

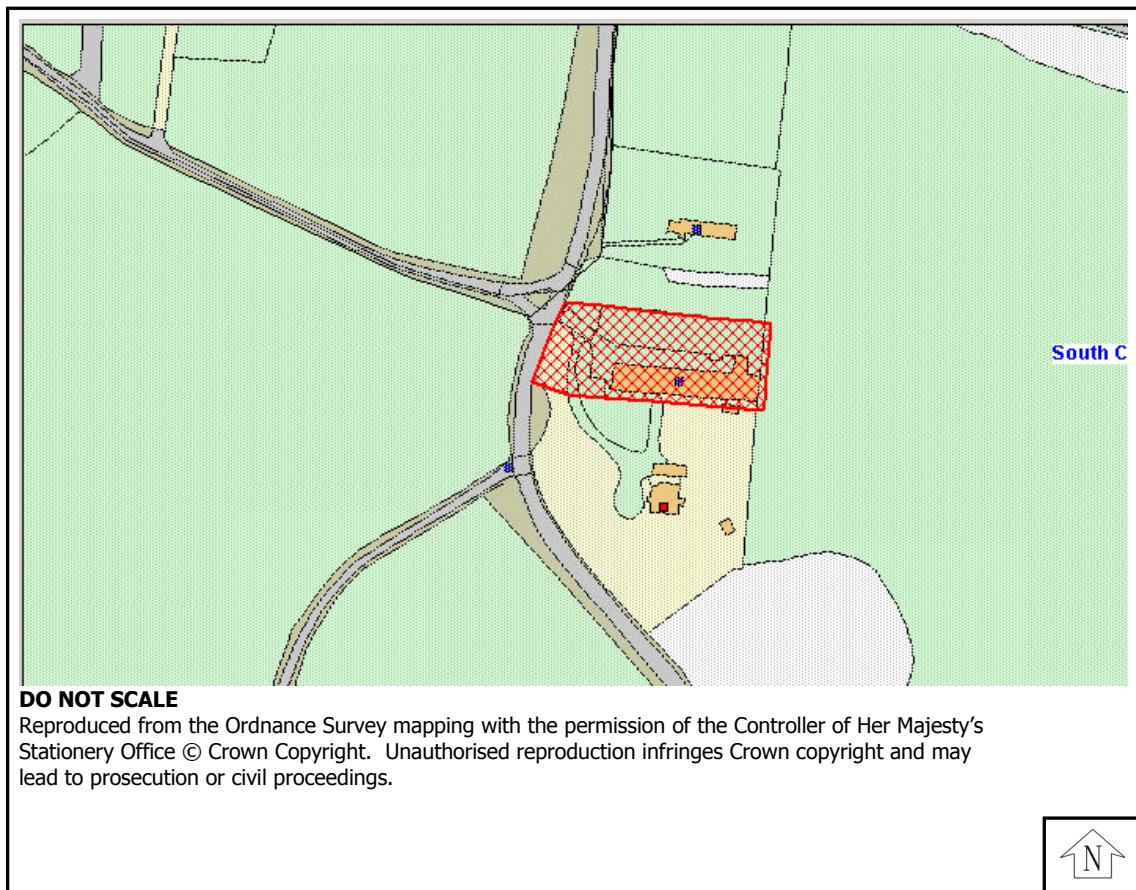
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 15 SEPTEMBER 2015**APPLICATION NO** DC/15/1713/FUL**LOCATION**

Land At South Cove House
 Southwold Road
 South Cove
 Beccles
 Suffolk
 NR34 7JD

EXPIRY DATE 5 July 2015
APPLICATION TYPE Full Application
APPLICANT Dr & Mrs A Eastaugh

PARISH South Cove

PROPOSAL Construction of a 1 No. Holiday home with carport

**SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application proposes a new building to provide a single holiday unit. The site is adjacent to the Church of St. Lawrence, which is listed Grade I, and also within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is currently an open site where an agricultural building was previously located on the southern boundary of the site; this building was subsequently used as a car repair workshop.

