
MAIN CASE

Reference No: 18/01284/OUT

Proposal: Proposed four bed barn style dwelling, garaging, parking, access & associated site works

Site Address: Land Adjacent Second Breed Farm Stretham Road Wicken
Cambridgeshire

Applicant: Mrs Susan Hall

Case Officer: Richard Fitzjohn, Senior Planning Officer

Parish: Wicken

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

Date Received: 17 September 2018 **Expiry Date:** 12th December 2018
[T153]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE this application for the following reason:
1. The proposed development, by virtue of its location and scale, would amount to a visually intrusive form of development in this countryside location, such that it would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the surrounding area to an extent which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits of the proposal. As such it is contrary to policies ENV1 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, policies LP22 and LP28 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018 and paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

- 2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for 1No. dwelling, with garaging, parking, access and associated works. Matters of access and scale are being considered as part of this application. Matters of appearance, landscaping and layout are reserved.
- 2.2 The proposal includes the provision of a public footway connection between the application site and the existing public footway further along Stretham Road to the south-east.

- 2.3 The submitted plans indicate that the scale of the dwelling would be 14m wide, 9m deep and 7.3m high, and the scale of the garage would be 8.1m wide, 6.5m deep and 5.5m high.
- 2.4 Indicative elevations of the dwelling and garage have been submitted with the application, however these are illustrative only.
- 2.5 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.**
- 2.6 Planning Committee refused an application for full planning permission for 1 new dwelling on this site in May 2017 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.
- 2.7 Councillor Mike Rouse (Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee) requested the case officer consulted with the local Members for their views as to whether to take the application to Committee.
- 2.8 This application has been called-in to Planning Committee by Councillor Ian Bovingdon. Councillor Bovingdon states that the previous refusal reason regarding sustainability has been addressed, but the impact on the character and appearance of the area is a subjective matter. Councillor Bovingdon has also stated that he has looked at the site and personally does not consider one dwelling would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the surrounding area. In light of other planning permissions given in similar countryside locations, Councillor Bovingdon feels that the application should be given further consideration by the committee for fairness and consistency.
- 2.9 Councillor Hamish Ross agrees that the application should go to committee to create a consistent precedent that can then be acted upon in future by planning officers.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

17/00121/FUL	Proposed dwelling, carport access, parking and associated site works	Refused	05.05.2017
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4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1

The application site comprises a crop storage pad and agricultural field, located to the north-west of the village of Wicken. The site is located approximately 150m to the north-west of the village envelope. A number of residential properties are located to the north-east side of Stretham Road within close proximity to the site. Residential properties are also located to the south-east of the application site.

4.2

The application site and the adjacent land to the north and west has a very open and rural character. The site is located on the south-west side of Stretham Road and is not served by a public footway. A footpath is located on the north-east side of Stretham Road opposite the site and further along Stretham Road to the south-west but not connected to the site.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1

Responses were received from the following consultees, as summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

5.2

Wicken Parish Council – The Parish Council were unable to meet a majority decision on this matter.

5.3

Ward Councillor Ian Bovingdon - Considers that the previous refusal reason regarding sustainability has been addressed, but the impact on the character and appearance of the area is a subjective matter. Councillor Bovingdon has also stated that he has looked at the site and personally does not consider one dwelling would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of the surrounding area. In light of other planning permissions given in similar countryside locations, Councillor Bovingdon feels that the application should be given further consideration by the committee for fairness and consistency.

5.4

Ward Councillor Hamish Ross - Agrees with Councillor Bovingdon's view that the application should go to committee to create a consistent precedent that can then be acted upon in future by planning officers.

5.5

Local Highways Authority - The highways authority has no objection in principal to this application. The Highway Authority do not consider that the proposed footway is required to facilitate this development as an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing, for this single residential dwelling, would be adequate in this location (30mph speed limit, with good visibility in either direction). However they request that, should the planning authority wish to include this measure, it is conditioned appropriately to ensure it is in line with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) standards.

Local Highway Authority Recommended Conditions:

A footway shall be installed along Stretham Road from the development to The Crescent and be a min of 1.8m in width and be constructed to CCC specifications.

- No gates to be erected across the vehicle access with the highway within 6m of the carriageway edge
- Access to be as per drawing number 16;135-10
- Turning and parking

5.6 CCC Growth & Development - No Comments Received.

5.7 Waste Strategy (ECDC) –

- East Cambs District Council will not enter private property to collect waste or recycling, therefore it would be the responsibility of the owners/residents to take any sacks/bins to the public highway boundary on the relevant collection day and this should be made clear to any prospective purchasers in advance, this is especially the case where bins would need to be moved over long distances and/or loose gravel/shingle driveways; the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide defines the maximum distance a resident should have to take a wheeled bin to the collection point as 30 metres (assuming a level smooth surface).
- Under Section 46 of The Environmental Protection Act 1990, East Cambridgeshire District Council as a Waste Collection Authority is permitted to make a charge for the provision of waste collection receptacles, this power being re-enforced in the Local Government Acts of 1972, 2000, and 2003, as well as the Localism Act of 2011.
- Each new property requires two bins; this contribution is currently set at £43 per property.
- Payment must be made in advance of bins being delivered; East Cambs District Council Account Number 43135897, Sort Code 52-41-19, reference should be the planning application number followed by (bins) i.e. 15/012345/FUL (bins) a separate e-mail should also be sent to waste@eastcambs.gov.uk detailing the payment amount and the planning reference number.

5.8 Neighbours – A site notice was displayed on 4th October 2018 and 5 neighbouring properties were notified. In addition, a press advert was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 4th October 2018. However, no neighbour responses have been received.

