

Planning and Heritage Assessment for  
proposed extension to Court Farm Cottage,  
Nowton

## **Background**

In August 2021 a planning application was submitted to the LPA and registered under ref DC/21/1784/HH The application description was

*Householder planning application – two storey side extension (following demolition of existing single storey side structures) | Court Farm Cottage Fox And Pin Lane Nowton IP29 5LP*

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 the LPA refused the application and the following reason was given for the refusal.

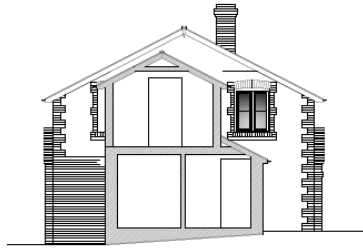
*The reason(s) for the Council's decision to refuse consent are/is:*

*Proposals for the demolition, extension or alteration of buildings identified as being Local Heritage Assets, or protected by an Article 4 direction or subsequent legislation, will be permitted where they demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the building and/or its setting, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance, respect the historic fabric, design, materials, elevational treatment and ornamentation of the original building, will not entail an unacceptable level of loss, damage or covering of original features and have regard to the setting, plot layout and boundary features. This supports to provisions of Policy DM24 which require extensions to dwelling in the countryside to be subordinate in scale and proportion to the original dwelling and to respect the character, scale and design of the existing dwelling.*

*In this regard, the proposal is for a two-storey linked extension that would be connected by a single storey element, this results in a contrived appearance that would have little benefit or reason for this design approach. In addition, the proposed ground floor and first floor of the proposed extension is comparable to that of the existing dwelling. As a result, rather than being a subservient addition which would be expected, the proposed extension would compete with the modest and simple form of the host dwelling both of which are key characteristic of the host dwelling, and would therefore prove harmful to the host building.*

*Therefore, it is considered that the proposed extension would fail to recognise and address the key characteristics of the building or fail to demonstrate a clear understanding of its significance proving contrary to Policies DM16 and DM24.*

During the planning process the LPA let it be known that the proposal, as submitted, was unacceptable in design terms. The architect/ agent for the previous scheme proposed a number of alternative designs in order to overcome planning officer concerns relating the design of the proposal. A number of iterations were suggested and number of them are shown below.



Section AA



Proposed rear elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation



Section AA



Proposed rear elevation



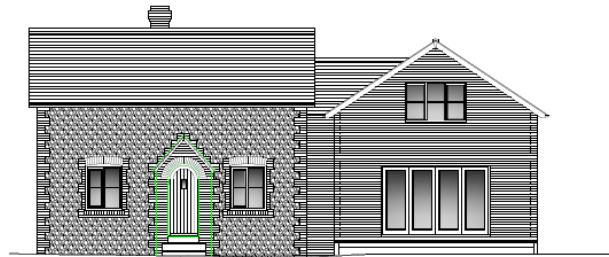
Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation



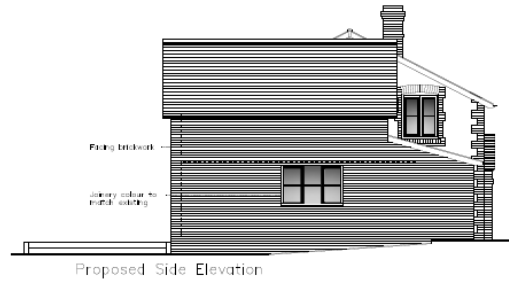
Section AA



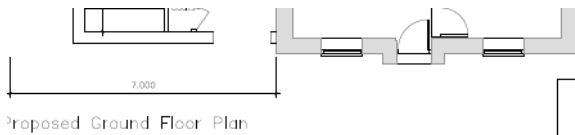
Proposed rear elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



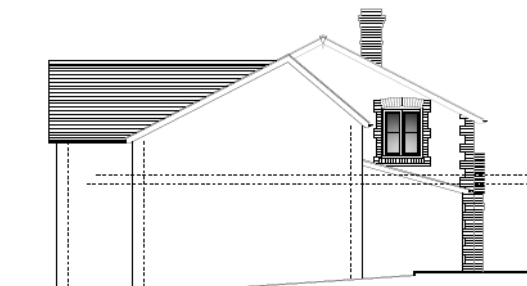
Proposed Side Elevation



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation



Proposed rear elevation



The previous architect took the approach of seeking to retain the sole window serving Bedroom 2 with all iterations shared with the LPA. This approach was in theory sound to ensure light entered the room and so that the overall proposal accorded with building regulations, specifically ensuring bedroom 2 had two means of escape for occupiers in the event of a fire. Nevertheless, this approach resulted in a link with then a two storey extension thereafter. The LPA felt it could not approve such a scheme and refused the proposal on design grounds.

