

# Forest Heath District Council

**DEVELOPMENT  
CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**7 OCTOBER 2015**

**DEV/FH/15/037**

**Report of the Head of Planning and Growth**

**PLANNING APPLICATION DC/15/1030/FUL – NEW BUNGALOW, WEST  
SUFFOLK GOLF CENTRE, NEW ROAD, BECK ROW**

## **Synopsis:**

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

## **Recommendation:**

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

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Case Officer: Sarah Drane  
Telephone: 01638 719432

# Committee Report

<b>Date</b>	31.07.2015	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	25.09.2015
<b>Registered:</b>			
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Sarah Drane	<b>Recommendation:</b>	Refuse
<b>Parish:</b>	Beck Row	<b>Ward:</b>	Eriswell & The Rows
<b>Proposal:</b>	Planning Application - proposed dwelling to replace temporary mobile home		
<b>Site:</b>	New Bungalow, West Suffolk Golf Centre, New Road, Beck Row		
<b>Applicant:</b>	R D Nixon, T R Nixon & Mrs A Nixon		

## **Background:**

**This application is referred to the Development Control Committee following consideration by the Delegation Panel.**

**The Parish Council raise no objections and the application is recommended for REFUSAL.**

## **Proposal:**

1. Planning permission is sought for a single storey 2 bed bungalow to replace an existing mobile home on the site. Access is shown along an existing track which runs parallel to the A1101, with access onto the main road approx. 135m to the south east of the site. The dwelling is proposed to accommodate the head greenkeeper of the golf course.

## **Application Supporting Material:**

2. Information submitted with the application as follows:
  - Location plan
  - Proposed plans
  - Land contamination questionnaire
  - Design & Access statement
  - Supporting statement

## **Site Details:**

3. The site is located in the countryside, within a generally flat landscape containing a mix of open fields and intervening vegetation. The site is partly screened by existing trees along the north east and south eastern

boundaries. The proposed site for the bungalow is set back from Mildenhall Drove and the existing mobile home (presently empty and in a poor state of repair) can be seen in glimpsing views from the main road.

### **Planning History:**

4. The golf course has an extensive planning history commencing from F/90/434 which first established consent for a nine hole golf course. Also material are F/2001/058 (and F/2006/0741/VAR which varied condition 8 of F/2001/058) which permitted the siting of a mobile home for staff accommodation until 2011, and F/2005/0671/COU which permitted the extension of the golf course to 18 holes.
5. F/2008/0164/COU - Re-submission of F/2007/0547/COU - Temporary siting of a mobile home. – approved for a temp. period
6. F/2008/0803/FUL - Erection of staff bungalow, as amended by plans received 14th January 2009. – approved (to replace the mobile home granted for a temporary period under F/2006/0741/VAR)
7. F/2011/0423/EOT - Extension of time for application F/2008/0164/COU - Temporary siting of mobile home (Departure from Development Plan) – approved for a temp. period (which expired on 3.11.2014)

### **Consultations:**

8. Highway Authority: No objection subject to a condition

### **Representations:**

9. Parish Council: Support
10. Member Comment: Cllr Bowman requested the application be considered at Committee

**Policy:** The following policies of the Joint Development Management Policies Document and the Forest Heath Core Strategy have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:

11. Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015:
  - DM1 – Sustainable development
  - DM2 – Creating places
  - DM5 – Development in the Countryside
  - DM22 – Residential Design
  - DM26 – Agricultural & Essential Workers Dwellings
  - DM27 – Housing in the Countryside
12. Forest Heath Core Strategy 2010
  - CS1 – Spatial Strategy
  - CS3 – Landscape character and the historic environment
  - CS5 – Design & Local Distinctiveness

- CS10 – Sustainable Rural Communities

**Other Planning Policy:**

13. National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- core principles
  - Section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
  - Section 7 – Requiring good design

**Officer Comment:**

14. The issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:
- Principle of Development
  - Essential/Functional Need
  - Siting and Access
  - Design

