

PF/26/1057 - Yew Tree Farm, The Street, Barney

Change of use of existing agricultural buildings with extensions and external alteration to form 4 dwellings

Fulmodeston & Barney Parish Council (PC) convened an Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on Monday 6th July to consider the implications of Planning Application PF/26/1057, dated 23rd June 2026. The proposal is for the change of use of existing agricultural buildings with extensions and external alteration to form 4 dwellings. The site in question is Yew Tree Farm, The Street, Barney, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 0AD.

Following a lengthy discussion around a number of issues, we are writing to inform NNDC that our PC provides qualified support for this application, as set out below.

It is vital to state at this stage that the PC is very much in favour of the redevelopment of the Yew Tree Farm site. It has been largely vacant for many years now; is degrading in quality and could be repurposed to bring new life and vitality to the village. We very much support new homes in the village. However the application itself raises issues that we feel need addressing before a decision is made by the planning authority.

We have set out our concerns below. In doing so, we have sought to be brief and to concentrate on matters relevant to the planning process.

1. **Development density** The plans show only a part of the overall plot being redeveloped (the area to the west of the 'tin shed' is left empty, see 7. below). As a consequence the four dwellings are very dense. Three of the properties are 'joined' in order to maximise density and the gardens are very small (one dwelling appears to have no garden), which is not in character with the village. There is no provision shown for waste/recycling bins, and there is also no provision for any outside storage.

The dwelling to the south east corner of the site is windowless as it fronts onto The Street; if it were set back, then a more attractive living space could be created. If the whole plot formed the basis of the plans, then detached homes with modest gardens could be created.

2. **Road safety** Our PC has major concerns about vehicular movement. Entry and egress already suffers from a 'blind spot' on The Street. NCC Highways have previously considered the access/exit as 'substandard, and the access/exit hasn't changed. But the volume of traffic and the size of vehicles using The Street has increased greatly. This will also be a concern during demolition/construction.

The creation of the new buildings fronting The Street do nothing to improve visibility north and south. Indeed the visibility from the exit northwards is very limited, and when vehicles are parked on the road there is no visibility at all. The applicant states that 'regular access for large agricultural machinery' is a positive, yet no large agricultural machinery has used this site for more than 20 years (and in any case, such vehicles have raised visibility).

The four new homes will attract significant new traffic, including deliveries, utilities and so on for which there is very limited turning space. Added to this, the current plan shows 17 car spaces (no garages) for parking which seems very generous for four family homes. Provision of all the spaces will simply encourage their use.

3. **North building** The single story building on the north boundary of the site seems to replicate the building that currently sits there. It is given two car spaces on its southern front and two spaces to its western rear. It seems that this has been designed for sub-division into two dwellings and our PC believes the objective is to create holiday homes. Such a conclusion could also be applied to the other dwellings (layout, joined properties, very small gardens). See 9. below.
4. **Biodiversity** Our PC cannot see any attempt to address biodiversity on the site. As stated, we believe the proposals represent over-development, and there are no details about environmental mitigation (eg rain water recycling; solar panels), landscaping and planting, bird/bat boxes, etc.
5. **Shared courtyard** The plot layout shows a good deal of shared space, mainly circulation space, but also verges and so on. Our PC can find no details about how this shared space will be managed in the long-term. Will there be a management company to care for the site? We believe there should be clarity over site management and maintenance.
6. **Design** Our PC has concerns about the overall design and the impact of the development of the main barn building. Generally the design is out of keeping with the adjacent buildings along The Street and the village generally, mainly comprising traditional brick and pan tiled properties. The materials being used to clad and roof the barn, being timber boarding and metal sheeting respectively, are at odds with the surrounding buildings, although this can be overcome with using high quality materials and construction methods.
7. **Rear plot** The planning application leaves a large part (we estimate 40%) of the overall, owned plot empty (this is the area on which the 'tin shed' is sited). Why is this so? We would expect a developer to maximise development opportunity. This raises concerns about long-term plans. Will the developer use the current application to establish the principle of development on the site, and then return at some point for a further application to develop the 'vacant as shown' site? If so, what would be the Council's response to this? This question is particularly important given our concerns about development density. NNDC should seek clarity on the future of the rear plot.
8. **EHO** The EH consultee comment suggests 'working hours to be restricted', although the hours that they recommend are incorrect, suggesting that all working will be overnight! In our opinion there will be considerable disruption for a lengthy period for site clearance, demolition and construction and therefore strict working hours need to be imposed. The PC is also concerned about the lack of any provision for noise and dust 'control', and the lack of provision for 'waste' material storage on site during demolition/construction. Is asbestos present in the existing buildings?

Also EH require to see adequate provision of refuse and collection areas, which we consider should form part of the planning application.

9. **Covenant** The PC is of the opinion that the current application is for dwellings that will be used for holiday homes (there are already a number of properties in the village that remain unoccupied for much of the year). If this is the case, then the overall benefit to the village of the application is very limited. We would, therefore, ask NNDC to consider a permanent covenant on the use of the site, limiting sales of the dwellings to buyers seeking a main home.

Our PC hopes that NNDC will consider the points raised here as being reasonable and within the purview of the planning process. As stated at the outset, we favour the

redevelopment of the Yew Tree Farm site for dwellings, but feel very strongly that the current proposal has a number of weaknesses and questions that need resolving prior to any planning decision.