
MAIN CASE

Reference No: 17/00121/FUL

Proposal: Proposed dwelling, carport access, parking and associated site works

Site Address: Land Opposite Hawes Lane Wicken Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 5XH

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Barry Hall

Case Officer: David Gibson, Planning Officer

Parish: Wicken

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

Date Received: 26 January 2017 **Expiry Date:** 10 April 2017

[R276]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

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

1. The proposal for one dwelling is remote from local services and facilities and would result in future occupiers having to cross Stretham Road to access a footpath, conflicting with the aims of sustainable development, the need to minimize travel, and the ability to encourage walking, cycling, use of public transport and reduce the reliance of the private car as expected in local and national policy. The site is in an unsustainable location and the benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the identified harm and the proposal is contrary to Policies GROWTH 2, GROWTH 5 and COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework
2. The proposal by virtue of its location would amount to a visually intrusive form of development in this countryside location, such that it would cause significant demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the surrounding area. As such it is contrary to Policies ENV 1 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan and paragraphs 14, 17 and 56-68 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a two storey dwelling and a detached double car port. The dwelling would access Hawes Lane from an existing field access that would be widened to 4 metres. The dwelling would be finished in buff brickwork and Spanish slate roof tiles. The ground floor would provide space for a kitchen, a dining room, a study and a sitting room. At first floor level the dwelling would benefit from 4no. bedrooms. Windows would be placed in all four elevations at ground and first floor. The car port would have a pyramidal roof. It would be open to the front and partially open to both sides. It would be closed to the rear.
- 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.**
- 2.1 This application was called in on 10th April 2017 by Cllr. Ian Bovingdon in order to expedite a decision rather than have a series of planning applications on the site.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 16/01574/FUL – Proposed dwelling, carport access, parking and associated site works – Withdrawn
- 3.2 Off site planning history – 9 Stretham Road – 15/00888/FUL – REFUSED - Extension of three bedroom farmhouse to create six bedroom detached property – This dwelling is located to the south of the application site on the same side of the road. The proposed large rear extensions were considered to be poor design. The extensions were considered to be bulky and uncharacteristic of the area. The front porch was also considered to be too large and disproportionate. The large balcony to the rear was also considered to be an incongruous feature and unacceptable in this rural location. The decision to refuse the application was challenged on appeal by the applicant. The appeal was dismissed and the Planning Inspector agreed with the decision of the Local Planning Authority. Enforcement action to improve the appearance of the dwelling has been carried out.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The site is located to the north west of the village of Wicken. The site is located approximately 150m to the northwest of the village envelope. A number of residential properties are located to the north of the site on the opposite side of Stretham Road. Further dwellings are located to the south and south east of the application site
- 4.2 The site is relatively open especially when viewed from the north and west. The site is located on the western side of Stretham Road. The western side of Stretham Road does not benefit from a footpath. A footpath is located on the eastern side of Stretham Road. Stretham Road becomes a 30 miles an hour road to the west of the application site.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

- 5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees, Town Council, Local Highways Authority and Waste Strategy and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Parish Council – No objections to the development

Ward Councillors – Councillor Bovingdon requested that the application be determined by Planning Committee in order to expedite a decision rather than have a series of planning applications on the site.

CCC Growth & Development - No Comments Received

Local Highways Authority – No objections to the development but has requested conditions on any approval.

Waste Strategy (ECDC) – No objections to the development.

- 5.2 Neighbours – a site notice was erected adjacent to the site and 5 neighbouring properties were notified directly. No objections or comments were received.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV9	Pollution
GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations
Design Guide

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 1 Building a strong, competitive economy
- 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

- 7 Requiring good design
- 8 Promoting healthy communities
- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6.4 Planning Practice Guidance

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

The main issues to consider when determining this application relate to the principle of development, visual amenity, residential amenity and highway safety.

7.1 Principle of development

The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary for Wicken. The development of the site for housing would therefore conflict with Policy GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan which seeks to focus new housing development within defined settlement boundaries. However as the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land, Policy GROWTH 2 cannot be considered up to date in so far as it relates to the supply of housing land. In this situation, the presumption in favour of development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) means that permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts of so doing would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

7.2 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances. There are other dwellings close to the site and it is not far from the village and in this sense the proposal would not be overtly isolated. The social role of sustainable development seeks to ensure amongst other matters the creation of a high quality built environment with accessible local services. However, given that paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, it is considered that the degree of accessibility of the proposal to services and facilities is also relevant.

7.3 The proposal would make a positive, albeit modest, contribution towards the provision of housing in the area and its construction would provide some short term economic benefits. With regard to availability and deliverability, the site is within the applicant's ownership and available now, making the development deliverable within 5 years to meet the housing shortfall. The proposal therefore supports the economic dimension to sustainable development which weighs in favour of the proposal

7.4 The services that are provided within Wicken are not necessarily easily accessible from the site by public footpath as the future residents of any dwelling approved on this site would have to cross the main road into Wicken to make use of the footpath to the eastern side of Stretham Road. This road is 30mph at the point of the proposed development with the change of speed limit from 60mph to 30mph located approximately 100 metres to the north west. It is considered that this is an unattractive and inadequate environment for pedestrians and is likely to mean that future residents will access the village services and wider towns and facilities by car, which means the

site is poorly connected to services and facilities, inconsistent with the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The proposal is therefore not considered to be sustainable development. It is therefore contrary to Policies GROWTH 5 and COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the NPPF.

