

Development Control Committee 6 January 2021

Planning Application DC/20/1497/FUL – Land East of Redcastle Farm Cottage, Brand Road, Great Barton

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| Date registered: | 1 October 2020 | Expiry date: | 26 November 2020 EOT 15.01.2021 |
| Case officer: | Connor Vince | Recommendation: | Refuse application |
| Parish: | Pakenham | Ward: | Pakenham & Troston |
| Proposal: | Planning application - 1no. Holiday cottage | | |
| Site: | Land East of Redcastle Farm Cottage, Brand Road, Great Barton | | |
| Applicant: | P W Cook & Son | | |

Synopsis:

Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and associated matters.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the committee determine the attached application and associated matters.

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Background:

This application is presented to Development Control Committee following consideration at Delegation Panel on 1 December 2020. It was presented to the Delegation Panel due to the support from Great Barton Parish Council. The application is recommended for REFUSAL.

Proposal:

1. Planning permission is sought for one new build holiday cottage on land east of Redcastle Farm Cottage. The proposed holiday cottage measures 18.2m in length, 8m in width and 5.2m in height. The holiday cottage will accommodate two bedrooms and en-suites, with an open-plan kitchen/lounge and lobby. The proposal includes two car parking spaces with wheelchair access

Application supporting material:

In support of this planning application, the following has been provided:

- Location plan
- Existing & proposed block plans
- Proposed elevations
- Proposed floor plans
- Land contamination report
- Design & access statement

Site details:

2. The holiday cottage is proposed to be situated on land east of Redcastle Farm Cottage, Brand Road, Great Barton. The site is situated within designated countryside, approximately 3.2 KM to the west of Ixworth and approximately 1.9km north east of the Great Barton settlement boundary (both distances are 'straight line' distances, the journey on the ground is further). The site is characterised by open views allowing visibility of the site from Brand Road to the west.
3. The applicant advises that the proposed siting of the holiday cottage will be similar to a cart lodge that burned down in May 2019. Redcastle Farmhouse, a grade II listed building, is approximately 70 metres east of the proposed holiday cottage.

Planning history:

4. None relevant.

Consultations:

5. **Pakenham Parish Council** - Stated no objection to the application
6. **Great Barton Parish Council** - made comments in support of the application - the holiday cottage needs to be built as far away as possible from the existing 3 phase transformer. The cottage should be totally separate and secure from the working farm with hedgerow screening.

Brand Road forms the buffer between Pakenham Parish to the east, in which the site lies, and Great Barton Parish to the west.

7. **Public Health & Housing** – No objections subject to the inclusion of a condition restricting hours of site clearance, preparation and construction operations including deliveries to the site and the removal of excavated materials and waste from the site
8. **Environment Team** – No objections subject to the inclusion of a condition Requiring the provision of electric vehicle charging points at the site prior to first occupation of the holiday cottage.
9. **Conservation Officer** – No objections.
10. **Highway Authority** – No objections subject to the inclusion of two conditions requiring the submission of cycle storage details before the development is commenced and the retention of parking and manoeuvring areas as shown on the block plan
11. **Suffolk Archaeology** – No objections subject to the inclusion of two conditions requiring archaeological investigation and recording.
12. **Ward Members** – No formal comments received.
13. **Representations:** No representations received.
14. **Policy:** On 1 April 2019 Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were replaced by a single authority, West Suffolk Council. The development plans for the previous local planning authorities were carried forward to the new Council by regulation. The development plans remain in place for the new West Suffolk Council and, with the exception of the Joint Development Management Policies Document (which had been adopted by both councils), set out policies for defined geographical areas within the new authority. It is therefore necessary to determine this application with reference to policies set out in the plans produced by the now dissolved St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
15. The following policies of the Joint Development Management Policies Document and the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 & Vision 2031 have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:
 - Core Strategy Policy CS1 - St Edmundsbury Spatial Strategy
 - Core Strategy Policy CS2 - Sustainable Development
 - Core Strategy Policy CS3 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
 - Core Strategy Policy CS7 – Sustainable Transport
 - Core Strategy Policy CS13 Rural Areas
 - Rural Vision Policy RV1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy DM1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy DM2 Creating Places Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness

Policy DM5 Development in the Countryside

Policy DM15 Listed Buildings

Policy DM31 Farm Diversification

Policy DM34 Tourism Development

Other planning policy:

16. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

17. The NPPF was revised in February 2019 and is a material consideration in decision making from the day of its publication. Paragraph 213 is clear however, that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the revised NPPF. Due weight should be given to them according to their degree of consistency with the Framework; the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework; the greater weight that may be given. The policies set out within the Joint Development Management Policies have been assessed in detail and are considered sufficiently aligned with the provision of the 2019 NPPF that full weight can be attached to them in the decision making process.

