
MAIN CASE

Reference No: 15/01381/FUL

Proposal: Residential Dwelling, Attached Double Garage, Parking & Associated Site Works (see prev approved 15/00323/OUT).

Site Address: Land Adjacent 14 Back Lane Wicken Cambridgeshire CB7 5YL

Applicant: Mr & Mrs R. Gorham & S. Clay (respectively)

Case Officer: Ruth Gunton Planning Officer

Parish: Wicken

Ward: Soham South
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Hamish Ross
Councillor Ian Bovingdon
Councillor Dan Schumann

Date Received: 10 November 2015 **Expiry Date:** 5 January 2016
[Q183]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members are requested to REFUSE the application for the following reason:
- 1 The proposal for a new 5 bed dwelling and double garage is considered to be out of keeping with the streetscene by virtue of the combination of the height, size and form of the proposed development. This harm is principally from the two storey front projecting garage that does not comply with the Design Guide SPD, which states integral garages should be located to the side. Additionally the width of the plot would result in an appearance of the dwelling being 'squashed' into the plot. This does not comply with policy ENV 2 (Design) which requires location, layout, scale and form of buildings to relate sympathetically with the surrounding area and each other.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission to erect a 5 bed detached residential dwelling, with attached double garage including living space above, and associated works.

- 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.**

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1
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|--------------|--|----------|------------|
| 15/00323/OUT | Outline Application for Residential Dwelling & Associated Infrastructure | Approved | 19.06.2015 |
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4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The site is located outside the development envelope of the village of Wicken and comprises land that was previously used for arable farming. Access onto the site has now been created having gained outline planning permission for a residential dwelling and associated works, with all matters reserved apart from access. The site is flat and open towards the fenland to the south.
- 4.2 There is a shed situated on the northern boundary and an existing ash tree on the northern border. On the site there is an unauthorised prefabricated building, shipping container and small shed along the eastern boundary. There is a residential dwelling adjacent to the western boundary and a further dwelling opposite. Back Lane is a narrow lane providing access to a number of residential dwellings and an agricultural building which is located to the east of the site.
- 4.3 The site is opposite, but outside, the Wicken conservation area that runs along the north side of Back Lane.

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.

Wicken Parish Council – no concerns.

Ward Councillors - no comments received.

Cambridgeshire Archaeology – their records indicate that the site lies in an area of archeological potential. They do not object to the development proceeding in this location but consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archeological investigation to be secured through condition, as the outline application was (15/00323/OUT).

Local Highways Authority – amended plans were provided by the agent following a holding objection regarding proposed access gates being set back by 5m from the public highway. The amended plans set the gates back as required by the highways

authority. Conditions were proposed to prevent water from the site draining onto the public highway, the driveway material, and for pedestrian visibility splays.

Trees Officer – requested a formal tree survey or Tree Impact Assessment (TIA) of the tree to the north of the site as the plans indicate that an ash tree is to be retained. A condition was proposed that if the application is approved, a landscaping scheme and landscaping maintenance schedule be provided prior to commencement of building work.

Conservation Officer – the officer noted that any development does not detract from the character, appearance and setting of the listed buildings on the High Street. In particular that it is not higher than the dwelling opposite, so as not to be visible from High Street/North Street. The style and materials are not considered to be out of character with the historic village. The garage would ideally be detached from the dwelling, however the dropped roofline helps to provide some separation. It is not considered overall that the proposed development would harm the character of the heritage assets nearby.

Waste Strategy (ECDC) – stated the requirement for two bins for which a charge will be made, and which should be brought to the public highway on collection days.

CCC Growth & Development - no comments received.

5.2 Neighbours – 6 neighbouring properties were notified and the responses received are summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council's website.

4 Butts Lane – objection due to: out of proportion with width of site, the garden room extending beyond the building line of 14 Back Lane, inappropriate to have a two storey building which could overwhelm neighbours, insufficient space for vehicles other than automobiles to access site due to narrowness of Back Lane, access for emergency vehicles, increased danger to walkers from increased traffic on Back Lane.

