



## Committee Report

Planning committee - 12 March 2024

Application no DC/23/4817/FUL

**Location**

1 Broadland Close  
Worlingham  
Beccles  
Suffolk  
NR34 7AT

**Expiry date** 29 February 2024

**Application type** Full Application

**Applicant** Mrs Carol Punt

**Parish** Worlingham

**Proposal** Remove hedge on boundary and replace with 2m high close boarded fence

**Case Officer** Debbi Wicks  
07584 642000  
debbi.wicks@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 This is a householder application in relation to a proposed section of fencing adjacent to the highway, in lieu of the existing conifer hedge, which is in decline.
- 1.2 The application triggered the referral process as the Parish Council does not support the application, which is contrary to the officer recommendation of approval. The Referral Panel chose to refer the case to Planning Committee (North) for determination.

## 2. Consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Worlingham Parish Council	11 January 2024	Late response 12 February 2024
<i>There is a need for retaining open plan around Broadland Close. Change of street scene would be the impact of this application. It was agreed by all to REFUSE on these grounds. It was suggested that if the applicant wished to have a fence - this be placed inside the boundary - with the greenery left to create a softer scene for the street.</i>		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	11 January 2024	12 January 2024
Summary of comments: No objection. Does not wish to restrict the grant of permission due to the application not having a detrimental effect upon the adopted highway.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Landscape Team	11 January 2024	19 January 2024
Summary of comments: <i>Looking at historic Streetview images of this hedge, I can see that it has declined in health and condition over recent years with a number of areas bare of foliage on the outer side. This species of conifer is too big for a garden of this size and I would have no objections to its removal. It would be preferable if it was replaced with a more suitable species of hedge for the sake of the appearance of the locality, but given that there is already a close boarded fence on the other side of the road so it won't be entirely out of place. Overall I have no strong grounds for objection.</i>		

## 3. Site notices

General Site Notice

Reason for site notice: General Site Notice

Date posted: 2 February 2024

Expiry date: 23 February 2024

## 4. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

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

## **5. Site Description**

- 5.1 1 Broadland Close is a bungalow of modern construction, situated on a corner plot at the junction with Sheridan Walk. The site is within a residential setting, where properties are a mix of single and two storey and varying designs, arranged in a regular formation around the cul-de-sac within modest sized plots.
- 5.2 Properties in the vicinity are predominantly open plan to the front, with enclosed rear gardens. The exception to this is numbers 2 and 19 Broadland Close, to the north of the site, which are located either side of the hammer head and have hedging and soft landscaping around their curved front boundaries. The site is not in a conservation area and there are no protected (TPO) trees nearby.

## **6. Proposal**

- 6.1 No.1 faces two highways: Sheridan Walk to the south side, where the applicant's front garden around the corner of the junction has been left open, other than some attractive shrubbery; the main entrance to the dwelling is located on the east side, accessed from, and facing Broadland Close. The rear garden is positioned to the north side and is enclosed along the eastern boundary by a two-metre-tall conifer hedge which directly abuts the pavement. This 14 metre stretch of hedge then adjoins and aligns with the evergreen hedge belonging to no.2; the neighbour behind, to the north of the site.
- 6.2 The conifer hedge along the pavement belonging to no.1 has died back over recent years and now contains several bare patches, which are unable to be maintained any longer. After considering their options, the applicant is requesting to replace the 14 metre stretch with five-and-a-half panels of close boarded fencing, supported by concrete posts and a shallow gravel board base.
- 6.3 The applicant's reason for doing so is to provide an immediate solution to enable their rear garden to continue to be used with privacy and security.

## **7. Third party Representations**

- 7.1 No comments have been received from neighbours or members of the public.
- 7.2 The Council's Principal Landscape Officer raises no concern with regard to impact on character and appearance.
- 7.3 There are no highway concerns/objections as the section is set well back from the junction.
- 7.4 The single objection is from the Parish Council, who consider that the proposed fence would be out of keeping with the open plan nature of the site and result in a harmful change in character.

## **8. Planning Considerations**

- 8.1 Policy WLP8.29 of the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan is relevant to this proposal. This policy expects proposals to respect the site context and its surroundings, without adverse impact upon neighbouring amenity.

- 8.2 Applying those key considerations to the case in question, the proposal is judged to be mitigated by a number of factors.
- 8.3 The Parish Council is concerned that adverse impact would arise as a result of the change to the streetscene and that there is a need for retaining an open plan feel around Broadland Close. In response to these concerns, officers have made a balanced assessment and conclude that, whilst there will invariably be a change to the streetscape, it will not be entirely out of character or alter the open plan nature of the close for the following reasons:
- The section of boundary treatment under consideration encloses the rear garden of the property, which happens to border the highway on one side. It does not extend across the whole front elevation of the bungalow and the front garden forming the corner of the site will remain open plan, as intended, with no boundary treatment added.
  - As the two metre fence will replace a two metre hedge there is no introduction of a tall enclosure where there is none already, and no increase in the existing height along the highway edge.
  - There is a close boarded fence enclosing the rear garden of the property directly opposite, albeit this is set back from the highway, and also a 2 metre tall fence directly abutting the pavement at no.15 Broadland Close; thus, the character would not be entirely altered as there is already a mix of hedging and fencing in the immediate vicinity, as would be expected in this type of residential neighbourhood.
- 8.4 East Suffolk Council receives a number of applications each year for frontage boundary fences that either exceed the exempt (permitted development) height limit of one metre and/or replacement hedging, usually in connection with enlarging gardens to the side taking in highway verge, or where the hedge is in a poor condition and these requests are assessed on an individual basis, with many refused (and sometimes appealed) where they are deemed to be inappropriate within the specific site context, usually due to their prominence and loss of character in the streetscene.
- 8.5 However, the current case is not judged to be one of those situations where harm would arise. Had the proposal been to continue the fence around the front corner, that would not have been supported by officers due to the appearance, but also highway safety impact; but as the proposal relates only to the side section where there is existing tall boundary treatment and the current hedge is clearly in a poor state and will continue to deteriorate visually, the planning balance weighs in favour of this particular proposal.
- 8.6 Furthermore, the applicant would be able to remove the hedge at any time without consent and replace it with a one metre high fence without requiring planning permission, which would result in the same change of appearance to the streetscape; however, it would not provide them with privacy to their rear amenity space. The Parish Council suggests moving any new fence back from the pavement and planting in front of it, which is a tactic that is often used to soften the appearance when a site is particularly prominent or has high heritage/landscape value for the public realm; however, asking the applicant to reduce the usable garden space and provide public benefit is not considered to be justified in this particular case, given the fence is deemed to be acceptable. A two-metre-high enclosure is,

