

AGENDA ITEM NO: 9/1(g)

Parish:	South Creake	
Proposal:	Retrospective change of existing cart shed to games room	
Location:	The Old Chequers 37 Front Street South Creake Fakenham	
Applicant:	Mr Ben van Rooyen	
Case No:	23/00884/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs Rebecca Bush	Date for Determination: 31 August 2023 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 6 October 2023

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

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

The application is for a retrospective change of existing cart shed to games room to the north west of the site behind the frontage of the main dwelling. This dwelling is situated within the Conservation Area and is a non-designated heritage asset.

The site is located to the middle part of the village on Front Street. South Creake is a Smaller Village and Hamlet as defined by Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2011.

Key Issues

Principle of development.

Form and impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Impact on neighbour amenity.

Parking.

Any other matters requiring consideration prior to determination of the application.

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

South Creake is a linear settlement strung out along the B1355. It has grown along the valley bottom of the river Burn. Front Street has a familiar range of cobble and red brick facades and a notably tall brick tower of the old brewery. There would be colourwash buildings hard up against the road.

There are a much larger number of non-designated heritage assets in South Creake than listed buildings, this site is one of those important unlisted buildings. This is a traditional building in a prominent position, that relates to the historic buildings close by. Together these buildings make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Situated in the small village of South Creake along Front Street, this existing dwelling is a 'U' shaped building, is two storey and has six bedrooms. The site is situated hard on the road with the River Burn running along the garden area to the rear.

The application site was originally a Public House and the area which is now the games room was used for storage and a cart shed. This area is located to the side of the dwelling behind the principle front elevation. In 1987 there was an approved application that included the erection of a wall to the north west (side) of the cart shed area. Due to the angle of the cart shed it is very unlikely two cars could have fit within the cart shed and more likely used for storage. The area in between the cart shed and host dwelling is very narrow so turning safely within the area would also have been an issue.

The existing cart shed/storage area was open at the front with one larger opening and a slightly smaller opening to the front elevation (east) and closed off to the rear (west). The wall is constructed in flint with a red clay pantile hipped roof and white framed door openings. This retrospective application is sought to change this building to a games room for the applicants Air BNB business. There would be a window and bi folding doors to the east and another bi folding door to the west of the games room. The roof and wall has remained the same. The main issues here are the design, glazing has been added to the front elevation, the impact on the Conservation Area and the car parking.

SUPPORTING CASE

To use the current letter received by the applicant on the 16.08.23:

When we bought The Old Chequers, the village and the surrounding houses were in a very different state, and I would like to think that we made some contribution, if only a small one, to driving that positive change. Subsequent to our investment in the village, multiple neighbouring properties have been restored and improved upon, and the pub went from being dilapidated to being a shining light of the surrounding area. I would like to think that The Old Chequers, which is aimed at multi-generational family gatherings, has exposed so many more people to South Creake and the surrounding North Norfolk, and though it might have brought some change to our direct neighbours, the community as a whole has benefitted from increased tourism. It was the previous owners' dream to create a tourism-focused property, and they extensively renovated it for that purpose; we are now simply following through on that vision, while enjoying it as well with our families and friends whenever we can. The Old Chequers creates work for various local businesses.

The transformation of the cart shed into a games room is fundamentally about creating a dedicated indoor space for us and our guests to gather, especially during the evenings.

In its original state, the cart shed was sparingly used, with usually just a single car parked there, despite the capacity for more (it was very difficult to get a second car in, so people never bothered). We must remember that using the cart shed and the adjoining courtyard for parking is a courtesy, not an obligation. Guests at The Old Chequers have the same rights as other properties on Front and Back streets to park on the roadside. We have encouraged off-street parking, but it cannot be imposed.