**Relevant Planning Policies**

The following planning policies are considered relevant in the determination of the application

**Policy DM24: Alterations or Extensions to Dwellings, including Self Contained Annexes and Development within the Curtilage**

*Within those towns and villages with settlement boundaries planning permission for alterations or extensions to existing dwellings, self contained annexes, and ancillary development within the curtilage of dwellings will be permitted, provided that the proposals:*

- a. respect the character, scale and design of existing dwellings, and the character and appearance of the immediate and surrounding area;*
- b. will not result in over-development of the dwelling curtilage; and*
- c. will not adversely affect the residential amenity of occupants of nearby properties.*

*In addition to criteria a, b and c, proposals for the alteration or extension of an existing dwelling in the countryside outside of towns and villages with settlement boundaries will also be required to demonstrate that it is subordinate in scale and proportion to the original dwelling.*

*Proposals for self contained residential annexes in the countryside will be permitted only where:*

- d. the design and siting of the annexe is such that it is capable of being reasonably integrated into the use of the original dwelling once the need for it has ceased;*
- e. the size of the annexe is the minimum necessary to meet the purpose; and*
- f. the size, scale, location and design relates satisfactorily to the existing dwelling and its curtilage, and to the wider surrounding area.*

*The occupation of the annexe will be controlled by planning condition or legal agreement to ensure that it is tied to the main dwelling and cannot be used as a separate dwelling.*

**Policy DM16: Local Heritage Assets and Buildings Protected by an Article 4 Direction**

*Proposals for the demolition, extension or alteration of buildings identified as being Local Heritage Assets, or protected by an Article 4 direction or subsequent legislation, will be permitted where they:*

- a. demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the building and/or its setting, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance;*
- b. respect the historic fabric, design, materials, elevational treatment and ornamentation of the original building;*
- c. will not entail an unacceptable level of loss, damage or covering of original features; and*
- d. have regard to the setting, plot layout and boundary features.*

*In the case of works which would cause harm to a Local Heritage Asset, or building protected by an Article 4 Direction or its setting, clear justification for the works must be provided so that the harm can be weighed against any public benefits.*

*The level of detail of any supporting information should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance and/or setting.*

## **Assessment of the proposal against the relevant policies.**

### **Policy DM24**

#### Design of the proposed extension

*"a. respect the character, scale and design of existing dwellings, and the character and appearance of the immediate and surrounding area;"*

*"will also be required to demonstrate that it is subordinate in scale and proportion to the original dwelling."*

After the refusal was issued by the LPA the applicants decided to go away and comprehensively review how a two-storey subservient extension in height, width and depth could be proposed that would also deliver the additional living space/ rooms that their young growing family needs in the short and long term.

Accordingly, a range of ideas were considered which included looking at where extensions could be constructed on the building, at what height and width, whilst fundamentally respecting the overall design principles of the dwelling. Additionally, advice has been sought from the West Suffolk Building Regulations team about alternative means of escape from existing and proposed bedrooms as this was identified as the main constraint to a subservient extension coming forward.

The scheme before the LPA is considered to be much more appropriate for the proposed host dwelling and acceptable in design terms. This is because the proposed two storey element is directly attached to the host dwelling, and it has a lower eaves height and lower ridge height to that of the main dwelling. The combined width of the two storey element and single storey element are noticeably less than the main dwelling. This ensures that the extension will appear as extensions against the original dwelling. The proposed extensions also include no dormers or even second storey windows on either the north or south elevations which accords with the design of the existing dwellings.

Whilst the Building Regulations issue has been overcome by giving Bedroom 2 two means of escape from the room in the event of a fire (the existing door and a door into a cupboard in the new bedroom) the bedroom does require natural daylight. This could be delivered by a squat second storey window on the northern elevation above the existing window that serves the dining room below. However, it was felt that this would have looked very poor in design terms, introducing a strange looking window onto the principle elevation that would be very prominent. Whilst the proposed rooflight is acknowledged as a modern feature, it is considered that a conservation rooflight, of minimal size, would have minimal visual impact and would go largely unnoticed on the building. As such it is considered that any harm from this element would not be so large as to make the overall scheme unacceptable.

#### Impact on neighbours

*"b. will not result in over-development of the dwelling curtilage; and"*

The extended property, if built, would still leave significant space around the dwelling and the plot would not look overdeveloped. It would still maintain the feel of a dwelling in a large spacious rural plot.

*"c. will not adversely affect the residential amenity of occupants of nearby properties."*

Impact on neighbours can occur from overlooking, loss of light or overbearing

The proposal includes no rear windows above ground level. The only neighbours around the property are located to the rear. Accordingly it is considered that the scheme would not cause any significant overlooking.

The proposed extension is set away from the boundaries of the site and so overbearing or loss of light are not considered issues.

### **Policy DM16**

The dwelling is considered a non designated heritage asset by the LPA.

The current dwelling was until relatively recently two dwellings. When the dwelling was converted from two dwellings to one dwelling the dwelling was completely gutted and all original staircases, walls, ceilings etc were removed and replaced.

The existing dwelling is a modest dwelling with a simple and pleasing visual form features. In order to comply with Policy DM16 the extensions have been made as simple as possible in order to sit comfortably with, and not compete against the original dwelling. The windows are proposed to match the existing windows on the host dwelling and the applicant is happy to have a condition which requires the windows to match the current windows and the facing and roofing materials to be agreed with the LPA before development commences. The applicant is also open to an appropriate condition on the roof light or a compliance condition that the rooflight is a "Conservation style rooflight".

### **Conclusion**

The proposed extensions are considered a vast improvement on all other iterations seen by the council and that which was formally refused by the LPA for the reasons given above. The one element of the proposal which might be open to criticism is the roof light, but this is considered a minor drawback and not something that would be so harmful that on balance would mean the proposal should be refused. It should also be noted that the applicant could install the rooflight today without any need to receive a formal consent or permission from the LPA. So it is suggested that this does reduce the negative weight that should be afforded to this element.