5.9 A full copy of the consultation responses are available on the Council's website.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
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

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations
 Design Guide
 Contaminated Land - Guidance on submitted Planning Application on land that may be contaminated
 Flood and Water

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2018

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 4 Decision-making
- 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 11 Making effective use of land
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6.4 Submitted Local Plan 2018

LP1	A presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
LP3	The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
LP6	Meeting Local Housing Needs
LP16	Infrastructure to Support Growth
LP17	Creating a Sustainable, Efficient and Resilient Transport Network
LP22	Achieving Design Excellence
LP23	Water Efficiency
LP24	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development
LP25	Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk
LP26	Pollution and Land Contamination
LP28	Landscape, Treescape and Built Environment Character, including Cathedral Views
LP30	Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31	Development in the Countryside

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

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

7.2 Principle of development

7.2.1 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.

7.2.2 Paragraph 79 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 79 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.

7.2.3 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

7.2.4 The services that are provided within Wicken are not easily and safely accessible from the site by public footway at present, as pedestrians would have to cross the main road into Wicken, approximately 110m from a 60mph to 30mph speed limit change. However, the proposal includes the provision of a new public footway connection between the application site and the existing public footway into the village on the southern side of Stretham Road. As the site is located within close proximity to the village, it is considered that the proposed footpath connection would allow a safe pedestrian access into the village.

7.2.5 However, the NPPF states that sustainable development has three dimensions, namely: an economic role; a social role, and an environmental role. All three are mutually dependent and should not be undertaken in isolation. To achieve

sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. Therefore, where a development does not achieve one or more of these roles that development will not be considered to be sustainable.

- 7.2.6 It is necessary, therefore, to consider the benefits of the proposed development and weigh those against any adverse impacts in order to determine whether or not the development comprises sustainable development.

7.3 Character and appearance of the area

- 7.3.1 The application site comprises a small parcel of a much larger open agricultural field, located within a sensitive edge of the village location. The very open and rural character and appearance of the application site at present provides a positive contribution to the wider rural surroundings. In addition, the open and rural character and appearance of the site contributes to views over the open fields, into and out of the village and towards Wicken Fen Nature Reserve, including important vistas from the junction of Hawes Lane which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.

- 7.3.2 By virtue of its location and scale, the proposed development would extend residential built form into the countryside in a manner that would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the open and rural local landscape character and visual amenity of the area. The resultant encroachment would increase the sense of suburbanisation of the countryside to the detriment of local visual amenity and would also result in the loss of important open views of the countryside, views into and out of the village, and views towards Wicken Fen.

- 7.3.4 It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, Policies LP22 and LP28 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018 and Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018. Furthermore, the proposal is not considered to constitute sustainable development in principle as the harm to the local rural landscape character and visual amenity of the area would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

7.4 Residential amenity

- 7.4.1 Due to the separation distance from neighbouring properties, it is considered that the proposed development could be accommodated within the site without causing significant detrimental impact to any neighbouring properties. Furthermore, future occupiers of the proposed dwelling would likely enjoy a high standard of amenity.

- 7.4.2 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 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and policy LP28 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.

7.5 Highway safety

- 7.5.1 The application shows that an existing access from the highway would be retained. Ample car parking would also be located within the curtilage of the dwelling.
- 7.5.2 The Highways Authority have no objections to the scheme. Subject to conditions, the access arrangements and parking arrangements within the site are considered acceptable.
- 7.5.3 The Highway Authority do not consider that the proposed footway is required to facilitate this development as an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing, for this single residential dwelling, would be adequate in this location (30mph speed limit, with good visibility in either direction). However, the Local Planning Authority consider that the proposed footway is required to make the development sustainable in respect of pedestrian access into the village and therefore has not requested that this is removed from the proposal.
- 7.5.4 The development is therefore considered to accord with Policies COM7 and COM8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and policies LP17 and LP22 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.

7.6 Biodiversity

- 7.6.1 The application site is not considered to be of any significant value in relation to biodiversity. Biodiversity improvements could be secured by planning condition if the application was to be approved. It is considered that the proposal would comply with policy ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and policy LP30 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018 in relation to biodiversity.

7.7 Drainage

- 7.7.1 Foul and surface water drainage details could be secured by planning condition if the application was to be approved. It is considered that the proposal would comply with policy ENV8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and policy LP25 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018 in relation to drainage.

7.8 Planning balance

- 7.8.1 In order for a development proposal to be genuinely sustainable, it must satisfy the three strands of “sustainable development” defined in the NPPF. The proposed development will deliver a very limited number of economic and social benefits. However, the NPPF makes it clear that sustainable development will only be attained where all three elements are secured jointly and simultaneously. All have equal status and where one or more is achieved at the expense of the others then the development should not be considered sustainable.
- 7.8.2 By virtue of its location and scale, the proposed development would lead to harmful encroachment into the countryside which would erode the open and rural character and appearance, causing significant and demonstrable harm to the character, appearance and views of the rural area, including the sensitive settlement edge.

7.8.3 In this case, the environmental role of sustainable development would not be realised. The degree of harm caused to the countryside on the edge of the settlement could not be resolved through mitigation and the development therefore would cause environmental harm, contrary to Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Policies LP22 and LP28 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.

7.8.4 As a consequence, the adverse impacts of the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited economic and social benefits of the scheme. For these reasons, the proposed development does not constitute sustainable development and the application is recommended for refusal.

8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Committee report relating to the previous planning application on the site (ref: 17/00121/FUL) refused by Planning Committee on 3rd May 2017.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
18/01284/OUT	Richard Fitzjohn Room No. 011 The Grange	Richard Fitzjohn Senior Planning Officer
17/00121/FUL	Ely	01353 665555 richard.fitzjohn@ea stcambs.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>