Officer comment:

18. The issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Scale, Layout & Design
- Heritage Impacts
- Economic Impacts
- Highway Impacts & Accessibility
- Other matters
- Planning Balance
- Conclusion

19. Planning permission is sought for holiday cottage situated on land east of Redcastle Farm Cottage, Brand Road, Great Barton. The site is situated within designated countryside, approximately 3.2 KM to the west of Ixworth and approximately 1.9km north east of the Great Barton settlement boundary (both distances are 'straight line' distances, the journey on the ground is further). Firstly, the principle of development given the local context will be discussed.

Principle of Development

20. Policy DM5 states that areas designated as countryside will be protected from unsustainable development. A new or extended building will be permitted, in accordance with other policies where it is for purposes directly related to agriculture or forestry. The policy also requires that all

proposed developments have no significant detrimental impact on the historic environment, character and visual amenity of the landscape or nature conservation and biodiversity interests and seeks to ensure that there will be no significant adverse impact on the local highway network. In this regard, the building proposed is not for any of the uses specifically permitted in DM5. DM5 however does further allow proposals for economic growth, respecting also that DM5 seeks to prevent unsustainable development in the countryside. The proposal, for the provision of a dwelling, albeit one to be restricted by condition to ensure it can only be occupied as a holiday let, will generate some modest economic benefit and some support in favour of the proposal can therefore be offered in principle by DM5. Furthermore, this of course is subject to further considerations and is also dependent upon any proposal also meeting any other relevant policies, for example DM31 and DM34, as well as Core Strategy Policy CS7, which requires all development proposals to provide for travel by a range of means of transport other than the private car.

21. Policy DM31 states that proposals for farm diversification will be permitted providing they comply with a set of criteria, including that the proposal forms an integral part of the existing farming unit, that the proposal is compatible and respects the scale and context of the locality, and providing that it does not have an adverse impact on the surrounding highway network. It is also a significant requirement of Policy DM31 that where any use is likely to create significant vehicle movements to and from the site that it should be well located in relation to sustainable settlements. So, some support can be offered in principle arising from DM31, noting the proposal does seek some diversification of the farm business, subject, of course, to an assessment against, in particular, the policy test requiring proposals to be well related to sustainable settlements. Such a test only applies in relation to proposals which generate 'significant' vehicle movements. There is no further indication in the policy of what constitutes 'significant' in this regard. However, Officers are satisfied in this case that the test applies. For the reasons discussed below, Officers are satisfied that all or almost all movements to and from this site will be by vehicle. So, whilst they might not be 'significant' in number necessarily, they will certainly be 'significant' in terms of their proportion of overall movements to and from the site.
22. Policy DM34 clearly provides that planning applications for new tourism facilities, including overnight visitor accommodation (which, it is considered, includes proposals for dwellings such as this that are intended to be limited by condition so that they can only be used for holiday letting purposes), will only be permitted provided that: 'the proposals are connected to and associated with existing facilities or located at a site that relates well to the main urban areas and defined settlements in the area and can be made readily accessible to adequate public transport, cycling and walking links for the benefit of non-car users'. Furthermore, Chapter 9 of the 2019 NPPF seeks to promote the use of sustainable transport. The extent to which this is required and the significance of such will of course be dependent upon and commensurate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the context of its location.
23. Officers consider however that this test in DM34 is the crux of whether or not proposals such as this should be permitted, supported by the very clear requirements of Policy CS7 and Chapter 9 of the NPPF. This is a new

build proposal, so is not reliant on an existing building being converted, and this is material to the assessment being made. The provision of new build proposals such as this in the countryside is not necessarily precluded by Policy. As discussed, support can be offered by DM5, and also by DM31, subject to a test within DM31 that the site is 'well related' to sustainable settlements. Officers are satisfied that this test is similar to that within DM34 that requires proposals be 'located at a site that relates well to the main urban areas and defined settlements'.

