
MAIN CASE

Reference No: 16/01680/OUT

Proposal: Erection of two detached houses

Site Address: Land South Of 1 Station Cottages Station Road Wilburton
Cambridgeshire

Applicant: Mr & Mrs R A Yarrow

Case Officer: Ruth Gunton, Planning Officer

Parish: Wilburton

Ward: Stretham
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Bill Hunt
Councillor Charles Roberts

Date Received: 1 December 2016 **Expiry Date:** 12th April 2017

[R256]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are requested to REFUSE the application for the following reason:

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 approximately 1.1 miles from the nearest part of Wilburton. There is a bus stop at a distance of approx 1.2 miles from the site along a 60mph road with no footpaths. This road is also used to access Wilburton and its services. This 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 dwelling. The contribution to the housing supply by two additional dwellings would be modest, and the benefits to the construction trade would be short term and minimal.

This does not accord with paragraphs 14, 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, by virtue of unsustainable location and reliance on car.

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of two detached dwellings with all matters reserved apart from access.
- 2.2 An amended plan without indicative layout was received in order to simplify the information being considered. A sustainability statement was also received following officer concerns regarding the location. The Highways Authority initially objected however further information was provided by the developer and they were informally consulted and satisfied to remove the objection.
- 2.3 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.**
- 2.4 The application has been called in by Cllr. Roberts because the location of the site outside the development envelope presents a special situation.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

15/00741/NMAA (The Willows, Station Road)	Resubmission of application ref 14/01372/FUL omitting changes to existing garage	Accepted	21.02.2017
15/00741/FUL (The Willows, Station Road)	Resubmission of application ref 14/01372/FUL omitting changes to existing garage	Approved	15.09.2015
02/01235/FUL (Station House, Station Road)	Two storey extension for kitchen/living/dining and three bedrooms	Approved	17.02.2003
89/01184/FUL (1 Station Cottages)	CONSERVATORY EXTENSION	Approved	21.11.1989
87/00336/FUL (1 Station Cottages)	EXTENSION	Approved	30.04.1987

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The site is located to the north of Wilburton and outside the development envelope of the village. Station Road leads from Wilburton north across open countryside and adjacent to Grunty Fen. The site is located approximately 1.1 miles (1.8km) from the closest part of the development envelope of Wilburton.

- 4.2 The site is currently an open field with a drainage ditch running adjacent to the front (west) boundary. The proposed access would cross this ditch although it is outside the red line of the application. The southern boundary is demarcated by approx 2m high wooden featheredge fencing, and the eastern boundary by small trees and shrubs. The northern boundary adjacent to 1 Station Cottages has a mixture of low-level walls, fencing and shrubs.
- 4.3 There is an existing crossing point from Station Road across the ditch along the front (west) of the site.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

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

Local Highways Authority – Objection on the grounds of impact on the safe and efficient operation of the public highway. Further information was requested to demonstrate that the proposed visibility splays were within the control of the applicant or are public highway, and to justify the 80mph visibility splay to the south. Further information was provided by the developer and the Highways Authority was informally consulted and satisfied sufficiently to remove the objection. If the application is to be approved, conditions are recommended regarding driveway material, removal of permitted development rights for gates across the vehicular access, construction of the access where it crosses County Council land, prevention of drainage onto public highway, provision and retention of manoeuvring areas, and access to remain free from obstruction.

The Ely Group Of Internal Drainage Board – No objection provided that soakaways are effective means of surface water drainage on this site.

Environmental Health – Standard contamination conditions regarding provision of a contamination report and reporting of unexpected contamination during construction are recommended.

Waste Strategy (ECDC) – Standard informative requested regarding bin collection and costs.

Wilburton Parish Council – Objection on grounds of being outside the development envelope, not having Stretham and Wilburton Community Land Trust (SWCLT) input, and the parish has already identified other sites where the village can grow.

Ward Councillors – Cllr Roberts - the location of the site outside the development envelope presents a special situation and should be discussed at Planning Committee for their decision.

Cambridgeshire County Council Archeology – No objection however due to the location of the site a condition is recommended requires a written scheme of investigation be undertaken before development commences on site.

5.2 Neighbours – 3 neighbouring properties were notified and the response received is summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council’s website.

- 1 Station Cottages – Objection on grounds of impact on open space around their property, that land may be greenbelt, permission has previously been refused on sites nearby, the site floods on a regular basis, it will change the nature of the area and may set a precedent, may add to the confusion of the postal service in this area.

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
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 9	Pollution
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision
HOU 2	Housing density

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations
Design Guide

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 4 Promoting sustainable transport
- 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- 7 Requiring good design

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

The main considerations in relation to this application are the principle of development, the visual impact on the streetscene and settlement character, and transport impact.

7.1 **Principle of Development**

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.

The benefits of this application are considered to be: the positive contribution of the provision of two additional dwellings 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.

