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| Parish: | Thornham | |
| Proposal: | Proposed extension and alterations to existing dwelling | |
| Location: | Church Cottage Church Street Thornham Hunstanton PE36 6NJ | |
| Applicant: | Karen Lane | |
| Case No: | 22/00306/F (Full Application) | |
| Case Officer: | Connor Smalls | Date for Determination: 10 May 2022 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 4 December 2022 |

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called in by Councillor Lawton

Neighbourhood Plan: Yes

Case Summary

This application proposes an extension to the north of the existing cottage alongside alterations and additions to the roof, dormers and rear elevation.

The application site is located on Church Street within the historic core of the village, falling within the Conservation Area. The site is also within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Key Issues

- Principle of Development
- Form and Character and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Impact on Neighbour Amenity
- Parking
- Any other material considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The site is located on Church Street within Thornham which is a residential area within the historic core of the village. The site and wider area are within the Thornham Conservation Area as well as the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural beauty. Whilst not listed, the

cottage is considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset and is an Important Unlisted Building within the Thornham Conservation Area Character Statement.

This application proposes both internal and external alterations to the existing cottage including alterations to the two front dormer windows, an extension to the northern elevation, alterations to the rear facing dormer windows alongside new roof lights and alterations to the rear elevation.

The application has been amended since its original submission to address design concerns.

SUPPORTING CASE

None submitted to date.

PLANNING HISTORY

2/00/0997/F: Application Permitted: 20/02/01 - Construction of dwellinghouse and construction of detached garage for Church Cottage (revised proposal)

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT: (summarised for clarity)

The Parish Council objects to both the original and revised scheme:

The revised application makes some attempt to meet the objections previously noted. Specifically, Council note the use of materials and overall design is more in keeping with the existing cottage and is slightly reduced in scale thus partially addressing Neighbourhood Plan Policies D1, H1.

However, no amount of minor adjustment can address the key and overarching objections made by Council in their initial response:

- Church Cottage is one of 91 important unlisted buildings in the heart of the Conservation area in Thornham. It is one of the oldest buildings in the village dating back to mid 17th century.
- Group value of Important Unlisted Buildings is especially of note. Church Street runs from the enclosed centre of the village at its southern end to the open fields at its northern end, with the salt marshes and sand dunes beyond. Every property fronting on to the road on the east side of Church Street from All Saints Church to Bunkles is an Important Unlisted Building.
- Thus, this application affects not only Church Cottage but the massively valuable heritage asset of the panorama of this site whether seen from walking down Church Street or the distant but rewarding prospect when
- The existing dwelling has robust symmetry and is a focal point.
- Proposed development would harm the Conservation Area and heritage assets detailed above.
- The proposal would be contrary to Paragraph 197 of the NPF, policy L1, Important Views and Policy H5 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan.

- The Parish is sceptical that with an entrance door on the north elevation which would require proper access with the effective parking of two vehicles on the allocated space is most unlikely.
- Parking on-road or on the green verge opposite would likely be a regular occurrence thus further adding to damage.
- Council has also noted the objections of neighbouring property owners re proximity and overlooking issues. Council is aware that the proposal has generated a considerable degree of local opposition. While the Council would not support knee-jerk nimbyism it recognises that the parish community does value its heritage and does not wish to see it destroyed in piecemeal fashion.
- Thornham Parish Council strongly urges planners and Planning Committee members to preserve this very special site and its heritage view and reject the application.

Conservation Officer: NO OBJECTION:

The Conservation Officer objected to the original plans on the grounds that the removal of the traditional dormers to the front with oversized catslide dormers would cause harm to the building and Conservation Area. The proposed overhanging timber clad extension was considered an alien feature to this historic setting and would have upset the simple balance of the traditional cottage causing further harm. However, these concerns have now been overcome with the submission of amended plans.

NCC Highways: NO OBJECTION:

Thank you for the consultation received recently relating to the above development proposal, which from a highways perspective reduces the parking area to the rear of the property, which appears currently to be inadequate for manouvring, but provides numerous off street parking spaces.