however, justified alongside a rear garden, and therefore the proposed height is not deemed to be unreasonable.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The proposal accords with policy, on balance. The new 14m length of fencing is appropriate within its surroundings and will sit alongside the long stretch of hedging adjoining the site to the north side and the deep grass verge opposite, which in combination with the landscaped front garden, will sufficiently retain the overall character of the neighbourhood. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the Development Plan and officers recommend that permission can be granted.

## **10. Recommendation**

- 10.1 Approve.

## **11. 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.

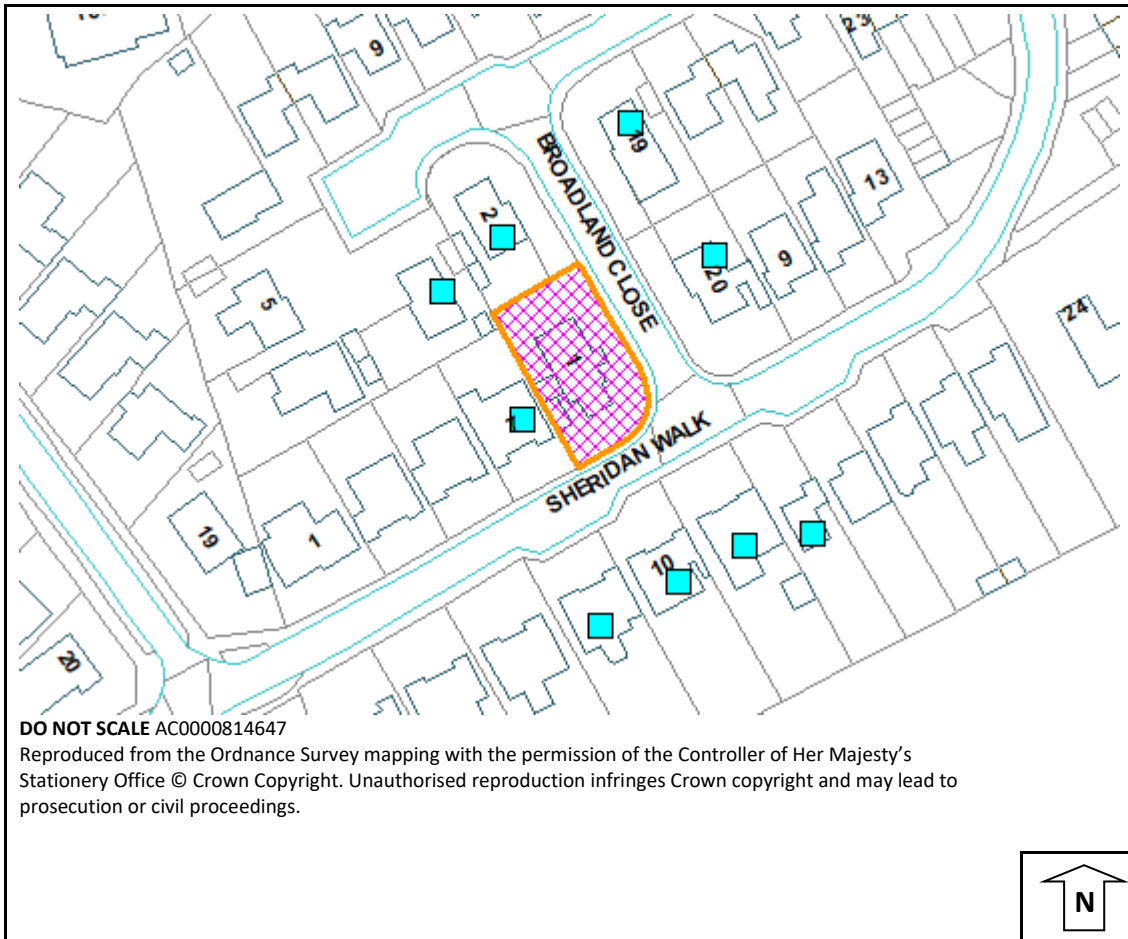
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the Site Plan, proposed Block Plan and Elevations received 12th December 2023 and 4th January 2024, for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.

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

## **Background information**

See application reference DC/23/4817/FUL on [Public Access](#)

# Map



## Key



Notified, no comments received



Objection



Representation



Support