



**EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL**

**PLANNING ADVISORY PANEL NORTH – 7 APRIL 2020**

**DECISIONS BY THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT**

**The following decisions have been taken by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management under his delegated authority set out in Appendix 1 of Section E of Part 2 of the East Suffolk Council Constitution:**

**Application Number:** DC/20/0417/FUL

**Application Address:** 30A Fair Close, Beccles

**Advice provided by the Advisory Panel's Elected Members:**

The Elected Members unanimously supported the recommendation of the planning officer to refuse the application. It was noted by one member of the Panel that Beccles Town Council had held significant concerns about the application and when reviewing the application, it had not been clear to it that the application site was in the conservation area.

**Decision Made by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management:**

That the application be **REFUSED** for the reasons set out below.

**Reason for Decision:**

The proposed porch extension was intended to reflect the existing porch set to the boundary between this property and the more recent number 28. The submitted plans did not indicate the rather well executed arch over the door, and the loss of this by concealment together with the repeat of a rather unattractive porch design in alien materials that has occurred to the east would represent a harm in the conservation area setting not considered offset by any public benefit and therefore contrary to both local policy WLP8.39 and NPPF paragraph 196. With a decent internal hallway there appeared limited functional reason for the porch. The other porch appeared to be of a vintage predating the extensions to the Conservation Area made in the early 21st century.

The first-floor extension and the box dormer would both be ugly alien features, out of character with the existing building. However, while the land all falls within the Conservation Area designation, the context at the rear of the terraces was much

diminished in aesthetic terms by existing similar extensions and ancillary buildings and structures and as such it would not be considered reasonable to refuse planning permission based on Conservation Area or general aesthetic considerations.

The upper floor extension that would result in a two-storey rear offshoot proposed to the rear would not harm the residential amenity of number 30 (east of 30A) as this already featured a double storey flat roofed extension to the full width of that residence and of similar depth to that now proposed, with blind flank wall. To the west side however there is a single storey outshot on the east boundary of 32. There were upper bedroom windows close to the proposal however that would lose some light and considerable outlook as a result of impact already occurring from other existing extension to the further west of 32. The ground floor as a result of the interposed single storey off-shot was not considered affected. It was considered that the harm to outlook at first floor level is to an extent that should be refused as contrary to policy WLP8.29.

The large box dormer would, if not on Article 2(3) land normally be permitted development. While ugly, its amenity impact from outlook, or loss of light considerations, given the south aspect was not considered to create material harm. Such box dormers would create overlooking of neighbour's gardens from a high vantage point, but not to the area at the rear of the property that was accorded the highest sensitivity so refusal on impact on neighbouring privacy amenity in not considered reasonable and the proposal in this regard meets the concerns of policy WLP 8.29.

The application submission was also inadequate, in that the submitted plans do not include elevational drawings of the side of the existing ground floor addition, the proposed first floor extension or the box dormer. Therefore, their depth of projection had to be taken from the floorplans in order to undertake the above assessment. Therefore, even if the proposed scheme was to be deemed acceptable, the application could not be approved in its current form.

**Any Declarations of Interest declared:**

Councillor Elliott declared a Local Non-Pecuniary Interest as Ward Member for Beccles.

**Any Declarations of Lobbying and Responses to Lobbying declared:**

Councillor Elliott declared that he engaged in factual discussions with Beccles Town Council on the application.

**Any Dispensation Granted:**

None.

**Application Number:** DC/19/0693/ADI

**Application Address:** Veterinary Clinic, London Road, Beccles

**Advice provided by the Advisory Panel's Elected Members:**

Members noted that street lighting currently existed in the area and that although the area was classified as residential, it was on the edge of Beccles and the site had been purpose-built as a veterinary clinic.

It was also highlighted that the previous application for signage at the site, which had been approved, had been considered in detail and that the new application had not significantly departed from the approved scheme and the proposed signage had been well designed.

The Elected Members unanimously supported the recommendation of the planning officer to approve the application.

**Decision Made by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management:**

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to appropriate conditions.

**Reason for Decision:**

The proposed design of the signage was considered to be simple, uncluttered, and was not considered to result in significant harm to character and appearance of the building. Several the proposed signs would also replace existing signage around the site. In addition, the level of luminance and proposed design was not considered to have significant impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area or street scene.

The Highways Authority did not consider that the proposed luminance level of the signage would result in excessive light spill into the highway, and therefore the safety impact to highways users was considered acceptable. In addition, given the screening around the site, positioning of the signage, and the distance to neighbours was considered to result in minimal light spillage out from the site. As such it was considered unlikely that the proposed signage would significantly impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

**Any Declarations of Interest declared:**

Councillor Ceresa declared an interest in the item as she had previously accessed the out of hours service offered by the veterinary clinic.

**Any Declarations of Lobbying and Responses to Lobbying declared:**

Councillor Elliott declared that he engaged in factual discussions with Beccles Town Council on the application.

**Any Dispensation Granted:**

None.