- 1.2 An application was presented to members in March 2012 for a slightly larger building on a similar footprint containing 2 holiday let units, comprising a green roof structure which was intended to blend into the surrounding landscape to minimise its impact on the setting of the Grade I listed building. It was concluded at that time that the loss of the dilapidated building, unkempt sheds and untidy land and their replacement with high quality holiday accommodation, together with the resulting economic benefits to the local economy, would outweigh the concerns relating to the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed building.
- 1.3 The previous planning permission contained a number of pre-commencement conditions none of which were discharged before the approval expired. The demolition of the barn has occurred. Despite this material operation this permission is not considered to have been legally implemented.
- 1.4 A fresh application has been submitted which is to be determined in accordance with the development plan and any other material considerations.
- 1.5 In 2012 English Heritage were concerned that the previous proposal would have had a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building and accordingly the application was recommended for refusal. Within the current proposal Historic England have highlighted concerns with the harm of this proposal to the significance of the listed building, however this view is based on their understanding that the agricultural building still occupies the site. Amendments have been received to the original proposal which in their view would reduce the impact of the proposal on the setting of St. Lawrence church and recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is an open area within the AONB, outside of the development limits of Wrentham, the site is in an un kept condition with fencing to the front of the site. South Cove House has a good tree screen surrounding it and is well hidden within the landscape; the area surrounding the church is free from buildings and allows the church to sit uninterrupted within its setting.
- 2.2 The church has remained the dominant building within the locality and was designed to be a prominent landmark. The open rural landscape around the church helps to enhance this role and the relationship between the architecture, old rectory and the landscape also has an aesthetic value.

PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application proposes the construction of a single storey building with a clay pantile and lime render appearance with photovoltaic panels on the southern roof slope and roof lights on the northern roof slope for the use as a holiday let. This is proposed in the form of a long narrow structure measuring 38m x 6m and 4m in height. This building would be situated along the northern boundary of the site and angled partially across the front of the site.
- 3.2 An amended plan has been submitted in response to the initial comments from the council's conservation officer and Historic England showing the removal of a roof light and the lowering of the majority of the remaining roof lights.

CONSULTATIONS/COMMENTS

- 4.1 **Neighbour consultation/representations:** No representations have been made.

- 4.2 **Parish Council Comments:** “Recommend approval, but recommend some natural vegetation to be planted to screen from the church”

Consultees

- 4.3 **Historic England – Summary.** The application proposes to construct a holiday home on land at South Cove. The site is within the setting of the Church of St. Lawrence which is listed grade I and lies to the north of the site. We have concerns that the proposed development would detract from the setting of the church, causing harm to the historical and aesthetic values of the church. This should be considered against the public benefits of the proposal in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.
- 4.4 **Advice** - The church lies to the west of the B1127 with South Cove House and the Old Vicarage to the south and Church Farm to the west and within a wider rural landscape. The proposed development site is adjacent to the churchyard. It is currently occupied by a single storey agricultural building, formerly a chicken shed. This is a low grade building that is transitory in character. The building lies along the south side of the site; the remainder of the area is a mixture of hard standing with scrubby vegetation. The site has been subject of a previous approval for a holiday ref; DC/11/1184/FUL.
- 4.5 The scheme proposes to construct a holiday home with detached carport. Like the previously approved scheme the building would be orientated to the south, facing the site and South Cove Hall beyond. The building would be set further into the site than the previous approved scheme. This may slightly reduce the impact of the new building in views east towards the church and site. In views towards the church from the South Cove House and the development site the new building would be seen in the foreground. This elevation is more heavily fenestrated and the windows and photovoltaic cells on the roof would increase the dominance of the building. The current application proposes to use pan-tiles for the roof rather than the permitted green roof. Pantiles are part of the vernacular palette of materials and would match those on the ancillary buildings to the house. In this sense they would not be out of keeping within the context, however they may be more visible from the churchyard, whereas the green roof would have blended into the landscape screen. The repositioning of the roof lights higher up the roof slope, below the ridge rather than above the eaves might also make the building more apparent in these views.
- 4.6 The “setting of a heritage asset” is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as ‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced.’ The church has remained the dominant building within the locality and was designed to be a prominent landmark. The open rural landscape around the church helps to enhance this role and the relationship between the architecture, Old Rectory and the landscape also has an aesthetic value. While the new location of the proposed holiday home would reduce its impact on the setting of St Lawrence’s Church, the change in roofing material and new location of the roof lights would increase the building’s prominence within the setting of the church. For this reason we have concerns that the proposal would result in harm to the setting of the church.
- 4.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies protection and enhancement of the historic environment as an important element of sustainable development and establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system (paragraphs 6, 7 and 14). The NPPF also states that the significance of listed buildings and conservation areas can be harmed or lost by development in their setting (paragraph 132) and that the conservation of heritage assets is a core principle of the planning system (paragraph 17). Furthermore, paragraph 137 states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of the heritage assets should be treated favourably.

