



Committee Report

Planning Committee South - 24 October 2023

Application no DC/23/3039/FUL

Location

Office
Wardens House
View Point Road
Felixstowe
Suffolk
IP11 3TW

Expiry date 11 October 2023

Application type Full Application

Applicant Harwich Haven Authority

Parish Felixstowe

Proposal Installation of 14No. Solar Panels to the Southeast and Southwest roof pitches of Landguard Bungalow.

Case Officer Natalie Webb
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1. Summary

- 1.1. This application seeks the installation of 14 solar panels to the southeast and southwest roof pitches of Landguard Bungalow, View Point Road, Felixstowe, IP11 3TW.
- 1.2. This application is presented to the planning committee as it is considered that East Suffolk Council have 'an interest' in the site. East Suffolk Council is not the owner of the site nor applicant, however we lease the building for accommodation for our Landguard Ranger.
- 1.3. The application is considered to accord with Local and National Policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

2. Site Description

- 2.1. The site is located at the end of a long private driveway adjacent to Landguard Fort, a grade I listed building. The original part of the bungalow was considered to be of some historic interest in earlier applications. The site is not within a conservation area and lies some distance to the south of the AONB, which commences in-line with Shotley Gate. The site is located within Flood Zone 3.
- 2.2. The application site is on the edge of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which forms Landguard Common. It also falls within the Landguard Fort and Associated Field Works Scheduled Monument but is excluded from the scheduling (list entry 1018969). The Bungalow was built in 1895 by Harwich Haven Authority (then known as the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board) as accommodation for its staff.
- 2.3. The Bungalow was continuously used until the retirement of HHA's final inspector in July 1994, apart from a few years during World War II, when all of Landguard Point was taken over by the Military. It was during WWII that the office annex was constructed. The office extension in situ is therefore not original to the bungalow, and of a more utilitarian design regarding the detailing and materials. The surrounding landscape is relatively open, with the reserve accessible and open to the public, as such there are wider views of the property and designated assets on the peninsular.
- 2.4. Various issues were found with the office annex, including damp penetration due to poor gutter detail, cracking to the floor slab in the kitchenette and the poor condition of the asbestos cement sheet roof covering, which came to the Authority's attention following receipt of a Planned Maintenance Report. Subsequent planning application DC/22/2466/FUL for the demolition and reconstruction of an office annex was approved by the Planning Committee on 28 March 2023.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. This proposal seeks the installation of 14 solar panels to the southeast and southwest roof pitches.
- 3.2. The Bungalow is occupied by a Site Ranger from East Suffolk Council, who manages the surrounding nature reserve. The office is used by the warden and Landguard Project staff. The Bungalow is let to East Suffolk Council and owned by the Harwich Haven Authority. As a domestic provide rented property, the Bungalow must have a minimum Energy Efficiency Rating of C by 2028. To exceed this target Harwich Haven Authority plan to install 14No. 6KW Sunpower Maxeon 430W solar panels to the southwest and southeast roof pitches. The installation of these solar panels will ensure an Energy Efficiency Rating of B and reduce the energy cost for the Site Ranger.

4. Consultees

Third Party Representations

- 4.1. No representations were received from neighbouring properties, due to the degree of separation of the site to immediate neighbours.

- 4.2. Comments were received from The Felixstowe Society raising no objections to the proposal.

Parish/Town Council

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|---|----------------|---------------------|
| Felixstowe Town Council | 21 August 2023 | 6 September 2023 |
| Summary of comments: Committee recommended APPROVAL. | | |

Statutory consultees

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Natural England | 21 August 2023 | 5 September 2023 |
| Summary of comments: No objection | | |

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|--|----------------|---------------------|
| Historic England | 21 August 2023 | 5 September 2023 |
| Summary of comments: Due to relatively small scale of the proposals and location of the bungalow in relation to other historic elements of the site it is unlikely that proposed development would result in adverse impact to the significance of the monument through changes to its setting. Historic England have taken into consideration the status of the site as a Scheduled Monument and we can confirm that in our view any resulting harm to the significance of the asset would be negligible. Historic England does not object to the application on heritage grounds and consider that the application would meet the requirements of the NPPF. | | |

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|---|----------------|---------------------|
| SCC Highways Department | 21 August 2023 | 24 August 2023 |
| Summary of comments: 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. | | |

Non statutory consultees

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| SCC Fire And Rescue Service | N/A | 29 August 2023 |

Summary of comments:
Informative information about access to water and fire fighting facilities, including advisory note on the installation of sprinkler systems.

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| East Suffolk Ecology | 21 August 2023 | 11 September 2023 |

Summary of comments:
Based on the available information the proposed development appears unlikely to result in a significant adverse impact on protected species or UK Priority habitats or species (under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)).