14 Back Lane – objection due to: proposed development beyond the current building line, danger to walkers from potential increased traffic along Back Lane from this and potential future development, the finished height of the building is not clear and may 'dwarf' no. 14 and affect the view to the fen of opposite properties.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
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
ENV 11	Conservation Areas
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide
Developer Contributions

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Paragraph 14

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

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a robust five year housing supply and therefore the policies within the Local Plan relating to the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date. In light of this, applications for housing development, such as this one, should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The key considerations in determining this application are therefore; whether any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, and against the policies within the Local Plan which do not specifically relate to the supply of housing; or, whether any specific policies within the NPPF indicate that the development should be restricted.

The main issues to consider are the impacts on visual amenity, the historic environment, residential amenity, biodiversity and ecology, flood risk, and highway safety.

7.1 **Principle of Development**

- 7.1.1 The principle of a residential dwelling and associated infrastructure has been approved by application 15/00323/OUT, therefore there are no concerns regarding the principle of development on this site.

7.2 **Residential Amenity**

- 7.2.1 Policy ENV2 requires consideration of the impact of a proposed development on residential amenity of neighbouring properties. There is agricultural land with no neighbouring properties to the south or east, and residential properties opposite (15 Back Lane), and to adjacent to the west (14 Back Lane).

- 7.2.2 Although one of the front first floor dormer windows of the proposed dwelling faces across the road into windows in the first floor of 15 Back Lane, the distance (21m) is considered to be too great to have a detrimental impact on residential amenity. The window in the en suite bathroom above the garage would face the central first floor dormer of 15 Back Lane at a distance of 12m but a bathroom window is likely to be obscured glass, and could be conditioned as such. The proposal is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact on the residential amenity of 15 Back Lane.
- 7.2.3 The windows of the bedroom above the garage would not directly face any windows of 14 Back Lane. There would be minimal and partial overlooking by these windows into the front and east amenity spaces of this neighbouring dwelling, and at a minimum distance of 12m. There is a first floor master bedroom rooflight, which would overlook the rear amenity space of no. 14, but the distance (12m) is such that it is not considered to have a detrimental impact. The western elevation closest to the boundary with no. 14 would overlook the single-storey rear part of the neighbouring dwelling, including two side windows. However these side windows are considered to be secondary windows for that room, with a large primary window facing the rear, therefore the impact of the proposed development on the secondary windows is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact on the residential amenity of 14 Back Lane that would warrant refusal.
- 7.2.4 The previous outline application included a condition covering unexpected contamination; if this application is approved this condition can still be secured.

7.3 Visual Amenity

- 7.3.1 It is considered that the combined effect of the height, size and form of the development would be harmful to the street scene. Each of these are explained in more detail below:
- 7.3.1.1 Height: The proposed ridge height is 8.3m, with neighbouring 14 Back Lane indicated on plan 15:041-20A as being approximately 6.86m from ground to ridge, and the dwelling opposite the site being approximately 7.93m from ground to ridge. This means that the proposed dwelling would be taller than those adjacent to it.
- 7.3.1.2 Size: The proposed dwelling is a large 5 bed house with two en suite bathrooms, one other bathroom, secondary living spaces (garden room, play room, study), and two-storey double garage located to the front of the site and which is integrated with the main dwelling. At outline stage the garage was separate from the dwelling. The effect of attaching the garage to the dwelling rather than having it separate is that it creates one single large building. The proposal is for a dropped roofline to the connecting section between the garage and the main dwelling. However, this link section is 5.5m in height and provides little visual separation between the two storey garage and main dwelling, in addition to which matching materials will be used that will unify rather than separate the elements.
- 7.3.1.3 Form: The form of the dwelling locates the garage to the front, and the main dwelling extends towards the rear of the plot along the eastern boundary. The Design Guide states that integral garages should be positioned to the side, and that it will rarely be acceptable to construct a garage between the front elevation and the

highway. The garage is both two-storey, and linked with the main house. The harm from the forward position of the garage is that it creates an alien feature, which is not keeping with the streetscene.