Principle of Development

15. There is significant planning history on this site which is material to the consideration of this application. Officer's past considerations of the mobile home applications on the site have resulted in recommendations of refusal due to the application of the adopted policy and the nature of the evidence provided. Temporary consents were issued following consideration of the applications by Members at Planning Committee. A permanent single storey bungalow is now proposed to replace the mobile home. The applicant's case continues on the same grounds as previously submitted and relates to the club's requirement for a greenkeeper to be available at the site during unsocial hours.
16. The applicant's supporting material continues to state the case that there is a functional need for additional accommodation, in particular for occupation by a greenkeeper who is expected to operate out of hours. The applicant also contends that there is no suitable accommodation in the vicinity which would cater for this need as local property is too expensive (to buy or rent). It further states that the proposal is 'well screened by existing trees' and that it is in accordance with local and national policy. No adverse comments on the proposal have been received from Suffolk County Highways. Furthermore, no letters of representation have been received as part of the consultation process.
17. The proposal fails to comply with policy DM26 of the newly adopted Joint Development Management policies (JDMP) as this is not an agricultural, forestry or commercial equine related dwelling. The proposal also fails to comply with policy DM27 (JDMP) which allows for an infill dwelling within a closely knit cluster of 10 or more dwellings. The NPPF does however provide for exceptions to be made under special circumstances for a rural workers dwelling. The NPPF also requires the essential need to be demonstrated in these cases. At the time the last application for the mobile home on the site was considered, the criteria set out under Annex A to PPS7 was used. Whilst this policy has been superseded by the NPPF, the criteria remains as useful guide in assessing rural dwellings which

relate to rurally based enterprises, which the golf course is considered to be.

#### Essential/Functional Need

18. One of the key considerations is whether or not it is an *essential* requirement of the enterprise for workers to be readily available at most times. The applicants are proposing that the home be occupied by a greenkeeper. At the time the mobile home was considered, in order to robustly test the essential need, officers sought a second opinion on this particular point from Acorus, a specialist countryside planning consultancy. At the time Acorus identified issues within the site which gave rise to a need including irrigation, security, greenkeeping etc. The conclusion however was that none of these on their own gave rise to a demonstrable need, however, it was concluded that "*there are other aspects of the course operation which when added to the green keeping aspect may increase the need.*" It is accepted therefore that the course, perhaps as a result of the expansion from 12 to 18 holes, does generate a functional need for an additional full time worker, as a result of the combination of requirements relating to security, irrigation, and green keeping etc. Regardless, it must be made clear that an identification of the need for an additional full time worker does not, in itself, justify a further permanent residential dwelling on site.
19. It then follows that it must be demonstrated that any identified functional need (if such is shown to exist) could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit or in the area. The applicant has claimed, anecdotally, that there is no suitable accommodation in the area that would fulfil the functional need due to the excessive house prices and rental rates locally. In particular, the site presently benefits from two units of accommodation including a former farm house (Crow Ground Hall - owned and occupied by Mr & Mrs Nixon) and a 3 bed bungalow occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Nixon's son, who is a further full time employee. Acorus, in their report concluded that the existing two dwellings on site were sufficient to cater for any additional identified need at that stage. Accordingly, it is considered that existing dwellings on site are entirely suitable and capable to fulfil the need identified and there is insufficient justification to allow a further permanent dwelling on the site.

#### Siting and Access

20. In this instance there are no highways implications of the proposal. The Highways Authority have raised no objection subject to a condition to secure the onsite parking and turning. In relation to siting, the proposed dwelling is remote from existing buildings and dwellings which, notwithstanding the surrounding vegetation, is considered to be detrimental to the open and rural characteristics and visual amenities of the area. The proposals in this respect are considered contrary to policy DM2 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015 and policy CS3 of the Forest Heath Core Strategy 2010.

## Design

21. The dwelling proposed is a modest 2 bed bungalow with a footprint of approx. 100 sq m. and overall height of 5.3m to the ridge. It is a simple design proposed to be rendered under a red concrete tile roof. If there were sufficient justification, there would be no reason to refuse permission on the details provided and a condition could secure appropriate materials.

## Other matters

22. In relation to the adopted Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD, the Leisure/Parks team have been consulted and confirm no obligation is required for a play and open space contribution as there is no current identified need within Beck Row that can be justified.

## **Conclusion:**

23. As a point of detail as well as in principle, the proposal is considered unacceptable and it is recommended that planning permission be refused. The proposal fails to comply with adopted Local Plan policies and national planning policy guidance.

## **Recommendation:**

24. It is recommended that planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:
  1. The applicant has failed to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that any functional need at this site could not be catered for by either of the existing dwellings already on the site, or by any other existing dwellings in the vicinity. Accordingly the proposal is unacceptable as a matter of principle and is contrary to the requirements of policies DM5, DM26 and DM27 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015 and policy CS10 of the Forest Heath Core Strategy 2010 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.
  2. The siting of a dwelling in this rural area remote from either existing properties or buildings is considered to be prejudicial to the open and rural visual amenities of the area. Accordingly, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of policy DM2 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015 and policy CS3 of the Forest Heath Core Strategy 2010 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Documents:**

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

<https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=NONEPHPD02M00>