
MAIN CASE

Reference No: 17/00732/FUL

Proposal: Construction of 4 bedroom, two storey detached dwelling

Site Address: Land Parcel South East Of Berrycroft Redfen Road Little Thetford Cambridgeshire

Applicant: Mr And Mrs L Thompson

Case Officer: Ruth Gunton, Planning Officer

Parish: Little Thetford

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

Date Received: 24 April 2017 **Expiry Date:** 19th June 2017

[S21]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

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

The proposed additional dwelling is located within the countryside and, by virtue of its distance from the main settlements of Little Thetford and Ely, is considered to be in an unsustainable location. The proposal does not promote sustainable forms of transport and the future residents of this additional dwelling will be reliant on motor vehicles in order to access any local services or facilities. The proposal does not meet any of the special circumstances as identified in Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal fails to comply with the Policies GROWTH 5 and COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Paragraphs 14 and 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as it fails to promote sustainable development.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

2.1 The application is for the construction of a new 4 bedroom dwelling on brownfield land currently containing unused stables and outbuildings but with evidence of recent activity of some description (remains of bonfires) so the site is not considered to be completely abandoned.

2.2 An application for a very similar dwelling on the same site was refused planning permission in January 2017. This application proposes the removal of the separate

garage, changes to the external materials, introduction of energy efficiency measures, and other minor modifications.

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 was called in by Cllr. Bill Hunt as he considered that it would 'benefit from the wider debate that Full Planning Committee allows'.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

16/01673/FUL	Proposed new dwelling	Refused	18.01.2017
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4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is outside the development envelope of Little Thetford on brownfield land bordered predominately by open countryside. There are a number of trees and hedges along the site boundaries and whilst individually none would be particularly worthy of formal protection they do provide a natural screening of the site and it would be desirable to have them retained.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees: Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage Board, ECDC Waste, and a Ward Member - these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

5.2 Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage Board – No objections providing soakways proved effective and noted that Grunty Fen Catchwater Drain flows through a tunnel under this site.

5.3 Waste Strategy (ECDC) - Each new property requires two bins; this contribution is currently set at £43 per property. It would be the responsibility of the owners/residents to take any sacks/bins to the public highway boundary on the relevant collection day. 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.

5.4 Ward Councillors – Cllr Bill Hunt requested to call in the application for wider discussion from the Planning Committee.

5.5 Little Thetford Parish Council - No comments received.

- 5.6 Local Highways Authority - No comments received.
- 5.7 Senior Trees Officer - No comments received.
- 5.8 Neighbours – A site notice was displayed on 10th May 2017, and a notice was placed in the Cambridge Evening News. 5 neighbouring properties were notified and no representations have been received to the Planning Authority although a supporting email from a neighbour was included in the application.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

- GROWTH 2 Locational strategy
- GROWTH 3 Infrastructure requirements
- ENV 1 Landscape and settlement character
- ENV 2 Design
- ENV 4 Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction
- ENV 7 Biodiversity and geology
- COM 7 Transport impact
- COM 8 Parking provision
- GROWTH 5 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- ENV 8 Flood risk
- ENV 9 Pollution

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

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

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

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

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

7.1 The main considerations with this application are the principle of development, the residential amenity impact and the impact upon the visual character and appearance of the area.

7.2 Principle of Development

- 7.2.1 The application site lies outside of the defined development boundary. 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.
- 7.2.2 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.
- 7.2.3 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, for example, where there are groups of smaller settlements development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances.
- 7.2.4 The proposed dwelling would be located 300m from the defined development boundary of Little Thetford and any future residents would be required to walk along the 60mph road and cross the A10 at an undesignated crossing before arriving into Little Thetford. Such a route would be considered to be dangerous and untenable and as such, the applicant would be reliant on the car to gain access to services and facilities. This would not accord with the Framework or the environmental dimension of sustainable development and the isolation of the sites from community facilities would weigh against the social dimension and would not accord with paragraph 55 of the Framework regarding the location of rural housing. It is considered that the proposal is contrary to Local Plan policy COM7 as it would have an adverse impact on the transport network and increase reliance on the car.
- 7.2.5 The small cluster of dwellings in close-proximity of the development site would not constitute a rural settlement and as such, growth is not encouraged as it would be unlikely to lead to the long-term sustainability of this residential cluster. The NPPF supports this by stating in paragraph 55 development can support services in a village nearby and that we should be resisting isolated new homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. Although a dwelling in the vicinity of Little Thetford could support the services of the village, the positioning of the proposal is deemed overly reliant on the car to be considered acceptable.

7.3 Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1 Although the proposal is for a two-storey dwelling, the location of windows and distance to neighbouring residential properties (closest is approx. 40m away) ensures the proposal is not considered to cause a detrimental impact to the residential amenity of the nearby dwellings. The aforementioned separation distance is also likely to subdue the impact of overbearing from this two-storey dwelling.

7.3.2 The level of noise from the A10 which is likely to be experienced by future occupiers is considered acceptable due to the distance from the A10 (running at a distance of approx. 70m from the south-east to north-west of the site).

7.3.3 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy ENV2.

7.4 Visual Amenity

7.4.1 The visual impact of the dwelling is not likely to harm the visual character of the area and will not appear incongruous in the open countryside. The dwelling, although approx. 7.5m in height, is set back from the boundaries of the site, is likely to be well shielded by existing boundary planting and will not be visible from the A10. The design and style of the dwelling would not appear out of character in the semi-rural location and amongst the small cluster of similarly designed dwellings. The applicant has proposed agreement of the materials to be secured by condition. With this condition the proposal is considered to comply with policy ENV2.

7.5 Other Material Matters

7.5.1 No response was received from the Local Highway Authority however they raised no concerns to the previous application for a dwelling on the site (16/01673/FUL) as it benefits from an existing access. The scheme makes sufficient provision for parking spaces and turning areas within the site. It is therefore considered to comply with policy COM7.

7.5.2 Policy ENV4 looks for development to maximise energy efficiency. The proposal includes energy efficiency measures of an air source heat pump, and solar panels to the rear (south) elevation. If approved, a condition would be attached requiring that the heat pump and panels are installed and working prior to first occupation. These measures are given moderate weight in favour of this application and it complies with policy ENV4.

7.5.3 The site plan states that all trees shall be protected unless specified for removal. The application proposes that boundaries of hedging and trees are retained apart from along the eastern boundary which currently has a post and rail fence. The hedging along the front of the site with Red Fen Road will be trimmed. With the additionally-proposed biodiversity enhancements of a bird/bat box (which would be conditioned if the application were approved), the proposal is considered to comply with policy ENV7.

7.5.4 As residential use of land is considered highly vulnerable to the presence of contamination, conditions requiring a contamination report to be approved by the local planning authority, and for unexpected contamination during construction to be reported, would be added if the application were approved. This would comply with policy ENV9.

7.5.5 Details of the disposal of surface water drainage would be conditioned if the application were approved. This would comply with policy ENV8.

7.6 Planning Balance

- 7.6.1 In conclusion, the proposal does not promote sustainable forms of transport and the future residents of this additional dwelling will be reliant on motor vehicles in order to access any local services or facilities of Little Thetford and Ely. The dwelling does not raise concerns with regards to visual or residential amenity or any other material considerations but in this instance the principle of the development is deemed contrary to the local and national policies referred to above.
- 7.6.2 It is recommended that Members REFUSE this application for the above reasons.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
17/00732/FUL	Ruth Gunton Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Ruth Gunton Planning Officer 01353 665555 ruth.gunton@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>