24. In this respect, the proposed siting of the holiday cottage is considered to be remote in terms of its proximity to existing facilities and settlement boundaries and which therefore conflicts significantly with the requirements of policies DM31 and DM34, and by consequence also with Policy DM5 and CS7. Ixworth by road is approximately 5.5 km to the east whilst Great Barton is approximately 2.85 km (to the petrol station and shop) to the south west. Ixworth contains a reasonable range of local services, Great Barton fewer. The distance itself to Ixworth is a very clear barrier to sustainable travel. Furthermore there is no obvious cross country footpath link and walkers and cyclist would first need to use Brand Road, before travelling along the A143. Likewise, to access the nearest services in Great Barton the journey is approximately 2.85 km, and again would require pedestrian or cycle use of Brand Road. The Bunbury Arms is approximately 1.9 km from the site, again needing to travel along Brand Road in order to gain access.
25. Brand Road, which runs North/South, is a narrow country lane with no footpath, no cycle path and no lighting, and is subject to the national speed limit. Pedestrians using this road would be forced to step off the carriageway in order to allow vehicles to pass and this would act as a significant deterrent to means of travel other than by the private car. Furthermore, cycle use would also be significantly discouraged by the likely need to cross and / or use the A143. Taken together, these factors, plus the location, serve to support a conclusion that the policy tests in D5, DM31, and DM34 have very clearly not been met. There is a public footpath to the north towards Livermere but in order to get there, users would still have to walk along the aforementioned unlit B-road for approximately 1km with no available path. In any event, there are no day to day public transport services in Livermere.
26. The proposal is, to all intents and purposes, a dwelling. Albeit one which is proposed as a 'holiday let'. In order to control such occupation a condition would be necessary, and which would be reasonable in order to prevent the creation of a new dwelling in an area where planning policy would not otherwise allow such .
27. Taking all these factors into account therefore, Officers are of the opinion, that this proposal does not meet the tests set out in Policies CS7, CS13 or DM5. The location of this proposal is not considered to be a well-connected site for the purposes of walking and cycling as required by these policies and it is inevitable, in the opinion of officers, that the vast majority of journeys to and from the site would be made via the private car. Whilst it is noted that some support must be drawn from the economic benefits arising from the proposal, and from the diversification of the farm enterprise, these benefits are modest and are not considered sufficient to outweigh the considerable harm otherwise identified.

Scale, Layout & Design

28. Policy DM2 states proposals for all development should recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/townscape character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the area and/or building and, where necessary, prepare a landscape/townscape character appraisal to demonstrate and produce designs that respect the character, scale density and massing of the locality. Policy DM5 requires development in the countryside to have no significant detrimental impact on the historic environment, character and visual amenity of the landscape. Policy CS2 seeks to conserve the character of local landscapes, and Policy CS3 of the St. Edmundsbury Core Strategy states that proposals for new development must create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.
29. The proposed holiday cottage measures 18.2m in length, 8m in width and 5.2m in height. The design and detail of the proposed development to include sympathetic materials respects the adjacent buildings existing on the farming unit and are characteristic of an ancillary building, with the exception of the provision of the porch which would appear a domestic. Given the sympathetic design, scale and location of the proposed holiday cottage in relation to the existing farming unit, there will be no adverse impacts associated with residential or visual amenity attributed to the surrounding area. There is significant distance from the adjacent buildings to the holiday let for it to be considered there will no adverse effects from the development to neighbouring amenity by virtue of noise, loss of light, overlooking or overbearing effects. Further, no third-party comments have been received and Public Health and Housing have responded with 'no objections' to the proposed development.
30. Given the location of the holiday cottage, there will be limited views of the holiday cottage from the public realm. Officers are therefore content that there will be no adverse impacts associated with the cottage's construction in relation to visual amenity or the character of the immediate and wider area and the proposal is considered in accord with Policies DM2 and DM5, Core Strategy Policy CS3, and the provisions of the NPPF in relation to good design.

Heritage Impacts

31. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development and that protection and enhancement of the historic environment is an overarching objective in this (paragraphs 7 and 8). The NPPF states that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of listed buildings and their settings irrespective of the level of harm caused (paragraphs 193 and 194).
32. Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This requirement for the safeguarding of heritage assets and their settings is echoed in local policy DM15. Policy DM15 states that proposals to alter,

extend or change the use of a listed building, or development affecting its setting will be permitted where they are of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing and design which respects the existing building and its setting.

