

MAIN CASE

Reference No: 17/01281/OUT

Proposal: Proposed single storey dwelling, garaging, parking, access and associated site works

Site Address: Site Opposite Perviale Barcham Road Soham
Cambridgeshire

Applicant: Mrs D Barcham Stevens

Case Officer: Toni Hylton Planning Officer

Parish: Soham

Ward: Soham North
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Carol Sennitt

Date Received: 17 July 2017 **Expiry Date:** 11 September 2017

[S89]

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 Members are recommended 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 approximately 0.6 miles from the nearest part of Soham's development envelope, and approx. 1.9 miles from the closest part of the town centre.

There is a bus stop at a distance of approx 0.4 miles from the site along a 60mph road with no footpaths. This road is also used to access Soham which is approx. 1.9 miles from the site to the town centre. 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 dwelling. The contribution to the housing supply by one additional dwelling would be modest, and the benefits to the construction trade would be short term and minimal.

This 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 would be short term and minimal.

2. There is considered to be a negative impact on the character of the area from the development of dwellings opposite each other, as this is not the existing character of the streetscene. It is considered that having dwellings on both sides of the road would contribute to a sense of enclosing to that part of Barcham Road. It is considered it would not be complimentary relationship with the wider landscape setting or preserve the character of the streetscene, and therefore would cause significant and demonstrable harm to the rural and open character of the area. The proposal therefore does not comply with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 The proposal is made in outline with access, layout and scale to be considered. Details for the access and parking arrangements have been received and where the dwelling would be sited. It is indicated that the dwelling would be single storey in height although no dimensions have been provided. The plan indicates a detached garage with 3 parking spaces in front of the garage. The garage has a floor area of 9.6 metres by 6.6 metres, which can accommodate 3 cars and cycle storage. The indicative floor area of the dwelling is 276 metres², with a terrace area 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.**

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 None relevant to this site but there are other similar proposals in the area.

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 site itself is currently an open agricultural field with a ditch running along the south-east boundary (front Barcham Road). Two dwellings have recently been approved 16/01751/OUT in March 2017 on the site adjacent to the proposal.
- 4.3 The proposed site is 0.192 hectares.
- 4.4 The northern edge of Soham's development envelope is approx. 0.6 miles away, and the closest part of the town centre boundary is approx. 1.9 miles away.

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.

Natural England – No objections although this does not mean there are not significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes.

Parish - No Comments Received

Ward Councillors - No Comments Received

Local Highways Authority - No objections in principal however are concerned with the amount of development in this area and potential to be detrimental to highway safety. These comments are copied below.

“It should be noted at this time that I am concerned with the increasing number of new dwellings along Barchmam 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.”

CCC Growth & Development - No Comments Received

Senior Trees Officer - No Comments Received

Waste Strategy (ECDC) - No Comments Received

The Ely Group Of Internal Drainage Board – Permission will be required from the IDB to culvert the drain. However provided that the soakaways are an effective means of water disposal the Board has no objection to the proposal.

Consultee For Other Wards In Parish - No Comments Received

5.2 Neighbours – 4 neighbouring properties were notified and no comments have been received. A site notice was displayed and published in the Cambridge Evening News.

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

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 2012

11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

7 Requiring good design

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

7.1 The main considerations in relation to this application are the principle of development, the visual impact on the streetscene and settlement character, residential amenity, transport impact, parking provision, and ecological impact.

7.2 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 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.

The application site is located outside Soham town and approx. 0.6 miles from the northern edge of the development envelope, and approx. 1.9 miles from Soham town centre. Barcham Road is a 60mph road with no pedestrian footpaths. There is a limited bus service currently with the closets 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.

The existing dwellings which are located generally at intervals along this part of Barcham Road, but 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. 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.

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

7.3 Residential Amenity

The proposed development for a single storey dwelling in this location would seem to be in keeping with the existing dwellings which are opposite the site. There are no designs of the proposed dwelling so it is not possible to determine if windows or the height of the dwelling would be detrimental to the amenities of the adjoining neighbours, this would form part of the reserved matters application. This is compounded by the adjoining dwellings approved, have been submitted in outline and the reserved matters application has not yet been submitted. At this time there are no concerns with regard to residential amenity and compliance with policy ENV2, and future reserved matters application would still be assessed against this policy.

