
MAIN CASE

Reference No: 17/00958/FUL

Proposal: **Erection of a chalet Bungalow and associated off road parking**

Site Address: **Byways, Barcham Road, Soham, CB7 5TU**

Applicant: **Mr Mark Fordham**

Case Officer: **Oli Haydon, Planning Officer**

Parish: **Soham**

Ward: **Soham North**
 Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Carol Sennitt
 Councillor Mark Goldsack

Date Received: **31 May 2017** **Expiry Date:** **4th August 2017**

[S76]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are requested to REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed site is not considered to be sustainably located and would have negative effects on the environmental and social roles of sustainability.

The site is located outside of the development framework at a distance of approx. 0.6 miles from the nearest part of Soham's development envelope, and approx. 2 miles from the closest part of the town centre.

There is a bus stop at a distance of approx. a third of a mile from the site along a 60mph road (Barcham Road) with no pedestrian footpaths. This road is also used to access Soham. Barcham Road is not considered a safe route for pedestrians, and would lead to a reliance on vehicular transport to access facilities by the future occupiers of the dwellings. The contribution to the housing supply by one additional dwelling would be modest, as would the short-term benefit to the construction trade.

The unsustainable location does not accord with paragraphs 35 and 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or policy GROWTH 5 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015. The adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits to the construction trade and housing supply.

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning consent for the erection of a chalet bungalow with off-road parking. The three bedroom dwelling will be 5.8m in height (ridge) with parking and turning to the front of the site.
- 2.2 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. **Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, in the application file.**
- 2.3 The application was called in to Planning Committee by Cllr Sennitt as it is considered that the location is sustainable.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 No relevant planning history.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The site is located north of Soham, outside the development envelope. Barcham Road is a single car-width road with no pedestrian footpaths, leading from the A142 along the edges of agricultural fields. Dwellings and rural businesses are regularly spaced along Barcham Road in the vicinity of this site.
- 4.2 The northern edge of Soham's development envelope is approx. two thirds of a mile away, and the closest part of the town centre boundary is approx. 2 miles away.
- 4.3 The site comprises an area of amenity space belonging to Byways, a detached single-storey dwelling located in close proximity to Orchard Farm, Orchard Farm Business Park and Holly Farm.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

- 5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Environmental Health - No Comments Received

The Ely Group Of Internal Drainage Board – No concerns if soakaways are found to be an effective means of surface water disposal.

Soham Town Council – Objects to the scheme on the basis it is outside the development envelope.

Ward Councillors – Cllr Sennitt called the application in to Planning Committee as it is believed that this site constitutes a sustainable location.

Local Highways Authority – No objections although the Local Highways Engineer is concerned with the increasing number of new dwellings along Barcham Road. There is a lack of infrastructure, sustainable travel and highways amenities. Although speeds are low, this is a 60mph road this is a single track road and there is no lighting or footways. Should this incremental development continue it is likely that it will result in the detriment to highways safety an increase in vehicle and pedestrian conflict and be unaligned with the ECDC Sustainability policies.

The proposal includes the erection of gates across the vehicle access. There should be a minimum distance of 5m from the back edge of the carriageway to allow cars to be free of the highway when entering the property if the gates are shut. Otherwise the highway will be obstructed and potentially lead to the detriment of highways safety. Therefore should planning permission be granted I would recommend a condition requiring gates to be 5m from the back edge of the carriageway.

A revised site layout was submitted with the gates set back by 5m – No concerns were raised by the LHA

Waste Strategy (ECDC) – No concerns subject to informatives

5.2 **Neighbours** – Nine neighbouring properties were notified, a site notice was posted and an advert placed in the Cambridge Evening News; the responses received are summarised below. A full copy of the responses is available on the Council’s website. One response was received from the owner of the adjacent Orchard Farm.

- The dwelling would be in front of a large farm with vehicle movements at unsocial hours at busy time when the yard will also be floodlit. There should be no obstruction to Barcham Road.
- The water supply may be inadequate for the further dwelling

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 1	Levels of housing, employment and retail growth
GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 4	Delivery of growth
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
HOU 2	Housing density
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 9	Pollution
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide
Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations
Flood and Water

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
7 Requiring good design
11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

7.0 **PLANNING COMMENTS**

7.1 The main considerations in relation to this application are the principle of development, the visual impact on the rural character of the area, residential amenity, transport impact, ecological impact, and drainage.

7.2 **Principle of Development**

7.3 The Council is not currently able to demonstrate that it has an adequate five year supply of land for housing. Therefore, all Local Plan policies relating to the supply of housing must be considered out of date and housing applications assessed in terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This means that development proposals should be approved unless any adverse effects of the development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It should be noted that all other Local Plan policies and relevant material considerations remain relevant and form part of the planning balance for this application.

7.4 The benefits of this application are considered to be: the positive contribution of the provision of one additional dwelling to the district's housing stock, and the positive contribution to the local and wider economy in the short term through the construction of the new dwelling.

7.5 The application site is located outside Soham town and approx. a third of a mile from the nearest part of Soham's development envelope, and approx. 2 miles from the closest part of the town centre. Barcham Road is a 60mph road with no pedestrian footpaths. There is a limited bus service currently with the closest stop on the A142 and linking with Newmarket, Ely and Cambridge. This would mean that occupants of the proposed dwelling are very likely to depend on a vehicle to access the services of the town and beyond.