**Application Number:** DC/19/2839/FUL

**Application Address:** Glebe Meadow, Darsham Road, Westleton

**Advice provided by the Advisory Panel's Elected Members:**

Two of the Elected Members, although not in support of the application, suggested that it could be deferred until the Planning Committee North was able to meet, given the length of time the application had taken to reach its current point and to allow for both the applicant's views as well as the significant local interest to be heard by that committee.

Three of the Elected Members considered that the application was not compliant with local and national planning policies and although sympathetic to the reasons suggested for deferral, they considered that the application should be refused for the reasons set out in the planning officer's report. It was also noted that it would not be appropriate to defer a planning application for an indeterminate period of time.

**Decision Made by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management:**

That the application be **REFUSED** for the reasons outlined below.

**Reason for Decision:**

In terms of the policy position the proposal would be contrary to both adopted and emerging planning policy through representing development of housing in the countryside that does not accord with adopted or emerging policy or with the National Planning Policy Framework, as set out in the planning officer's report. The adopted and emerging Local Plans set out policies and allocations to meet District wide needs for housing, and the Council can demonstrate a 7.03 year supply of land for housing (for the former Suffolk Coastal district area) as set out in the Statement of Housing Land Supply (August 2019). The Council's planning policy team had reviewed the application and raised these objections.

It was also noted that there would be harm to heritage assets if approved, namely the setting of two listed buildings and the conservation area. The application site is identified in the conservation area appraisal as being an important open space. Reference was drawn to the concerns raised not only by the Council's internal design and conservation officer but also Suffolk Preservation Society and Historic England. In the opinion of officers, the public benefits were not significant enough to outweigh the harm to heritage assets as required by the NPPF.

Approval would also lead to future pressure to fell trees and an objection on these grounds has been lodged by the Council's landscape manager

It was further noted, notwithstanding that the principle of the proposal is contrary to policy, that the mix of housing proposed did not meet the requirements of adopted Policy SP3 'New Homes' (or emerging Policy SCLP5.8 'Housing Mix') in that it did not provide a mix of house types, noting that all the proposed units would be two bedroom. Further, the proposal did not meet the requirements of Policy DM2 'Affordable Housing on

Residential Development' (or emerging policy SCLP5.10) in that no affordable housing provision was proposed as part of the development.

It should be noted that this response had focused on the principle of the proposed development and the provisions of housing policies in this respect and did not provide comment beyond these policies.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management, when making his decision, noted that three of the Members had been in support of the officer's recommendation and that two Members had suggested deferring the application until such time that it could be determined by the Planning Committee North. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management considered the issue of deferring the application but considered that as the material planning issues presented against the proposal were so significant and that they could not be positively addressed on this site, and in any case in a reasonable period, it was appropriate to determine the application. He stated that the reasons for refusal outlined in the report were strong and substantial and he particularly noted the comments of the Suffolk Preservation Society that the development was "the right development in the wrong location". He advised the Panel, and they agreed, that the aims of the scheme were supported and that officers would seek to engage with the applicant team to explore alternative locations.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management also took into account the late representations made by the applicant and the Ward Member, which were contained within the update sheet (and accompanying documents) published on 6 April 2020.

**Any Declarations of Interest declared:**

None.

**Any Declarations of Lobbying and Responses to Lobbying declared:**

Councillor Ashdown declared that he had been lobbied on the application by telephone and email.

Councillor Ceresa declared that she had been lobbied on the application by email; she had not replied to any of these emails.

**Any Dispensation Granted:**

None.

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**Application Number:** DC/20/0858/FUL

**Application Address:** Little Chapter, Church Field, Walberswick

**Advice provided by the Advisory Panel's Elected Members:**

Four of the Elected Members supported the recommendation of the planning officer to approve the application. The improvements made over the previous scheme were considered to be positive.

One of the Elected Members noted the change in the bulk and scale of the proposed dwelling, comparing the proposed elevations of the current application and the previous scheme. He expressed reservations about this aspect of the application.

**Decision Made by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management:**

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to appropriate conditions.

**Reason for Decision:**

The proposal was considered to be of appropriate scale and uses forms appropriate to the host building.

The scheme was also considered appropriate in terms of the relationship with the heritage assets (the Church and the Conservation Area), in terms of the amenity of adjoining residents and off-street parking provision/highway safety.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management, when making his decision, acknowledged the concerns raised by consultees and Members regarding the application and stated that there were no substantive planning reasons to refuse the application and that he was content to approve it.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management also took into account the late representations made by the applicant and the Ward Member, which were contained within the update sheet published on 6 April 2020.

**Any Declarations of Interest declared:**

None.

**Any Declarations of Lobbying and Responses to Lobbying declared:**

Councillor Elliott declared that he had been lobbied on the application by email by the Ward Member for Walberswick.

Councillor McCallum declared that she had been lobbied on the application by email; she had not responded to any of the emails.

Councillor Fryatt declared that he had been lobbied on the application by email.

**Any Dispensation Granted:**

None.