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| East Suffolk Environmental Protection | 21 August 2023 | 8 September 2023 |

Summary of comments:
We have no comments to make regarding this application.

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| East Suffolk Landscape Team | 21 August 2023 | 24 August 2023 |

Summary of comments:
No objection.

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| SCC County Archaeological Unit | 21 August 2023 | No response |

Summary of comments:
No response received.

| Consultee | Date consulted | Date reply received |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| East Suffolk Design And Conservation | 21 August 2023 | 22 August 2023 |

Summary of comments:
Support this proposal.

Publicity

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

| Category | Published | Expiry | Publication |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Ancient Monument | 24 August 2023 | 15 September 2023 | East Anglian Daily Times |

Site notices

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| General Site Notice | Reason for site notice: Scheduled Ancient Monument Date posted: 27 August 2023 Expiry date: 18 September 2023 |
|---------------------|---|

5. Planning policy

- National Planning Policy Framework 2023
- SCLP10.1 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)
- SCLP10.4 - Landscape Character (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)
- SCLP11.1 - Design Quality (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)
- SCLP11.2 - Residential Amenity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)
- SCLP11.3 - Historic Environment (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)
- SCLP11.6 - Non-Designated Heritage Assets (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)
- SCLP11.7 - Archaeology (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)
- Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (East Suffolk Council, Adopted June 2021)

6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the district (former Suffolk Coastal area) consists of "The East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (adopted 23 September 2020)".

Principle of Development and Heritage Impact

- 6.2. Paragraph 9.7 of the Local Plan states "Solar panel developments can range in scale from installations on individual buildings to solar farms, and can range in type, from in-built solar panels to mounted solar panels. Solar panel schemes will generally be supported, particularly in new development. Careful consideration will be given to the visual impact in sensitive locations including through design, siting and, where possible, natural screening."
- 6.3. The submitted Heritage Statement provides an important assessment of the significance of the Warden's Cottage, which appears from map regression to be late Victorian in origin and, by virtue of its position, provided staff accommodation for the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board. The building, therefore, has some local importance for its maritime contribution to the understanding of how Harwich Haven was managed in the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century until 1994. It also forms part of the military history of Landguard as it was requisitioned by the military in WWII when its annexe was constructed. For these reasons, although a modest building, the bungalow is essential to retain and to maintain in use. The Council's Principal Design and Conservation Officer has confirmed that for the reasons set out above, the bungalow is important to retain and maintain in use such that support is awarded to this application.
- 6.4. The building is not a listed building and there is no requirement, therefore, for PV panels to avoid being mounted on the principal building (there is no other building, in this case). The addition of the panels will represent a partial and modest change to the appearance of the building but will not harm its integrity, detract from its character or reduce any ability to appreciate its significance.
- 6.5. The panels are proposed for two roof slopes and do not cover the entirety of the roof pitches. The submitted elevations and roof plan clearly illustrate the arrangement and impacts arising. There is a strong justification for historic buildings to benefit from the supply of renewable energy and where that can be accommodated without detriment, such as in this instance, to a building of local importance (only), it is considered that we can be supportive of the principle and design. Conservation of energy need not be at the expense of conservation of character and significance. No harm has been identified, therefore the test at paragraph 203 of the NPPF is not engaged.
- 6.6. For the reasons given above the proposal is considered to accord with SCLP11.1 and SCLP11.3.

Landscape / Visual Amenity

- 6.7. The Council's Principal Landscape and Arboricultural Officer has reviewed the proposed development in regards to the impacts of the installation of solar panels of the roof of the Landguard bungalow. It is not considered that the proposal will have any meaningful adverse landscape or visual impacts and nor will it affect the recorded special qualities of the AONB landscape which is located further to the north, but partly visible within its setting; although it should be noted that there is a good distance of approximately two miles as the crow flies. On that basis, the proposal is considered to accord with SCLP10.4.

Residential Amenity

- 6.8. Due to the site's location, away from any other residential properties, the proposed development will not adversely impact residential amenity. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with SCLP11.2.

Ecology

- 6.9. The application site is located immediately adjacent to Landguard Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Landguard Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and therefore any potential impacts on the designated sites must be avoided. Based on the available information the proposed development appears unlikely to result in a significant adverse impact on protected species or UK Priority habitats or species (under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)). An informative has been recommended by the Council's Ecologist in the event that permission is granted, this is in relation to encountering protected species whilst works are being undertaken. Natural England were also consulted on this application and have not raised any objection to the proposed development. The proposal therefore accords with SCLP10.1.

Flood Risk

- 6.10. The site is located within flood zone 3, however due to the nature of the proposals it is not considered that the sequential or exemption tests are applicable. The proposed development would not result in any increased risk of flooding. The development is therefore considered to accord with SCLP9.5 and Chapter 14 of the NPPF.