- 4.8 Historic England has concerns regarding the increased prominence of the proposed building in comparison to the approved scheme. We consider that the building's undue prominence would cause harm to the significance of the listed building in terms of the paragraphs 132 and 134 of the NPPF. However, the design could be amended to reduce the harmful impact and we recommend this is done. We would not support the scheme as proposed and while it is for the Council to weigh any public benefit which might arise from the development (as required by paragraph 134) we would suggest that as a single holiday residence might not deliver a significant amount of benefit and the harm could be reduced by amendment the clear and convincing justification has not been made.
- 4.9 **Recommendation** - The proposed application would have increased prominence in comparison to the previous approval, this would cause harm to the significance of the listed building in terms of the paragraphs 132 and 134 of the NPPF. The harmful impact could be reduced if the application were to be amended; we therefore would not support the scheme in its current form. Unless your authority are convinced that the application would be outweighed by public benefit in line with paragraph 134 of the NPPF you should seek to have it amended.
- 4.10 **Comments following amendments** - In our letter dated 19 June 2015 we expressed concerns regarding the increased prominence of the proposed building in comparison to the approved scheme and recommended that the design could be amended to reduce the harmful impact.
- The proposals have been amended in an effort to reduce the building's impact on St Lawrence's Church. A roof light has been omitted and the majority of the roof lights have been moved down the roof slope away from the ridge. This would make the building less apparent in views from the churchyard.
 - The proposed roofing material remains pantiles rather than the permitted green roof. Although a green roof would have blended into the landscape screen and been less prominent from the churchyard we understand that pantiles are part of the vernacular palette of materials and would match those on the ancillary buildings to the house.
 - We therefore consider they would not be harmful in this context. On balance we feel that the amendments would reduce the building's impact upon the setting of St Lawrence's Church. We therefore recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.
- 4.11 **Environmental Health - Contaminated Land:** Comments awaited
- 4.12 **Suffolk County – Archaeological Unit:** "This proposed development affects an area of archaeological potential, as defined by information held by the County Historic Environment Record (HER). The site lies within the historic core of Southwold (SWD 051). There is therefore high potential for archaeological deposits to be present on the site, relating to the medieval development of the town. The proposed works, involving excavation of a basement to depths of 3m, would cause significant ground disturbance with the potential to damage any archaeological deposits that exist. This is acknowledged in the application.
- 4.13 There are no grounds to consider refusal of permission in order to achieve preservation *in situ* of any important heritage assets. However, in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Paragraph 141), any permission granted should be the subject of a planning condition to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage asset before it is damaged or destroyed.
- 4.14 **Suffolk County - Highways Department:** Notice is hereby given that the County Council as Highway Authority make the following comments: This proposal is unlikely to have any significant impact on the local highway network in the area.

PUBLICITY

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

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Adjacent to Listed Building,	22.05.2015	11.06.2015	Beccles and Bungay Journal
Adjacent to Listed Building,	22.05.2015	11.06.2015	Beccles and Bungay Journal

SITE NOTICES

4.16 The following site notices have been displayed:

WDC General Site Notice	Reason for site notice: Adjacent to Listed building, Date posted 26.05.2015 Expiry date 15.06.2015
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PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 W17576 – Change of use from poultry house to car repair workshop – Approved 21.06.2000 – Condition 2 The permission shall enure solely for the benefit of Mr John Martin and not for the benefit of the land.
- 5.2 W17576/1 – Variation of condition 2 of permission W17576 – Approved - 10.11.05 - Temporary permission until 30.11.06, use to discontinue on this date.
- 5.3 W17576/2 – Use of former poultry house as car repair workshop – Approved -13.02.07 – Condition 1 This permission shall enure solely for the benefit of Dr A and Mrs A Eastaugh and not for the benefit of the land.
- 5.4 DC/11/1184/FUL - Demolish workshop building, construction of a single-storey building to provide 2 units of holiday accommodation letting use, use part of land for siting of 3 yurts for holiday letting use. Construction of a natural bathing pool. Provision of car parking spaces, landscaping measures, vegetable garden, septic tank drainage system, recycling grey water system and heat pump – Approved 23rd March 2012

PLANNING POLICY

- 6.1 Waveney Core Strategy **Policy CS01** “Spatial Strategy” seeks to focus new development on previously developed land within Lowestoft followed by the Market Towns. Outside of these locations development will be regarded as being in the open countryside where the objective is to preserve the countryside for its own sake.
- 6.2 (**Policy CS13** “Tourism”) of The Core Strategy states that new build tourist development should be located in areas that offer good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport and cycling states that new tourist accommodation and attractions should be developed in locations that offer good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. New tourism development will normally be located in or close to Lowestoft and the market towns, the larger village coastal resorts of Corton and Kessingland, and other villages where local services, facilities and public transport reduce the need to travel by car. Outside of these locations new-build development will not normally be acceptable. The focus will be on the conversion of existing buildings and development that contributes to farm diversification.

