

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: 10 February 2023

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

Neighbourhood Plan: Yes

Members Update

The application was deferred at the Planning Committee of 18 November 2022 in order to ensure the accuracy of submitted plans. Following the deferral, an additional Officer site visit was undertaken, and measurements were taken by hand. This has been compared to the latest submitted plan.

The report has been amended to reflect this and relevant paragraphs are highlighted in bold.

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 (Summarised for clarity)

To be noted, OS mapping has Church Cottages some 600mm longer and 800mm narrower than they truly are, this makes significant differences.

I have accessed previous OS map extracts and the boundary to the North of Waders has changed significantly since Waders was built also.

I hope you can see why sometimes exercises like this are not easy to demonstrate but I am assured that our surveying, as presented on the attached drawing is accurate.

Finally - please note that the proposal is some 300mm narrower than the existing lean-to as the client wished for slightly larger parking area. Therefore the actual visual gap / alignment when viewed from the road between Waders and Church Cottage is more than it is at present.

The first floor gable window of Waders is therefore still allowed its full view to the West as demonstrated by the green dashed vision lines on the attached drawing. The wider angle of vision is not hindered with Waders sitting higher and with a window designed at modern, full height above a standard floor to floor height, views from this window will be able to look over part of the proposed roof slope, towards a large tree screen not affording distant views.

As previously stated, we have support of the LPA including the Conservation Team and I therefore ask for the Committee to also consider supporting this modest proposal.

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 NPFF, 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.

OBJECT (latest comments and summarised for clarity)

Council recognise that amendments have been made to modify the external appearance of the property to be more sympathetic to the street scene. However, Council still believe that the proposal runs counter to the Neighbourhood Plan with Reference to Important Views and draws attention to paragraphs 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 and Map 10 – note viewpoint 8.

Church Cottage is an important unlisted building in a continuous run of the same stretching north along the east side of Church Street from All Saints Church to Bunkles. All within the Conservation Area and AONB- a very significant landscape and panorama.

Councillors, parishioners and visitors who walk Church Street and the Norfolk Coastal Path along the sea wall to and from the dunes and then along FP3 stand and enjoy this panorama which gives a true sense of the history and heritage of Thornham, a sparse rural and coastal village set on the saltmarsh.

The white elevation of the cottage gives a focus to this view and its local name as Bill and Bens cottage shows its roots in the village. For council and the community this is not a paper exercise but part of the soul and spirit of Thornham.

Additionally, Council notes the application shows two cars parallel parking at the side of the house. This is not practical and one car will have to park either on the road outside the house.

It is clear from the plans that the future intention of the owner would appear to be the division of the property into two high end lettings. There is no community or public benefit from this application that might mitigate the harm to the village heritage that the application inevitably creates.

Finally, Council noted that a parishioner neighbour has questioned the accuracy of the plans in some details. Council does not have the technical ability to comment on this but does request that planning officers check this carefully before making their recommendation to Planning Committee.

Thornham Parish Council strongly recommend refusal of this 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.

Amended plans - Nothing further to add to response.

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

Additional FOUR letters of OBJECTION from TWO objectors regarding:

- **Whilst the amendments address the Conservation Officers concerns, the scheme should be heard at Panning Committee as it is still a major alteration to an important heritage asset in the village.**
- **Parking provision.**
- **Impact of scheme on neighbouring property to the north- north/east.**
- Neighbour impact reinforced by plans that now appear more accurate.
- Moving the proposed east (rear) extension to the south and increasing the size whilst maintaining single storey height could create a full bathroom. This would remove the need for the proposed extension to the north and remove many objections.

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 approximately 4.6m from the neighbouring house to the north at its closest point. The existing lean-to roof side projection to the north of the application dwelling is currently approximately 3m in height to the ridge and 1.8m to the eaves. The proposed pitched roof extension would be approximately 5.1m to the ridge and approximately 3.2m to the eaves. The existing projection currently extends 2.5m to the north of the main dwelling. However, the proposed extension would extend approximately 0.3m less to the north. As such, there would be a larger gap between the extension and neighbouring dwelling compared to the current arrangement.

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. Whilst the first-floor extension would be to the south of the neighbouring dwelling, as it is below the ridge of the main dwelling and only extends approximately 2.2m, it will not have a significant or adverse increase in overbearing or overshadowing compared to the side gable of the main building. This acceptable impact also takes into account the separation of approximately 4.6m at the closest point between the proposed extension and neighbour dwelling, preventing an unneighbourly impact. To the side, the first-floor window would be conditioned to be obscure glazed and non-opening, preventing any overlooking impact. Overall, it is not considered that there would be a significant or adverse impact on neighbour amenity as a result of the northern extension that could warrant refusal.

The proposed single storey lean-to located on the rear elevation of the northern projection would be approximately 3m away at its closest point to the neighbour to the north. However, as this is single storey, it would not present an overbearing impact or overshadow the neighbour. There will be no overlooking as the extension is screened from the rear of the neighbouring dwelling by boundary treatment (1.8m close board fence).

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. **Plans have been confirmed to be correct by the agent and the case officer has hand measured onsite and compared to plans for accuracy. Plans have been confirmed to be correct by the agent and the case officer has hand measured onsite and compared to plans for accuracy. Regarding a suggested amended design, the Local Planning Authority have to determine the application based on the scheme as presented within the application currently. Should the applicant wish to amend based on this suggestion, a further application would potentially be required.**

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 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: F.
- 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.