33. The proposed development is located east of Redcastle Farm Cottage and replaces the remnants of a former outbuilding on a similar but slightly amended footprint. To the north east of the site sits Red Castle Farm which is grade II listed. Redcastle Farm Cottage is described as a traditional Suffolk Farmhouse of flint and render with a red Suffolk pantile roof. It is described as remaining part of Redcastle Farm.
34. If Redcastle Farm Cottage pre dates 1 July 1948, and at the time of listing (14.07.1955) sat within the curtilage of Redcastle Farmhouse and provided an ancillary function to Redcastle Farmhouse, then Redcastle Farm Cottage will be curtilage listed to Redcastle Farmhouse and the proposed development will result in development within the curtilage of a listed building.
35. Based on the information provided it has not been possible to determine the status of the building at the time of listing. In the absence of evidence to determine the status of Redcastle Farm Cottage the Conservation Officer has adopted a precautionary approach and assessed the proposal on the basis that the proposed development will sit within the curtilage of a listed building.
36. Currently, Redcastle Farm Cottage is separated from Redcastle Farmhouse by both a large modern agricultural building and a more historic barn (according to aerial photos) to the north east. Historic Maps indicate the presence of a number of additional historic barns. previously existed in the approximate location of the proposed development and the existing modern agricultural building which exists today.
37. The location of the proposed development would appear to reflect historic arrangement of buildings formerly serving Redcastle Farm. Therefore, the Conservation Officer has no objections to the principle of a replacement building in this location as it is considered that the proposed development will not adversely affect the setting of Redcastle Farmhouse.

Economic Impacts

38. In addition to the previously identified criteria of Policy DM5, and notwithstanding the above, DM5 further provides that proposals for economic growth and expansion of all types of business (such as this holiday let) which recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside will be permitted if the proposal:
 - Does not result in a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.
 - There will be no significant detrimental impact on the historic environment, landscape, ecology or highway network.
39. The proposal can demonstrate that it complies with the above points owing to the lack of excessive built development arising and the lack of identified adverse impacts on the local landscape, ecology, versatile agricultural land or the highway network via the intensification of the use

associated with the proposed holiday cottage. The site will lead to some additional economic benefit, arising from local spend by visitors, and this is a factor which, in accordance with Policies DM5, DM31 and DM34, weighs in favour of the proposal.

40. Overall, given the national and local policy position, there is a general degree of support for rural enterprises which deliver sustainable tourist-based development and do not unjustifiably or irrevocably erode existing amenity or character.

Other Matters

41. The proposals utilise the existing access to the site and will result in a limited increase in traffic movements to and from the holiday cottage. No objection has been received from SCC Highways and the scheme is not considered to have a detrimental impact on highway safety. There is also adequate parking available on site. The application therefore accords with Joint Development Management Policies DM2 and DM46 in this respect.
42. Given the modest scale of the development, there are considered to be no adverse impacts associated with the development in relation to Ecology and Biodiversity. The holiday cottage will be situated in a similar position to the cart lodge which previously existed at the site.

Planning Balance

43. It is important to note all factors in consideration for the proposal. The proposal may provide clear economic benefits via the provision of tourism accommodation in the location. No objections to the proposal have been received from consultees regarding the design and adverse impacts of the proposed holiday cottage in relation to local heritage assets and residential amenity. However, the locational unsustainability of the proposal results in a conflict with the provisions of Policies DM5, DM31 and DM34, plus CS7 and Chapter 9 of the NPPF, as previously highlighted. Therefore, notwithstanding the modest support that can be offered in principle to the provision of tourist accommodation such as this, and to the economic benefits arising, the very clear planning balance falls in favour of refusal.

Conclusion:

44. In conclusion, whilst the economic benefits of the proposal are noted, and weigh in its favour, this is not a proposal to convert an existing building, which might be looked upon more favourably, noting present policy. Accordingly, , due to the relative inaccessibility of the proposed development and conflict with the provisions of Policy DM34, the proposal is recommended for refusal.

Recommendation:

45. It is recommended that planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason:
1. Policy DM5 seeks to protect the countryside from unsustainable development. This is supported by Policy DM31, which enables the diversification of farms providing the site is 'well related' to sustainable

settlements and by Policy DM34 which requires sites to 'relate well' to the defined settlements. Additionally, Chapter 9 of the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable travel. The proposal for the provision of 1no. holiday cottage in this location is considered to be unsuitable with poor access by sustainable means of travel to services and facilities and would result in future occupants relying on the car for most of their journeys. In this respect the site and provision of a holiday cottage is not considered to be 'well-related' to the defined settlements of Great Barton or Ixworth. Brand Road has no footway or lighting, and is subject to the national speed limit. Further, access beyond Brand Road would rely on using the A134 and in the view of officers this locational unsuitability outweighs any economic benefit otherwise arising from the proposal. The proposal does not therefore comply with Policy DM5 or with the provisions of policies DM31 and DM34. The proposal is also contrary to the spatial strategy set out in policies CS1, CS4 and CS7 of the Core Strategy 2010 which seeks to secure sustainable development within defined settlement boundaries and to policy CS13, which promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy. Policy CS13 further refers to the Policies in the Development Management DPD and Rural Site Allocations DPD, which will set out detailed uses which are appropriate in rural areas.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online [DC/20/1497/FUL](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/DC/20/1497/FUL)