- 6.3 Wherever possible existing buildings should be used for permanent tourist facilities; where new permanent holiday sites are proposed they should be well contained within the landscape and not situated with the AONB (**Development Management Policy DM24** "Touring Caravan, Camping and Permanent Holiday Sites")
- 6.4 Proposals are expected to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment of the district. National designations such as AONB's are given the highest level of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty (**Policy CS16** "Natural Environment"). Development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect and where possible enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area (**DM27** "Protection of Landscape Character")
- 6.5 The District Council will work with Partners and the community to protect and enhance the built and historic environment (**CS17** "Built and Historic Environment). Proposals will protect the architectural or historic interest of listed buildings including their setting (**DM30** "Protecting and enhancing the historic environment").
- 6.6 **Paragraph 132** of the NPPF states that the significance of listed buildings can be harmed or lost by development in their setting. "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. **Paragraph 134** requires that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.7 **Paragraph 137** of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are a number of factors to be considered in the determination of this application. The planning status of the site is the first.
- 7.2 The applicant considers that this is an amended scheme and that approval should be granted based on the previous consent granted in 2012. As stated earlier it is considered that the material operation of demolition of the building on this site prior to discharge of pre-commencement conditions does not constitute a lawful commencement. Therefore members are advised that this application should be considered afresh with consideration to the current condition of the site.
- 7.3 The primary consideration is the impact of the proposed structure on the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St. Lawrence, the key local and national policies are highlighted in section 6 of this report.
- 7.4 The southern part of this land historically formed part of the curtilage of South Cove House, whereas it appears that the northern part of the site where the development is proposed was formerly a breathing space between the church and its rectory, an arrangement that is often found and which allows the church the pre-eminence it deserves. Until recent times the church has remained the dominant building within the locality and the open nature of the land around the church enhances its role as a prominent landmark; this breathing space has remained, albeit interrupted by the previous agricultural and commercial uses on the site. In the opinion of the officers it is crucial that this space is retained.

- 7.5 In terms of the suitability of the location of this site for new build tourist accommodation, the Waveney Core Strategy policy CS13 is particularly relevant. This limits new-build tourist accommodation (as opposed to conversions of existing buildings) to sites in or close to Lowestoft, the market towns and larger villages. In this case the site is close to the village of Wrentham, and not too far from Southwold. The site is situated on the Suffolk Coast Path so would be accessible by foot. The B1127 would not be attractive to pedestrians seeking to walk into Wrentham due to the lack of footpaths and the 60mph speed limit; but would be a reasonable prospect for cyclists and the site is relatively close to the National Cycle Network for access to other tourist attractions. Although the visibility is not ideal to the south the highways authority have not objected to this proposal. In terms of its location in relation to accessibility, this site is therefore considered to comply with the policy.
- 7.6 Development Management policy DM24 states that proposals for new permanent holiday sites should be situated outside of AONB's, and contained within the landscape and places an emphasis on the use of existing buildings for tourist accommodation ahead of new build accommodation.
- 7.7 Grade 1 listed buildings are the most significant of historic buildings, of which there are comparatively few locally and nationally. Great weight is given to the conservation of heritage assets within paragraphs 132, 134 and 137 of the NPPF to ensure that harm is not caused to the setting of such buildings due to inappropriate development within their setting.
- 7.8 The current proposal, whilst smaller than the previously approved scheme, is still a substantial new structure within the setting of the grade I listed Church of St Lawrence. Its detrimental impact on the church's setting highlighted both by officers and by Historic England during the last application process will be increased by the use of pantile in place of the previously approved green roof. The approved 'dark stucco render' is now proposed to be off white lime render, a further change that will result in increased prominence.

CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Government is committed to ensuring that proposals that support sustainable economic growth are supported and appropriate weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. However this has to be weighed up against other important aspects of a proposal, being in this instance the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed building and the AONB.
- 8.2 As previously noted, the NPPF states that where a proposal has a harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset the local planning authority should weigh the public benefit of the proposal against the harm, which would be limited in terms of the economic benefit to the area from visiting tourists. However the overriding consideration is the safeguarding of the setting of the adjacent Grade I listed building for the enjoyment of future generations.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be refused for the following reason:

The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the adjacent Grade I listed church, causing harm to the significance of the heritage asset. The proposed form and materials of the proposed building and its proximity to the church would detract from the prominence of the Grade 1 listed building eroding the open nature which surrounds it within this sensitive setting. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the aims of the Core Strategy (Adopted January 2009) Policies CS17 "Built and Historic Environment" and CS02 "Design", and Development Management Policies (Adopted January 2010) Policy DM30 "Protecting an enhancing the historic environment", DM02 "Design", DM24 "Touring

caravan, camping and permanent holiday sites" and Paragraphs 12, 134 and 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Case File DC/15/1713/FUL. Contact Development Management, Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft.
Iain Robertson Tel: 01502 523067

CONTACT