The proposed extensions remove access to the rear, but retains two parking spaces to the side, off the adopted highway, adequate for Church Cottage. I am able to comment that in relation to highways issues only, as this proposal does not affect the current traffic patterns or the free flow of traffic, that Norfolk County Council does not wish to resist the grant of consent. A condition requested that the on-site car parking area shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use would be attached to any consent granted.

REPRESENTATIONS: TEN letters of **OBJECTION** from **NINE** objectors and **ONE NEUTRAL** letter to the **ORIGINAL SCHEME** regarding the following:

- Church Cottage was built in 1646 and is older than all the listed houses in Thornham.
- It is an “important” unlisted building.
- Prominent position within street and can be viewed from harbour, regarded as local landmark.
- Relatively unchanged in its current form.
- In its original modest form, makes a significant positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and the street scene.
- Proposal will detrimentally alter the character of the cottage and Church Street.
- Proposal will unbalance the cottage and destroy historic features.
- Overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impact to neighbouring dwelling.
- Elevation labels and incorrect plans.
- Insufficient space for two cars to park at side of dwelling.
- Dormer windows to east will increase overlooking.
- Possible subdivision.

- Proposed materials.

SEVEN letters of **OBJECTION** from **SEVEN** objectors to the **AMENDED SCHEME** regarding the following:

- Amended scheme fails to address concerns raised regarding design, scale and impact on historic house and Conservation Area, recommendation should not therefore change.
- Lack of symmetry.
- Much loved ancient village landmark.
- Scale and balance of property.
- Insufficient parking.
- Neighbour amenity impacts remain.
- Incorrect plans

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Policy D1: Design principles for new development

Policy H5: Residential extensions

Policy L1: Important Views

Policy HA1 Development Affecting the Conservation Area

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

National Design Guide 2019

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations are:

- Principle of Development
- Form and Character and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Impact on Neighbour Amenity
- Parking
- Any other material considerations

Principle of Development

This application proposes alterations and additions to an existing dwelling, all within the plot of an existing residential unit. As such, the principle of development is acceptable subject to compliance with neighbourhood, local and national policy.

Form and Character and Impact on Heritage Assets

The original application proposed two new oversized catslide dormers to the front roof slope of the main dwelling and an enlarged central dormer to the rear roof. To the north, an overhanging 1st floor extension was proposed, extending past the ground floor projection with a large dormer to the front. This new addition was proposed to be clad with a pitched roof and tiles to match the main dwelling.

However, this was considered unacceptable due to the removal of the traditional dormers to the front, a feature on many of the properties in this part of the village, in favour of overly large catslide dormers. The proposed overhanging timber clad extension would have been an alien feature to this historic setting and would have upset the simple balance of the traditional cottage and was therefore also unacceptable. These elements of the proposal would cause significant harm to the Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset) and to the building itself, an important unlisted building and non-designated heritage asset.

As such, this application has been amended and now proposes several different elements. First, and most notable, is the extension to the northern elevation following the footprint of the existing ground floor side projection. The extension would be pitched roof, set below the eaves and ridge of the main dwelling. The extension would include a small pitched roof front dormer and ground floor window to the front, a first-floor circular side window to the north with door and window at ground floor. To the rear, a small single storey mono-pitched element at ground floor is proposed with one small window.

To the front elevation of the main dwelling, the two front dormers will remain generally as existing with a slightly lower ridge and windows of the same size as existing. The form, scale and in turn wider visual impact will preserve the existing character of the front elevation.

To the south side elevation, no works are proposed. To the rear, works to the main dwelling include moving the existing dormers to a more central location on the roof, moving an existing roof light plus the addition of one new roof light. These would be either side of the central dormers. A new opening in the form of a glazed double door would be added at ground floor.

It is considered that the changes and additions to the main dwelling would now be acceptable. The proposals are now in scale with the existing dwelling. The dormers to the front would be of an appropriate form and massing given the historic context as are the dormers to the rear. The roof lights to the rear would be small and in keeping.