It is worth noting that from a planning perspective, the guidance is that we should aim for 3 parking spaces on site, given that this is a 6-bedroom house. I note the various comments referring to our capacity for 14 people, but that extra capacity is on a sofa bed that adjoins one of the bedrooms and is targeted at families with young children (like ours) who don't want to sleep separately from the parents. As mentioned in my planning application, our historical data shows an average of 4 cars used by visitors to The Old Chequers. This was typically split with 3 cars in the courtyard and one in the cart shed. However, we have always encouraged that up to 4 cars can park inside the courtyard. I have attached the historic picture we always shared with guests to indicate the parking arrangements, clearly showing 4 cars in the courtyard (and one in the cart shed). I also attach a recent picture below, after the completion of the works, showing 4 cars in the courtyard which is how we now encourage guests to park. As can be seen, these large family cars fit in comfortably.

Additionally, in my opinion, the cart shed changes have no negative impact on neighbour amenity – i.e., through noise, overlooking, overshadowing, smells, light pollution, loss of daylight, loss of privacy, dust, or vibration. This is an existing structure that is not being extended. The area cannot be seen directly by any of the neighbours from their homes. I notice complaints from my neighbours at No. 30 Front Street saying that the games room lights shine into their windows, which is not possible. I have attached a drawing showing the location of the games room and the neighbours, with no line of sight from any neighbour.

It is also worth pointing out, for clarity, that the games room is a single-story part of the house, with the part of the house facing Front Street (Blue box) is a double story. By enclosing the cart shed on the courtyard side and making it as soundproof as possible, we are actively attempting to reduce noise from the house.

This letter can be shown in full, with photos, on the public realm.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2/87/2034/CA Demolition of ground floor walling and removal of roof to link first floor extension to front and rear buildings. Permitted 04.08.1987 (Delegated).

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT

The Parish Council believes that parking provision at the property is inadequate and impacts on highway safety. The property is advertised as a luxury holiday home that can accommodate 14 guests and states that there is parking on the premises for guests.

However, there is inadequate parking for the guests as guests frequently park in the layby that is adjacent to the property. The layby is double yellow lined, parking is prevented at this point because this is a public right of way over the ford through to Back Street. Parking that causes an obstruction to the public right of way is a criminal offence and can be reported to the Police. Obstructive parking regularly prevents residents in the village using a highly used route to access both Front Street and Back Street. Parking in this area has made use of the PROW particularly difficult for the disabled, elderly and families with younger children using pushchairs. Vehicles have also been parked in an obstructive manner with electric car charging cables across the PROW.

Additional parking on the main B1355 also impacts on highway safety. This is the main route from Fakenham to Burnham Market and has a particularly high vehicle count

especially in the summer months. This is also frequented by large agricultural vehicles. Therefore cars parking adjacent to The Old Chequers on the B1355, a narrow section of the roadway, obstructs visibility for road users and can prevent larger agricultural vehicles navigating the stretch or impacts on pedestrian safety as vehicles make use of the only footway to avoid parked vehicles.

In addition to this, the number of guests staying at the property regularly causes a noise or disturbance to neighbouring properties. The immediate area and indeed the village is residence to young families through to the elderly. Given that the property attracts large groups of guests, is within a central village location and the number of other houses closely surrounding The Old Chequers, noise from the property particularly during late evening regularly impacts on the residents living in very close proximity.

As you are aware the application is retrospective so the work has now been completed. Given that the property is situated within a conservation area the Parish Council would comment that the visual appearance and finishing materials have an adverse impact. The work that has been done is neither attractive or sympathetic to an old building. In particular the style of windows and brickwork does not reflect the existing style of the property.

The Parish Council have requested that the planning application be 'called in' by Borough Councillor Chris Morley so that it can be considered by the planning committee.

Highways Authority : NO OBJECTION

Whilst it is evident from historic streetview imagery that the cart shed was used for parking which would be displaced by the proposal, however, given the historic use, current on street parking in the vicinity and removal of on street waiting restrictions, NCC would find any objection on highway safety grounds difficult to substantiate in the event of an appeal.

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 restrict the grant of consent.

Conservation Team: OBJECT

37 Front Street lies within the South Creake Conservation Area. It, and the buildings behind it are marked as Important Unlisted Buildings and are therefore non-designated heritage assets using the recent NPPF terminology. The cart shed which is the subject of this application seems to be missed off of the mapping and is not marked as a building of interest however, it is clearly seen within the context of buildings which are, therefore, any works to it have the possibility of causing an impact upon the significance of the non-designated heritage assets marked.

The building, before conversion was a simple cartshed, a pantile roof over a simple space divided, off centre with a three quarters high solid wall and a post. The building had a horizontal emphasis due to the minimal divisions and was simple and utilitarian in appearance. This type of building would be expected to the rear of this particular building as, being historically a public house associated with the adjacent brewery, it required outbuildings in which to store machinery and stable horses or carts.

The outbuilding in its current form has introduced glazing to the front which has created a more dominant vertical emphasis due to the chunky glazing details. This has entirely altered the appearance of the building and its historic relationship with the building along Front Street. While the principle of ancillary use could be acceptable, the glazing used has

materially altered the character of the building and the context of its former use. A less vertically emphasised glazing could be used such as slim, aluminium framed doors between one or two timber posts which would keep the cart shed feel to the building and retain the hierarchy of spaces and uses on the site. The conservation team therefore consider that there has been less than substantial harm, low on the scale caused to the significance of the non-designated heritage assets on this site through the unsympathetic conversion of a building within their setting.

This has had a detrimental impact upon the hierarchy of built form and concept of historic uses on the site which has impacted upon the conservation area also in this location. We therefore have strong concerns in relation to the scheme and suggest that some changes, as noted above are required.

REPRESENTATIONS

SIX public comments received all **OBJECT** for the following reasons:

- Continually let for purpose as AIR BNB.
- Parking issues - not enough space on site.
- The main road is the B1355 used by many types of vehicles. The road is narrow when there is parking on the road.
- Unsafe visibility on the road.
- Wheelchair users difficult to manoeuvre on road and to the bridge.
- Cars blocking access to the footbridge.
- Electric car leads near to river.
- Bins have moved and creates blocking.
- New spotlight shines into neighbour windows.
- Not in keeping with the rest of the property. All other walls are brick and flint.
- No respect to neighbour amenity.
- The Old Chequers should be protected, of special architecture and of historic interest.
- Increased traffic on the road.
- Noise.
- Pleasant views ruined by waste bins.
- Two less car parking spaces than before.
- Not consistent with the Conservation Area.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS12 - Environmental Assets

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
National Design Guide 2021

OTHER GUIDANCE

South Creake Conservation Area Character Statement.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations are:

- *Principle of development
- *Form and character
- *Impact on neighbour amenity
- *Parking
- *Any other matters requiring consideration prior to determination of the application

Principle of Development:

The development is within the village of South Creake, a smaller village and hamlet as defined in Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy these will be limited to specific identified needs only in accordance with Policy CS06 development in rural areas.

This application seeks retrospective planning permission for a games room which is situated to the north (side) of the site, situated behind the main house within the curtilage of an existing dwelling within a rural area.

The proposal must maintain local character and a high-quality environment. Although the conservation officer was not in total agreement with the design it would have a neutral effect on the Conservation Area and comply with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy. The games room would be located behind the main dwelling so only slightly seen from the street scene. Additionally, with regards to Policy DM17 the site has not changed in regard to bedrooms and only three spaces is needed.

Form and Character:

This application seeks retrospective planning permission for a games room which is situated to the north of the site. The games room measures 8.6m long by 6.3m wide, 4m high and 2.2m to the eaves with a hipped roof , in the same footprint as what was the cart shed and storage area.

The only external changes to this cart shed/games room have been to the front (north east elevation) and the rear with the addition of a set of bi folding doors. The applicant has added a window closest to the north and two sets of bi folding doors to the front.

The games room is situated behind the frontage of the main dwelling and would only be seen driving from north to the south of the village. Therefore, minimal impact on the street scene.

The existing cart shed was a simple design with a pantile roof and a high solid wall. The building had a horizontal emphasis and utilitarian in appearance. The Conservation Officer is not duly happy with the design of the games room as has introduced chunky glazing to the front which creates a more dominant elevation which has altered the appearance of the building and the historic relationship with the building along Front Street vertical emphasis.

It appears the applicant was hoping the design of the games room would be in keeping with the host dwelling that is currently on site so the elevations around the courtyard were matching.