7.5 Visual amenity

Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan states that development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, form, design and materials will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape features and the settlement edge.

7.6 The environmental role of sustainable development seeks to in part, contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. Consideration of a developments impact on the character and appearance of the area within which it is situated is therefore integral to the environmental dimension of sustainable development, as is design. In addition Policy GROWTH 2 seeks to ensure that all new housing developments protect the countryside and the setting of villages. Policy ENV 1 seeks to protect landscape and settlement character and in particular, respect views into and out of settlements. These aims are reiterated in paragraph 17 of the NPPF which seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

7.7 The site is relatively open and has a rural feel to it unlike the northern side of Stretham Road which has a much more developed appearance which includes numerous dwellings and a caravan park. The openness of the site helps to contribute to the open and rural character of the immediate area to the west of Stretham Road north of the village envelope, typical of what one would expect to see in this locality. As stated above, the site is extremely open when viewed from the north and west. The applicant proposes to plant native hedging along the northern boundary to counteract this. Whilst additional landscaping could soften the appearance of the dwelling in the long term, any planting would take a number of years to mature so in the short and medium term a proposed dwelling would have a significant detrimental impact on the immediate. Any proposed landscaping could be removed in the longer term, thereby resulting in an unsatisfactory form of development in this rural location outside of the village envelope.

7.8 Furthermore, as stated above in the 'off site history' section, the Council has refused retrospective works, successfully defended on appeal and carried out enforcement action against a neighbouring property on the western side of Stretham Road, to the south of the application site. The delegated report for application 15/00888/FUL stated –

“The form of the extensions to the front and the rear, including the roof form and first floor balcony extension, comprise poor design that is not subservient in scale or form and represents an alien, incongruous and contrived form of development that is contrary to national and local plan policy.

The dwelling is located in the countryside and sits within an open landscape in a relatively isolated prominent position, where views of the dwelling are apparent as you approach and leave Wicken village. “

- 7.9 It is considered a large detached dwelling with a large detached cart lodge would look similarly out of place in the open countryside.
- 7.10 For the reasons provided above, it is considered that the sites rural appearance provides a valuable contribution to the surrounding countryside and the site connects strongly with and contributes to the value and character of the surrounding open landscape, particularly on the western side of Stretham Road. The incursion of new development into the countryside would significantly change its rural character and appearance and which would also be materially detrimental to the character and appearance of the wider area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy ENV 1 and ENV 2.
- 7.11 Residential amenity
Detailed plans and elevations have been submitted as part of the application. The plans show a two storey dwelling with windows in all elevations. As stated above, the dwelling would be situated well within the plot and would benefit from ample amenity space. Policy ENV2 aims to ensure that development would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residents.
- 7.12 Given the size of the plot, the distance of the adjacent properties to the site boundary and the drawings that have been submitted, it is considered that the scheme has been designed in such a way as to ensure that it would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties. The scheme would not lead to a loss of privacy or the creation of an overbearing impact on the neighbouring properties.
- 7.13 It is therefore considered that the proposal could be designed to ensure that it would not create any significantly detrimental impacts upon the residential amenity of the neighbouring and future occupiers, in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015.
- 7.14 Highway safety
The application shows that an existing field access would be retained and widened to 4 metres. Ample car parking would also be located within the curtilage of the dwelling. Policies COM7 and COM8 seek to ensure that new development would not have an adverse impact on highway safety and would provide sufficient car parking so as not to increase the potential for off street car parking.
- 7.15 The Highways Authority has not objected to the scheme. Subject to conditions, the access arrangements and parking arrangements within the site are considered acceptable. The development is therefore considered to accord with Policies COM7 and COM8.
- 7.16 Biodiversity
The application site is not considered to be of any significant value in relation to biodiversity. Details of bird and bat boxes have been submitted with the application. It is considered that the proposal would comply with policy ENV7 in relation to biodiversity.

7.17 Drainage

In order to ensure that adequate surface drainage measures are incorporated into the scheme it is recommended that a surface water drainage strategy condition is appended to any grant of planning permission.

- 7.18 A condition could be appended to any grant of planning permission requiring that a scheme to dispose of foul water has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented prior to occupation of the dwellings.

7.19 Planning balance

The proposal would increase the built form within the countryside. It would be a dwelling located outside of the village envelope. As stated above, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. On balance, the proposal is not considered to be sustainable development and therefore conflicts with Policy GROWTH 5 due to its location. The village services of Wicken are not safely accessible, and the nearest full range of services is located in Soham, hence car dependency will be high, contrary to the social dimension of sustainable development. The development will be visually intrusive in this countryside location such that it will materially and significantly harm the character of the countryside. These aspects of the proposal are not consistent with the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
17/00121/FUL	David Gibson Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	David Gibson Planning Officer 01353 665555 David.Gibson@east cambs.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.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>