- 7.3.1.4 The dwelling does not extend further from the built form than the outbuildings at 14 Back Lane, and the dwelling at 12 Back Lane, so the location of the dwelling on the plot is not considered to be out of line with the built form.
- 7.3.1.5 The scale of the development in combination with the plot shape, means that the development would extend out to 2/3rd of the width of the plot along the eastern boundary, which would give the appearance of the development being 'squashed' onto the site, despite an extensive garden to the rear. Along Back Lane there are a variety of shapes and sizes of plots with associated residential dwellings. 20 Back Lane is a dwelling of a similar size to that proposed in this application, however the plot shape is significantly larger, and the dwelling sits within this with a considerable amount of space to all of its boundaries with 14 Back Lane and the public highway. As such, 20 Back Lane appears in proportion to its plot size despite it being two-storey and occupying a large footprint.
- 7.3.2 Amendments were requested to: reduce the garage to single-storey, to detach it from the dwelling, and to reduce the length of the master bedroom so that it matched the orangery. These would have the effect of reducing the height of the garage, the overall size of the dwelling, and amending its form. Amendments were made that removed the orangery entirely, reduced the length of the garden room and master bedroom rear elevation by 1.2m, and shifted the entire development 1m towards the rear of the plot. These amendments overcame some of the concern regarding overall size. However it is the combination of concerns regarding height, size and form on these on this particular plot, combined with the front positioning of the two-storey garage creating an alien feature that has a significant detrimental impact on the streetscene sufficient for refusal by non-compliance with policy ENV2 (design).

7.4 Historic Environment

- 7.4.1 The site is adjacent to the Wicken Conservation Area but not inside it, however potential impact on the conservation area should be assessed. The Conservation Officer did not object to the proposed development, though noted that the impact on views from North Street across the conservation area should be considered. As the principle of development of a dwelling which would have an impact on these views has already been established through 15/00323/OUT, this cannot be given much weight in determining the application.
- 7.4.2 An archaeological condition was secured under outline planning and therefore can be added to this application if approved.

7.5 Highways

- 7.5.1 The principle of a dwelling with access onto the public highway was established in the Outline planning application. As such the additional vehicular use has been

approved, and concerns regarding the impact on walkers are not part of the consideration of this report. The development is on an adopted road which although narrow is already sufficient for access by emergency vehicles to existing properties. It is therefore considered suitable for emergency access to the proposed property.

- 7.5.2 Amended plans were submitted which removed the holding condition from the Highways Authority regarding distance of the gates from the public highway. Other highways impact issues regarding visibility splays and construction of the driveway can be dealt with by condition. As such the proposal is in compliance with COM7.
- 7.5.3 The proposal includes a double garage which provides sufficient space for the two parking spaces required for the dwelling by COM8, and it is therefore in compliance with this policy.

7.6 Ecology

- 7.6.1 The existing hedge on the northern boundary is proposed for removal and plan 15:041-20 A shows a new hedge that will be planted to replace this. There is an ash tree on the northern boundary which is not protected and Plan 15:041-20A indicates that this will be retained. If planning permission is granted a landscaping scheme and maintenance schedule would be required. In addition a condition would be required to secure two Barn Owl boxes, as previously required under 15/00323/OUT.

7.7 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.7.1 A condition to control surface water drainage was secured under outline planning and therefore can be added to this application if approved.

7.8 Planning Balance

The National Planning Policy Framework requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development unless the harm significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefit. The benefits are an additional dwelling to the housing stock and the short-term benefit to the building trade locally. There is considered to be no significant harm to the conservation area, and no consultee issues which cannot be resolved by planning condition. In this case, the harm to the streetscene from the combination of the height, form with attached garage to front, and overall size is considered to be significant enough and outweighs the benefits to warrant refusal of planning permission.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
15/01381/FUL	Ruth Gunton Room No. 011 The Grange	Ruth Gunton Planning Officer 01353 665555
15/00323/OUT	Ely	ruth.gunton@eastca

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.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>