7.6 Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside; this proposal also does not meet any of the exceptions detailed in that paragraph. Paragraph 35 also encourages development to protect and exploit opportunities for sustainable transport. For the purposes of assessing the proposal in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the site is therefore not considered to be in an environmentally or socially sustainable location and is

contrary to policy GROWTH 5 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 35 and 55 of the NPPF

7.7 Two recent proposals in close proximity to this application site were refused at Planning Committee in May 2017 (17/00373/OUT & 17/00374/OUT) on the grounds of unsustainability and visual impact. Members are also aware of three recent appeal decisions which have upheld the Local Planning Authority's decision to refuse planning permission on the grounds of an unsustainable location. This is also a material planning consideration.

7.8 The proposal is, therefore, considered to be contrary to the requirement of the NPPF to deliver sustainable development.

7.9 **Visual Amenity and Character**

7.10 The existing street scene on this part of Barcham Road is generally characterised by sparse single storey dwellings at staggered intervals so that no dwelling is directly opposite another, occasionally with detached garages to the sides. The openness of the agricultural land also forms part of the character of the area. The site is located to the front of Orchard Farm and the associated business park. The existing dwelling is located behind a tall boundary fence within a modest curtilage.

7.11 The proposed one and a half storey scale of the dwelling (5.8 metres in height) is in keeping with the larger dwellings in the wider street-scene, and the proposed layout of the dwelling is in line with the existing neighbouring dwelling. The footprint of the proposed dwelling is smaller than those in the surrounding area and is balanced out by the increased height.

7.12 The scheme will utilise materials similar to those of the neighbouring dwelling such as buff brickwork and red rooftiles and will maintain a generally agricultural aesthetic similar to that of a rural cottage.

7.13 There are no significant concerns regarding the scale and layout as the dwelling echoes the general built form along Barcham Road. The proposal is considered to be acceptably coherent within the rural and open character of the area. Furthermore, there is potential within the scheme to incorporate boundary treatments to ensure further subtlety within the street scene (akin to the existing scenario on site), this can be secured by condition if necessary.

7.14 **Residential Amenity**

7.15 The proposed dwelling will be one-and-a-half storey, 5.8m in height; it would be situated approximately 3.5m from the neighbouring side boundary and set back from the highway by approximately 17m. The proposal would have one neighbouring dwelling, located to the NE, with a side-to-side separation distance of 8.5m. The neighbouring dwelling, Byways, is a single storey dwelling with no windows on the side elevation facing the proposal. Three side facing windows are proposed, one serving a bedroom (11.5m from the neighbouring dwelling) and the other two serving the kitchen/dining room. By virtue of the separation distances and the scale of the existing and proposed dwellings, there is unlikely to be any

overlooking resulting from these windows. A first floor window has been proposed though this is front facing and has no overlooking impact.

- 7.16 Due to the separation distances and the proposed height of the scheme, at 5.8m, there is unlikely to be an overbearing impact from this proposal on the neighbouring occupiers of Byways.
- 7.17 The site has sufficient space to accommodate the dwelling with an acceptable level of private amenity space as set out in the SPD Design Guide. It is considered there will be an acceptable and minimal impact on any future occupier from the nearby farm access, approximately 32m from the proposed dwelling and currently separated by boundary planting. No windows have been proposed on the elevation facing the farm access aside from the ground floor bathroom and any noise associated with the farm is likely to be expected from future residents in this rural location. On balance, the proposal is broadly in accordance with the residential amenity aspect of Local Plan Policy ENV2 and the NPPF Paragraph 7.
- 7.18 **Highways**
- 7.19 The proposal includes a 3.8m wide access with a gate set back 5m from Barcham Road. The Local Highways Authority have raised no concerns with the scheme, although they are concerned with the increasing number of dwellings along Barcham Road and the stress it will place on the limited infrastructure in place in the locality. The proposal is compliant with Local Plan Policy COM7.
- 7.20 A turning space and sufficient parking has been accommodated within the plot and the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Local Plan Policy COM8.
- 7.21 **Ecology**
- 7.22 The site is currently unused private amenity space belonging to Byways; the site has minimal levels of planting, hedgerows, watercourses or ditches which may hold some biodiversity value. Any larger features, such as the side boundary hedging, are being retained as part of this application. In order to protect and enhance species in accordance with policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, a condition should be placed on any approval to ensure that measures to enhance the biodiversity in the vicinity are installed prior to occupation of the development.
- 7.23 **Other Material Matters**
- 7.24 The site is not located within an identified Flood Zone and any permission granted will be subject to a condition requiring a detailed drainage strategy to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 7.25 **Planning Balance**
- 7.26 The proposal would provide the following benefits:- the provision of an additional residential dwelling to the District's housing supply which would be built to modern, sustainable building standards and the positive contribution to the local and wider economy in the short term through construction work.

- 7.27 However, it is considered that these benefits would be outweighed by the significant and demonstrable harm which would be caused by this unsustainable form of development.
- 7.28 This proposal is in conflict with Policies GROWTH5 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and the core principles of the NPPF and would counterbalance the recent multiple conclusions of the Planning Inspectorate within the District.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
17/00958/FUL	Oli Haydon Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Oli Haydon Planning Officer 01353 665555 oli.haydon@eastca mbs.gov.uk

National Planning Policy Framework -
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -
<http://www.eastcamb.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>