 02 Rev A - Proposed Location Plan
*22183 04 - Proposed Landscape Plan

- 1 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 Condition: The approved landscaping, including the agreed hedgerow planting, fire break and boundary treatment shall be completed as shown on the approved plan within two months of the date of this decision.

The proposed species, plant sizes, establishment, and ongoing maintenance, shall comply with the details shown within the Hedgerow Planting & Maintenance section of the Management Plan received via email 20th January 2026.

The hedgerow planting, fire break and boundary treatments shall thereafter be retained and maintained on site as approved for the lifetime of the development.

- 2 Reason: In the interests of safety and the amenities of the locality and Conservation Area, In line with Paras 96, 102, 187 and 203 of the NPPF (2024) and Policies LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan.
- 3 Condition: The land outlined in red on dwg No. 22183 02 Rev A shall only be used as an overflow car park in connection with the existing business known as The Dabbling Duck, shown in blue on the approved plan. The car park shall operate in full accordance with the Management Plan submitted via email received 20th January 2026.
- 3 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in order to control potential impacts of the scheme on the locality, in accordance with the NPPF (2024) and Policies LP07, LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan.

- 4 Condition: Any hedgerow plants as shown on the approved that 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.
- 4 Reason: In the interests of safety and the amenities of the locality and Conservation Area, In line with Paras 96, 102, 187 and 203 of the NPPF (2024) and Policies LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan.