



Committee Report

Planning Committee North – 12 December 2023

Application no DC/22/2364/FUL

Location

Cornfield Mews
6A Stradbroke Road
Southwold
Suffolk
IP18 6LQ

Expiry date 7 August 2022

Application type Full Application

Applicant Mr & Ms Sandra & Greg Devaney & Barnard

Parish Southwold

Proposal Replacement Dwelling

Case Officer Joe Blackmore
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1. Summary

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for a replacement dwelling at 'Cornfield Mews', Southwold.
- 1.2 The decision on this application has been delayed because officers were originally unconvinced about the claimed residential use of the existing building. The applicant was therefore required to prove this use through an application for a lawful development certificate; evidence was provided in support of that certificate application and on 08 Sep 2023 a lawful development certificate (application ref. DC/23/1493/CLE) was granted to establish that Cornfield Mews had a lawful use as a separate dwellinghouse (use class C3); this establishes the principle of a dwelling on the site.
- 1.3 The proposed replacement dwelling is an interesting design - distinctive and reflects the seaside location in an imaginative, playful way. It is a highly constrained site, and this proposal works within that context. The objection from the Town Council is solely in regard

to the proposed white metal shingle finish; however, officers have sought input from the Council's Senior Design and Conservation Officer, who notes that there does seem to be a prevalence of light coloured painted brick and render in the vicinity so the proposal would not be as visually jarring as the Town Council suggest - especially considering how tight the site is it would be very difficult to take in the full expanse in a single view. The applicant has been offered the opportunity to amend the colour of the metal shingle finish, but they have decided to stick with the proposed white colour; the applicant's agent intends to speak at the Planning Committee meeting and provide some information on this design choice.

- 1.4 Given the constraints of the site, a construction management plan and method statement would be required as a pre-commencement condition to manage localised amenity impact during the construction period. The conditions as recommended in this report have been agreed to by the applicant's agent.
- 1.5 For the reasons set out in the report, the principle of development is established, and this replacement dwelling is of good design in a constrained and historically sensitive location. The Town Council acknowledge positive aspects of the design and the only area of concern is regarding the external materials, which officers are satisfied with following consultation with the Senior Design and Conservation Officer. The recommendation is therefore to grant permission.
- 1.6 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee (North) by the Referral Panel.

2. Consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Southwold Town Council	5 July 2022	26 July 2022
<p><i>"Recommendation: No objection subject to changes in materials."</i></p> <p>Summary</p> <p><i>STC supports high quality modern design which this application is save for the choice of materials. The use of light coloured metal as the dominant material (metal roof and metal shingle sidings for the elevations), making an otherwise pleasing modern design out of character and over-bearing, causing harm to neighbour amenity by creating visual blight and heat.</i></p> <p><i>We note that the applicant's planning statement refers to the Suffolk Coastal Plan and not the Waveney Local Plan or, more importantly for this application, the Southwold NP.</i></p> <p>Southwold NP Design Policy Applied to this Application</p> <p><i>The key planning issue here is design, and the relevant NP policy, which is specifically drafted to deal with the issue raised by this application is Policy SWD 6. The Design policy identifies Recurrent Design Issues, which every application must address. One of these is Visual Amenity – see Paragraphs 5.28 – 5.31.</i></p> <p><i>The emphasis on visual amenity – irrespective of whether the site is visible from the street – is one of the most important and distinctive elements of the SNP.</i></p>		

Paragraph 5.31, P. 36, states: ‘Poor quality design creates visual blight, which will always have a significant adverse impact on visual amenity. In Southwold, the design of buildings can be experienced not only from the street but also from the public or private domain in the rear of buildings, or public rights of way or shared private paths. Accordingly, when an application is assessed, its impact on visual amenity should be considered from all sides, including from private space from which it would be visible....’.

The existing building has been created by cobbling together extensions and outbuildings in a densely developed area, surrounded by residential buildings on three sides. A site visit counted at least six dwellings that would have views of the site from their gardens or first story windows. See photographs at the end of this response on pp 2-4. This is confirmed by the limited selection of photos in the D & A Statement.

We support the use of a cobble stone plinth but the all metal siding and roof would create a glaring, light reflective effect that is out of character with its surroundings (self-evident from the photos) and visually over-bearing.

Equally important, this choice of material is not environmentally sustainable. It is widely accepted that we will be experiencing higher temperatures for prolonged periods. Reflective light coloured metal would accentuate, not mitigate, the adverse impacts of climate change by generating heat whose impact would be felt in the rear gardens and the rear rooms of the surrounding buildings. We like the idea of shingles, and a light colour would work with the Southwold ‘palette’. However, we strongly urge that the shingles be wood; wood siding is a feature of Southwold and interspersed randomly through the town. An all metal building is a totally alien concept.

In sum, this design is not yet good enough to be accepted – see SNP Paragraph 5.15, P. 34. Nor does it yet comply with the National Design Guide (incorporated into the SNP Design Policy in Paragraph 5.16, P. 34), which says that good design is achieved by making the right choices about layout; form and scale; appearance (a concept not included in the Local Plan), landscape, materials and detailing. (Italics added.)

Currently, for the reasons set out above, the design does not comply with Policy SWD 6 –Design, set out below – especially A, B, C and D. However, with a change in materials from metal to wood, it would be considered high quality innovative design.”

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC County Archaeological Unit	5 July 2022	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	5 July 2022	25 July 2022
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	N/A	16 October 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Environmental Protection	5 July 2022	No response
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Waveney Norse - Property And Facilities	5 July 2022	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Essex And Suffolk Water PLC	5 July 2022	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Ecology	5 July 2022	18 July 2022
Summary of comments: No objections, recommend standard conditions.		

3. Publicity

The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

Category Conservation Area	Published 8 July 2022	Expiry 29 July 2022	Publication Beccles and Bungay Journal
Category Conservation Area	Published 8 July 2022	Expiry 29 July 2022	Publication Lowestoft Journal

4. Site notices

General Site Notice

Reason for site notice: Conservation Area

Date posted: 7 July 2022

Expiry date: 28 July 2022

5. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

WLP1.2 - Settlement Boundaries (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.33 - Residential Gardens and Urban Infilling (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.21 - Sustainable Transport (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.29 - Design (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.37 - Historic Environment (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.38 - Non-Designated Heritage Assets (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

WLP8.39 - Conservation Areas (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (East Suffolk Council, Adopted June 2021)

SWD4 - Principal residence requirement (Southwold Neighbourhood Plan, 'Made' February 2022)

SWD6 - Design (Southwold Neighbourhood Plan, 'Made' February 2022)

SWD7 - Parking (Southwold Neighbourhood Plan, 'Made' February 2022)

6. Site Description

6.1 The site is situated in a backland position to the rear of No. 6 Stradbroke Road, adjacent to No.11 East Green and is accessed from the rear between the Adnams office and the Southwold Methodist Church. The site is situated within the Southwold Conservation Area on the very edge of the Seaside Corporation Character Area. There are several Grade II Listed buildings in the vicinity including the Sole Bay Inn, nos 8-10 East Green and the Lighthouse. Several others in the vicinity are noted as buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, although the building the subject of this enquiry is not noted as such.

7. Proposal

7.1 The applicant's Design and Access Statement explains the proposal as:

- *"Demolish the existing dwelling and recycling all materials.*
- *Erect a new highly insulated timber frame dwelling. Possibly of thin CLT timber panel construction with external insulation*
- *Coursed pebble ground floor and white feather shingles to first floor inspired by the local bird population, seaside context of white rendered and painted houses and repetition of a pattern as seen in painted brick.*
- *Improve the amenity for the dwelling and for surrounding occupiers."*; and

"The first floor in matt white aluminium feathered shingles will improve light and outlook from neighbouring dwellings. This material has been chosen to reflect the colour palette seen locally in numerous houses and the lighthouse. The context is red brick, pebble walls and white rendered flat surfaces."

8. Third Party Representations

- 8.1 Four local residents/neighbours have submitted comments of objection in response to the public consultation period.
- 8.2 Some objections relate to covenants imposed on property 6A Cornfield Mews; however, covenants are outside of planning process being a civil matter and thus, not a material consideration.
- 8.3 Objections have also been received in regard to the impact upon local residential amenity through construction work, overlooking, noise and privacy concerns. Objections also have been raised in regard to the marginal increase in footprint of the building, the proposed design, and the layout/access path.
- 8.4 An additional neighbour letter was received in response to the comments from the Design and Conservation Officer. This objection letter sets out that (inter alia):

"The proposed development will cause a definite visual blight! I fail to understand what benefit a house in an enclosed alley way with limited or no natural sunlight will benefit Southwold. There is no direct access to the property, so any building work will be a great inconvenience to surrounding properties. I am all in favour of innovative design, which inspires and allows a town to move forward. However, not at the cost of common sense."

9. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 9.1 The lawfulness of the existing building as a C3 Dwellinghouse has been clearly established through DC/23/1493/CLE. The fall-back position for the applicant is that they could renovate the existing building and allow its occupancy as an unrestricted dwellinghouse without any further permission needed from the Council. As this is an urban location, with the principle of residential development established, there can be no objection to the principle of a

replacement dwelling (especially in this case where the existing building is of no historic or architectural significance). Local plan policy WLP8.33 - Residential Gardens and Urban Infilling, is relevant to the proposals in addition to other detailed Development Plan policies listed in the policies section of this report.

Design of Development and Historic Environment

- 9.2 The site is located within the Conservation Area and there are Listed Buildings proximate to the site. The Council therefore has statutory duties to preserve the setting of those listed buildings, and also the character and appearance of the conservation area. These objectives are reflected in the Historic Environment objectives of the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Development Plan.
- 9.3 The existing building is not listed, and it is not identified as being of any local or historic importance within the Southwold Conservation Area appraisal; on the appraisal map it shows the building is located to the rear of four grade II listed buildings and, to the west, two buildings of 'local importance' which are Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs).
- 9.4 A heritage statement has been provided in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and also to determine if the building itself was a NDHA. A heritage statement has been submitted as part of the application and the findings of the heritage statement clearly show the building has been altered and extended significantly and very little material of the original outbuilding(s) still remain. The Design and Conservation Officer has confirmed its replacement is acceptable.
- 9.5 Noting the Town Council's objection on design grounds, the Council's Senior Design and Conservation Officer has reviewed the scheme and advised as follows:

"I note the scale is very similar to the existing so assume that is not an issue. The TC only seem to be objecting to the white metal shingle finish, however there does seem to be a prevalence of light coloured painted brick and render in the vicinity so I don't think that this would be as visually jarring as they suggest especially considering how tight the site is it would be very difficult to take in the full expanse in a single view. Bringing the white shingles over the entire roof would make it stand out within the more traditional roofscape but from what I can see there would not be any real views of this other than from a limited number of neighbouring properties. The design is distinctive and reflects the seaside location in an imaginative, playful way. I think that the feather shape is important to the success of this scheme so we should make sure that that can't get watered down if it is to be approved. Changing the metal shingles to wood or clay tile would make the design more muted but is that what we want? Distinctive design should be encouraged in my opinion."

- 9.6 The proposed design is distinctive and is considered to have no harmful impact upon the setting of the listed buildings. The site is so constrained that there will be little visual impact on the wider conservation area; in any case, even when visible, the design is of a high-quality and will cause no harm to the historic environment. The scheme accords with policies SWD6, WLP8.33, WLP8.37 and WLP8.39 of the Development Plan.

Residential Amenity

- 9.7 The proposal is unlikely to have any additional impact upon the neighbouring properties or wider residential amenity, as windows have been located to avoid overlooking and the proposed new terrace will be screened and face towards the access point which does not overlook any neighbouring properties.
- 9.8 The existing building already has a large window opening on the eastern side. Whilst it may currently only serve a stairwell, it is a large, glazed area that allows views into neighbouring properties; the proposal creates a window in the same location, and therefore the impact from overlooking will be similar (albeit acknowledged that the use of the upper floor space as living accommodation may be more intense than how the building has previously been used).
- 9.9 In terms of size and scale, the replacement building is very similar to the existing and there is no significant increase in scale proposed. The relationship of the building to surrounding development will therefore be similar to the existing situation and unlikely to cause harm.
- 9.10 Subject to a condition securing a construction method statement and management plan, the scheme is acceptable in amenity terms in accordance with the Development Plan.

Highway Safety

- 9.11 Suffolk County Council Highways Authority have commented on the application as follows: *"Notice is hereby given that the County Council as Highways Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission due to the application not having a detrimental effect upon the adopted highway."*
- 9.12 Officers acknowledge that no on-site parking is to be provided; however, that is exactly the same as the existing situation, and with it being only a 1-bedroom dwelling (again, as existing) there is no increased impact on the local highways network arising from this proposal. The site is sustainably located, and future residents may have to rely on more distant off-site parking. Officers therefore do not consider there to be significant conflict with policies SWD7 and WLP8.21.

Ecology

- 9.13 The application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) that has been reviewed by the Council's Ecologist. There are no objections, subject to standard conditions being applied to any permission granted.

Principal Residence Restriction

- 9.14 Policy SWD4 of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to restrict new dwellings to being a principal residence/home, only (i.e., not used for holiday letting or as a second home). However, as a replacement dwelling, no such restriction can be applied in granting planning permission.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 For the reasons set out in the report, the principle of development is established, and this replacement dwelling is of good design in a constrained and historically sensitive location. The Town Council acknowledge positive aspects of the design and the only area of concern

is regarding the external materials, which officers are satisfied with following consultation with the Senior Design and Conservation Officer. The recommendation is therefore to grant permission.

11. Recommendation

11.1 Approve.

12. Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within a period of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers 01, 07C, 08C, 09B, 10A and 11; received 13/6/2022.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.

3. No building work shall commence until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
 - (i) Details regarding the proposed finish, and 'edging' of the white metal tiles around the proposed terrace and fenestration, and thickness of individual tiles,
 - (ii) A sample panel of the proposed flint/pebble work shall be constructed, with this either being made available for the LPA to physically view on request; or, for photographic details of this sample panel to be provided, and
 - (iii) Details of all other materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the dwelling.

Thereafter, all work must be carried out using the approved materials and in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that any new detailing and materials will not harm the traditional/historic character of the building; the application does not include the necessary details for consideration.

4. In the event that contamination which has not already been identified to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is found or suspected on the site it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Unless agreed in writing by the LPA no further development (Including any construction, demolition, site clearance, removal of underground tanks and relic structures) shall take place until this condition has been complied with in its entirety.

An investigation and risk assessment must be completed in accordance with a scheme which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and conform with prevailing guidance (including BS 10175:2011+A1:2013 and CLR11) and a written report of the findings

must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Where remediation is necessary a detailed remediation method statement (RMS) must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The RMS must include detailed methodologies for all works to be undertaken, site management procedures, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria. The approved RMS must be carried out in its entirety and the Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification prior to the commencement of the remedial works.

Following completion of the approved remediation scheme a validation report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation must be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

5. Development must be undertaken in accordance with the ecological avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures identified within the Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (DCS Ecology, April 2022) as submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

Reason: To ensure that ecological receptors are adequately protected and enhanced as part of the development.

6. No removal of hedgerows, trees or works to or demolition of buildings or structures that may be used by breeding birds shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that nesting birds are protected.

7. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The Statement shall provide for:

- the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, if appropriate;
- wheel washing facilities;
- measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;

- a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works; and
- delivery, demolition and construction working hours.

The Statement shall also set out very clearly the logistics of how the existing building is to be demolished, and a method of construction of the new building; this shall include working practices, machinery/plant/equipment required to carry out the work and how that will be operated on this site to carry out the approved development.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period for the development.

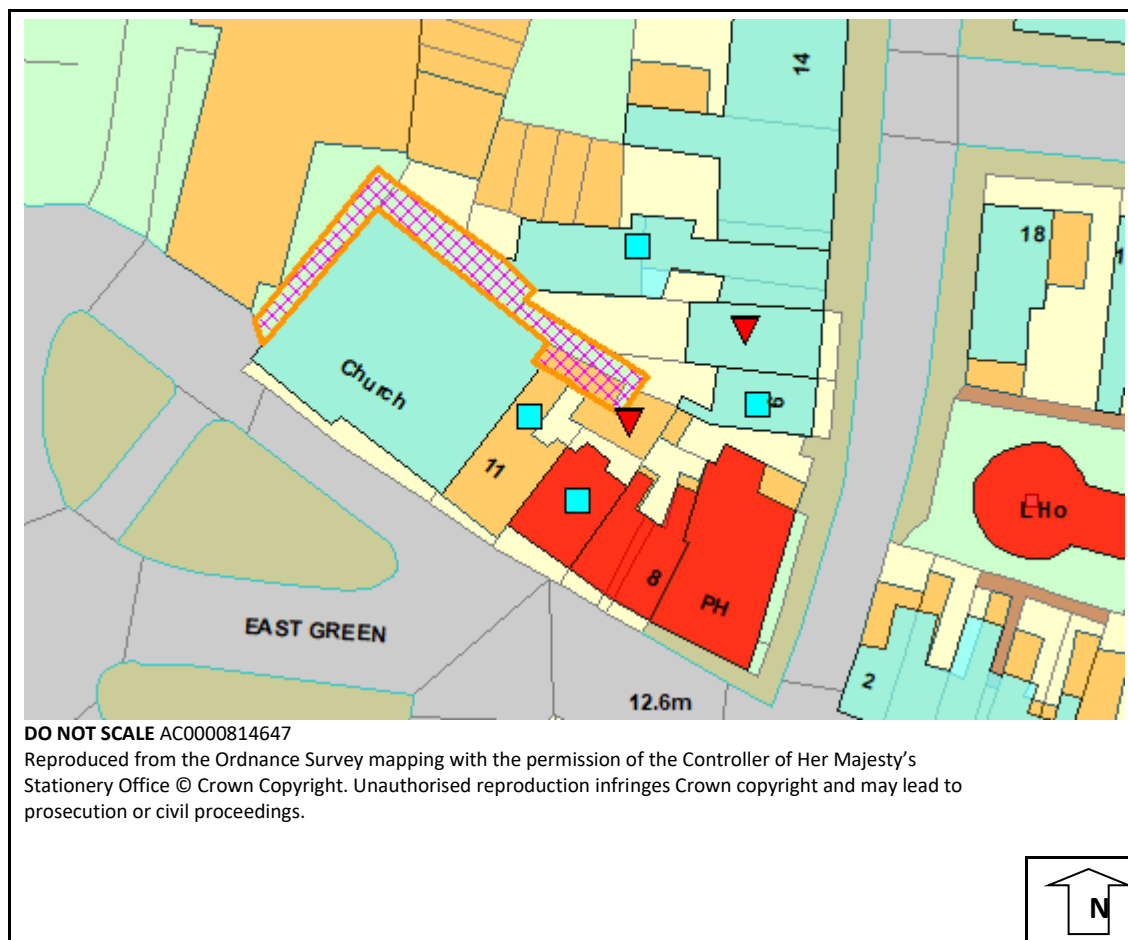
Reason: this is a highly constrained site, and the construction process needs to be carefully managed to limit local amenity impact.

Note: Failure to discharge this condition prior to any work of development (including demolition) will result in this planning permission being invalidated.





13. Background information

See application reference DC/22/2364/FUL on [Public Access](#)

Map



Key

-  Notified, no comments received
-  Objection
-  Representation
-  Support