Due to the games room being situated to the rear of the site behind the main dwelling the work would be considered as less than substantial harm to the non-designated heritage asset. It would be less detrimental on the dwelling. Pedestrians are mostly likely to see the minimal amendments to the games room and would be hardly noticeable whilst driving past in a vehicle, with limited impacts to the street scene.

The application is of neutral effect and would comply with Policies CS06, CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy and Policies DM15 and DM17 of the SADMPP.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity:

The retrospective games room has not increased in height and is hidden behind the front part of the property to the front of 37 Front Street. Properties 28 and 30 Front Street are opposite No 37 however the games room is not visible from this part of street scene.

No 32 Front Street is set further forward than No 28 and 30 and has a small view of the games room. The games room is approx. 18m from No 32 so some light could be seen from the games room however not enough to warrant a refusal.

To the north of the site is Burnham Road. Between No 37 and 54 is a low wall but with mature trees to the boundary of No 54. The wall which faces north is still solid with no windows.

To the west of the games room is the rear garden with a property behind. However, this properties to the west (Anchorage 52 Back Street and Blackford Cottage 50 Back Street South Creake) are a distance of 23m from the proposal.

As this is the case, the application would accord with CS08 of the Core Strategy and DM15 of the SADMPP.

Parking:

For a four-bed or more dwelling, three car parking spaces are required under the Norfolk Parking Guidance 2022 and DM17 of the SADMPP. However, how the original cart shed was positioned, it is very unlikely that two cars could have ever fitted or turned around in this area safely. Norfolk Parking Guidance recommends a garage should measure 7m by 3m. The cart shed/storage was and still is 8.6m by 6.3m. However, due to position turning would still be an issue. The minimum dimensions for a car parking space should be 5 x 2.5m (12.5m²). The courtyard area measures approx. 36m² and therefore four cars in this area would not accord with parking standards. As the existing cart shed could most likely only house one car the loss of the cart shed to a games room would be of minimal impact.

The applicant has provided a picture of four cars parked in the courtyard area parked in two rows, see letter from applicant dated 16.08.23 on the public realm.

This former public house, which is now used as a dwelling has space for two cars on the site between the retrospective games room and the kitchen/hallway area. As the numbers of bedrooms have not changed under the parking guidance and Policy DM17 of the SADMPP it would be hard to recommend a refusal on parking due to the original location of the storage/cart shed and safety measures when manoeuvring within the courtyard area.

Highway Safety:

Whilst it is evident from historic street view imagery that the cart shed was used for parking, given the historic use, current on street parking in the vicinity and removal of on street restrictions, NCC would find any objection on highway safety grounds difficult to substantiate in the event of an appeal.

Additionally, in relation to highways issues only, as this proposal does not affect the current traffic patterns of the free flow of traffic, there is no observations from NCC.

Flood Risk:

Due to the location of the site, it is within an area at risk of flooding. This is an ancillary building to the main dwelling and would need refuge in the event of flooding. Due to the location of the site, it is within an area at risk of flooding. An informative would be added to the decision if approved.

Any other matters requiring consideration prior to determination of the application:

Although this dwelling is considered an Air BNB it would still be classed as residential.

As this is a large Air BNB this can affect the Front Street which is quite narrow. Due to the cart sheds position on the site, the effects from the application would not change the usage of the street.

The area to the north of the site where Air BNB customers used to park now has yellow lines so the footbridge across the river should be accessible.

Unfortunately, bins are expected within a residential unit. If there are any issues to noise, smell etc this should be dealt with through Community Safety and Neighbourhood Nuisance.

CONCLUSION:

Although not specifically having any public benefits to the area, the retrospective games room, by virtue of its balanced appearance and less than substantial harm to the non-designated heritage asset does not give rise to any potential impacts.

The host dwelling screens the majority of the games room and does not have any detrimental neighbouring amenity issues.

Car parking would be on site and on Front Street.

This application complies with the Paragraphs 197, 199, 202 and 203 of the NPPF, Policies CS06, CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy and Policies DM15 and DM17 of the SADMPP.

This application is recommended for **APPROVAL**.

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 - location plan received 14.06.23, block plan received 14.06.23 and existing and proposed plans 266/23 received 05.07.23.
- 1 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.