To protect neighbours from unreasonable levels of disruption and therefore comply with policy ENV2 the construction and delivery times will be conditioned if planning approval is granted.

7.4 Visual Amenity

The existing streetscene on this part of Barcham Road is generally characterised by single storey dwellings at staggered intervals so that no dwelling is directly opposite another, with detached garages to the sides. The openness of the agricultural land also forms part of the character of the area. Along the south-east side of Barcham Road the boundary with dwellings is well defined by dense hedging or fencing.

The proposed single-storey scale of the proposed dwelling and garage is in keeping with the streetscene, and the proposed layout of the garage being detached and to the side is also generally in keeping with those dwellings in the vicinity.

However whilst there are no concerns regarding the scale, there is considered to be a negative impact on the character of the area from the development of dwellings opposite each other, as this is not the existing character of the streetscene. It is

considered that having dwellings on both sides of the road would contribute to a sense of enclosing to that part of Barcham Road, it would not be consistent with the rural and open character of the area. The proposal is therefore not considered to comply with policy ENV1 which states that development should have a complementary relationship with the wider landscape setting, or ENV2 in that it does not preserve or enhance the streetscene. This reason is significant enough to warrant refusal.

7.5 Highways

There are no Highways Authority concerns subject to standard conditions which would be applied if planning approval was granted. This complies with policy COM7. However a comment regarding the potential for highway safety being compromised with the incremental development of this area was made by the Highways Officer.

Having visited the site, it is predominantly a single track road, with some passing places. There is no footpath, although there is some highway verge, which is part of the drainage system for the area. In the short amount of time that the case officer was at the site, there were a number of vehicles which passed some at speed and in terms of highway safety; increasing traffic in this area without the provision of footpath will undoubtedly lead to conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. There is not opportunity to provide a footpath the length of Barcham.

7.6 Ecology

With the characteristics of the site it is not considered that a detailed biodiversity investigation is required. Some of the front hedge is proposed to be removed to allow for the access to the proposed dwelling, and some hedge will be trimmed back to allow visibility splays, however the trees officer commented on the adjoining application 16/01751/OUT and considered the hedge was in a poor condition. The proposed native hedging to form the north-east, north-west and south-west boundaries is likely to result in improved biodiversity levels on site, and whilst landscaping is a reserved matter, the indicative boundary treatment of native hedging is considered to comply with policy ENV7.

7.7 Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is not within flood zones 2 or 3 so there are no concerns in this regard. The Internal Drainage Board raised no objections to the proposal subject to soakaways being an effective method of surface water disposal, details of which would be conditioned to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority should the application be approved. It is therefore considered to comply with policy ENV8.

7.8 Other Material Matters

An Envirosearch contamination report was submitted with the planning application, however comments from the Environmental Health Officer have not yet been received. However, having reviewed the application on the adjacent site, the Environmental Health Officer requested that a condition was attached to ensure any unexpected contamination was reported during construction if planning permission was approved. This complies with policy ENV9.

7.9 Planning Balance

The location outside of the development envelope and on a road with no footpaths is not considered to meet the social and environmental aspects of sustainability

expected by the NPPF, nor is the dwelling proposed for special circumstances as outlined in paragraph 55 of the NPPF. Therefore whilst there would be some modest benefits to the housing supply and construction trade, no significant impacts on highway safety, residential amenity, ecology, flooding or pollution, the location is considered as unsustainable and given significant weight as the primary reason for the recommendation of refusal. The secondary reason for refusal is that there is considered to be a significantly detrimental impact on the rural open character of this part of Barcham Road from development of dwellings facing each other along both sides of the road.

It is requested that members refuse this application for the above reasons

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
17/01281/OUT	Toni Hylton Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Toni Hylton Planning Officer 01353 665555 toni.hylton@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.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>