Highways Considerations

- 6.11. Suffolk County Council as Local Highways Authority were consulted in respect of the application and have not raised any objection to the proposed development. The site is served from an existing access and the proposed development will not result in an intensification of the use; thus, does not require any additional parking provision. Any additional vehicle movements in regards to transporting and installing the solar panels would have limited impact to the existing movements from the Fort/Viewpoint area, which are not considered to have a significant impact on the highway network.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. For the reasons given above the proposal is considered to accord with SCLP10.1, SCLP10.4, SCLP11.1, SCLP11.2 and SCLP11.3 and is therefore recommended for approval.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. Grant planning permission subject to the conditions listed below.

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 not be carried out other than in complete accordance with Drawing Nos. 03313-01 Rev D4, 03313-02, 03313-03, 03313-04 Rev D4 and 03313-05 Rev D2, all received on 2 August 2023.

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

3. Within six months of the cessation of the use of the solar panels, the PV panels and any associated equipment and cabling shall be removed from the site and the site made good.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and the protection of the local environment.

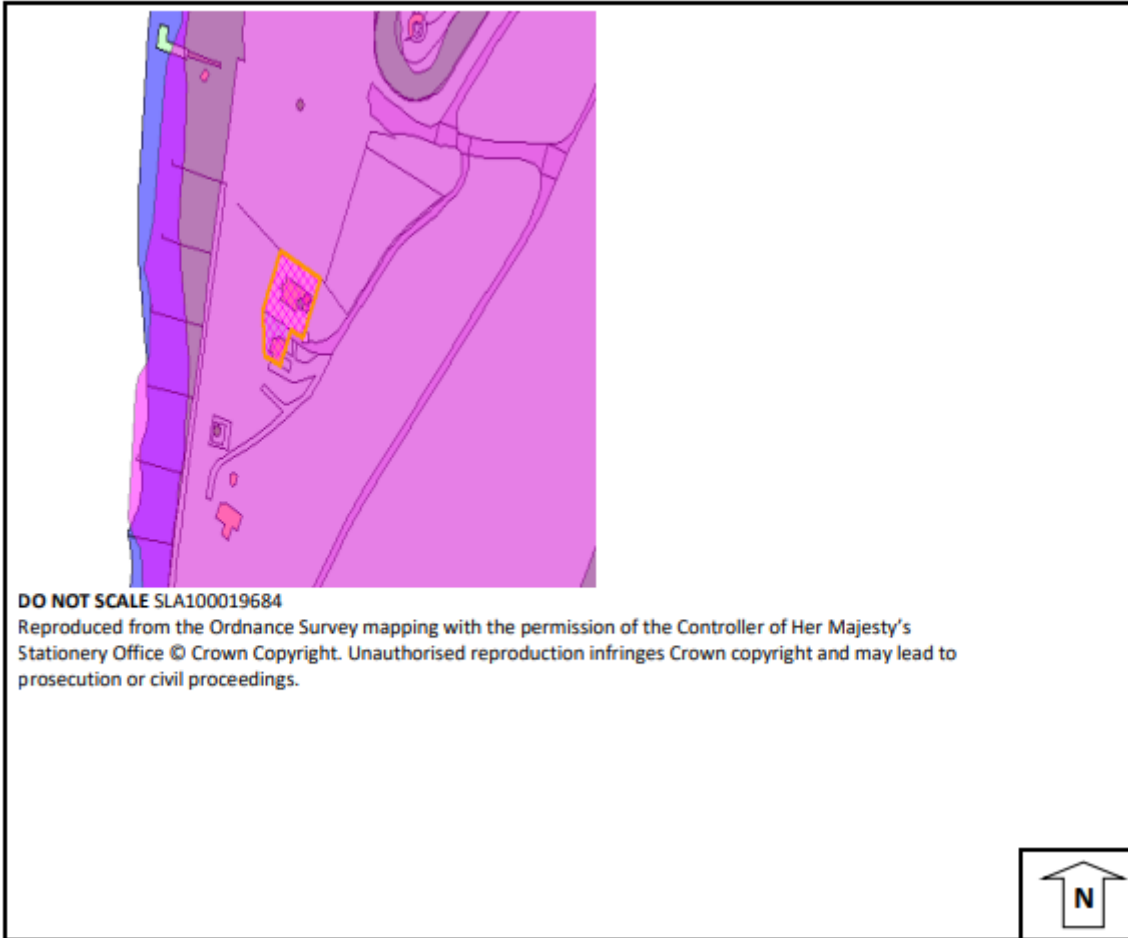
Informatives:

1. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.
2. Certain species, including bats and nesting birds, receive legal protection, primarily under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). Should a protected species be encountered during development work must stop immediately and advice on how to proceed be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Background information

See application reference DC/23/3039/FUL on [Public Access](#)

Map



Key



Notified, no comments received



Objection



Representation



Support