It is common to see extensions to older dwellings as they are adapted to provide homes in the 21st century; this ensures they can maintain a viable use and be preserved. The northern extension is now of a reduced size and scale, utilising more traditional materials and form. Following the footprint of the existing northern projection, this is a subservient addition to the existing dwelling. Conditions would be attached to any consent regarding sample panels and samples of proposed materials to ensure a suitable visual finish. As such, the amendments to the scheme now ensure that, on balance, the development would be acceptable. The Conservation Officer considers that there would be an acceptable impact on the Non-Designated Heritage Asset and Important Unlisted Building, as well as the wider Conservation Area and in turn the AONB.

Based on the above it is considered that the development would deliver an acceptable design in accordance with Policies D1, H5, L1 and HA1 of Thornham Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed development would retain the character of the original dwelling and is of an acceptable scale, bulk and mass, having regard to the size of the existing property as well as wider street scene and Conservation Area. The development would also comply with CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy 2011, DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016 and the NPPF 2021.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

The two storey extension would be 6.4m from the house to the north at its furthest point and 4.3m at its closest point. The existing side projection to north is currently approximately 3m in height whilst the proposed extension would be approximately 5.2m at the ridge with a maximum increase of 2.2m. The extension follows the footprint of the existing projection which only extends an additional 2.5m to the north of the main dwelling. Due to this limited size and scale as existing and proposed, it is not considered that the impact to the neighbouring dwelling would be significantly more than the existing arrangement. To the side, the first-floor window would be conditioned to be obscure glazed and non-opening, preventing any overlooking impact.

To the front, windows would only overlook the public street and land beyond. To the rear, there is only a net increase of one roof light so whilst dormers are moved there would be no significant or adverse increase in overlooking potential. At ground floor, new windows and doors are screened by boundary treatment to the rear (1.8m close board fence) or to the north, will only face the neighbouring driveway.

The proposal therefore complies with CS08 of the Core Strategy 2011, DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016 and the NPPF 2021.

Parking

The Local Highway Authority has considered the proposal and subject to a condition that the on-site car parking area shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter, raise no objection on parking or safety grounds. Based on this, it would not be reasonable to refuse or otherwise request an amendment to the proposed parking area. The proposal therefore complies with CS08 of the Core Strategy 2011, DM15, DM17 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016 and the NPPF 2021.

Any other material considerations

Parish Council Objection

Form and Character and Impact on Heritage is addressed in the above report but it is of note that the Conservation officer raises no objection to the amended scheme. Neighbour amenity and parking considerations are also addressed above.

Third Party Objections

Form and character, impact on heritage and parking/highways safety have been addressed above. Elevation labels have been corrected and the subdivision of the property would require planning permission in its own right. The planning agent has confirmed that plans are accurate.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development, by virtue of its balanced appearance, appropriate choice of materials and subservient nature would present a visually in keeping and in scale set of additions to the Non-Designated Heritage Asset and Important Unlisted Building. The development would therefore preserve the historic character of the existing cottage as well as the locality ensuring that the street scene and wider visual amenity impact is acceptable including on both the Conservation Area and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The site is somewhat constrained with the neighbouring dwelling to the north, however, it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable relationship. There are no other neighbour amenity concerns and parking provision is considered suitable by the Local Highway Authority. Overall, the proposed development would be in accordance with policy CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy 2011, DM15 and DM17 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan as well as Policies D1, H5, L1 and HA1 of the Thornham Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF 2021.

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: Proposed Flood Plan, Elevations and Site Plan, Drawing Number: 585-02 Rev: E.
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition: Before the first occupation of the extension hereby permitted the window at first floor on the northern elevation shall be fitted with obscured glazing and any part of the window that is less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which it is installed shall be non-opening. The window shall be permanently retained in that condition thereafter.
- 3 Reason: To protect the residential amenities of the occupiers of nearby property.

- 4 Condition: No development shall take place on any external surface of the development hereby permitted until details of the type, colour and texture of all materials to be used for the external surfaces of the extensions and alterations have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 5 Condition: No development shall commence on any external surface of the development until a sample panel of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the extension 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.
- 5 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.