The application site is located outside the village of Wilburton parish at a distance of approximately 1.1 miles by road from the closest edge of the village's development envelope. The vast majority of this route is 60mph road with no pedestrian footpath until just outside the development envelope. There is very small number of buses linking with Cambridge, Ely, Impington, March and Chatteris 6 days of the week, however the closest bus stop in Wilburton is approx. 1.2miles from site. This means that occupants of the proposed dwelling are very likely to depend on a vehicle to access the services of the local village and beyond, and cannot safely walk into Wilburton along Station Road. The existing dwellings which are clustered around the corner of Station Road are not considered to form a substantial grouping to which the proposed dwelling would adhere.

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. In addition, Paragraph 35 encourages development to protect and exploit opportunities for sustainable transport.

The developer provided a sustainability statement that argues that planning permission should not be unduly restrictive just because rural areas have a higher reliance on vehicle use than urban areas. It also cites the internet as improving all areas of people's connectivity. The Council's Local Plan policies GROWTH1 and GROWTH2 clearly demonstrate the commitment to increasing the housing supply and particularly the wider benefits of this within villages "...thereby helping to support local services, shops and community needs" (policy GROWTH2). It is acknowledged that rural areas have a greater reliance on car use to access some services over and above those (eg shop, pub, village hall) which are likely to be available in the village itself, however this should not be used to justify dwellings in the countryside and disregard the importance of social and economic benefits to new dwellings adhering to existing settlements.

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.

Two appeals in Isleham and Little Downham parishes (Planning Inspectorate refs APP/V0510/W/16/3160576 and APP/V0510/W/16/3158114) were dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate recently. This upheld Local Planning Authority decisions to

refuse new dwellings due to unsustainable locations, and demonstrates that significant weight can be given to the issue of sustainability.

7.2 Visual Amenity and settlement character

The built style of the existing dwelling in the vicinity of the site varies strongly. There are two pairs of traditional red-brick cottages to the north of the site (1-4 Station Cottages) which have been extended significantly so that their integrity as an example to influence design on this site has been reduced. To the south of the site are two large detached residential dwellings (The Old Station and The Willows) which use multi-tonal bricks and cream/yellow render (The Old Station), and buff brick with no render (The Willows). Whilst design and scale are Reserved Matters, due to the variety of styles and sizes of dwellings, it is considered that the proposed two detached dwellings could be constructed on the site without significant harm to the streetscene. This complies with policy ENV2.

Whilst development in this location is not desirable as it incrementally urbanises the area which is considerably rural at the moment, the site is between two existing residential sites, and is not extending into the countryside. It is therefore considered that the harm to the character of the area is not significant and complies with policy ENV1.

7.3 Highways

The initial Highways Authority objection was due to there not being sufficient evidence that the visibility splays could be provided. Following discussions with the case officer, the developer subsequently provided evidence that the land was within their ownership. The Highways Authority was informally consulted and satisfied with this information so as to remove the objection. There are no other concerns related to highways and therefore the proposal is considered to comply with policy COM7.

7.4 Other Material Matters

7.4.1 Residential amenity: The site is considered of a sufficient size that two detached dwellings could be provided without significant impacts on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, and for sufficient private rear amenity space to be available (in line with the Design Guide).

If approved, details of proposed boundaries would need to be conditioned in order to assimilate the development well into the environment and streetscene, and to protect residential amenity of neighbours. This is to comply with policy ENV2.

7.4.2 Ecology: If approved, details of biodiversity enhancements would be conditioned as policy ENV7 states that opportunities for creation and enhancement of natural habitats should be maximised.

7.4.3 Parking: There is considered to be sufficient space for two parking spaces to be provided per dwelling, and for vehicles to turn and leave the site in a forward gear. This complies with policy COM8.

7.4.4 Flood risk: The site is not within a high risk zone for flooding, and the Internal Drainage Board did not object provided that soakaways will work

in this location. therefore Details of the proposed surface water drainage would be conditioned if the application were approved, in order to comply with policy ENV8.

7.5 Planning Balance

In summary, whilst the development is considered achievable in terms of impact on the streetscene, character of the area, residential amenity, highways, ecology, parking and flood risk, these are considered to outweigh the fundamental concern of the location being unsustainable. The location is at a distance significant enough for car use to be essential and for pedestrians to be at risk if walking along a 60mph road. The isolated countryside location does not meet any of the exceptions in the National Planning Policy Framework, and the harm is considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development. On balance, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policies GROWTH 2 and GROWTH 5 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, and paragraphs 14, 35 and 55 and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
16/01680/OUT	Ruth Gunton Room No. 011 The Grange	Ruth Gunton Planning Officer 01353 665555 ruth.gunton@eastca mbs.gov.uk
15/00741/NMAA	Ely	
15/00741/FUL		
02/01235/FUL		
89/01184/FUL		
87/00336/FUL		

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>