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**MAIN CASE**

**Reference No:** 18/01464/OUT

**Proposal:** Erection of up to 3 new self-build plots and associated works

**Site Address:** 3 Main Street Wentworth Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 3QG

**Applicant:** Mr David Lee

**Case Officer:** Toni Hylton, Planning Officer

**Parish:** Wentworth

**Ward:** Haddenham  
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Steve Cheetham  
Councillor Mark Hugo  
Councillor Stuart Smith

**Date Received:** 25 October 2018      **Expiry Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**[T171]**

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**1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE the applications for the reasons shown below:
1. Located within the open countryside the proposal is considered to be visually intrusive and cause demonstrable harm to the character of the rural area and its setting within the open countryside. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the requirements of policies ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan 2015 and LP3 and LP31 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.
  2. The proposed development is considered to be contrary to policies ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan 2015 and LP22 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018. The proposal is tantamount to a form of back land development which is not only a contrived form of development but will generate a significant material detriment to its residential amenities of the dwellings that sit to the front of the proposed development site by reason of proximity and long driveway to access the proposal.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application is made in outline with all matters reserved apart from access. The proposal is for up to 3 dwellings with access from Main Street along the boundary with number 3 Main Street. Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale have not been provided and do not form part of the application.
- 2.2 The application states that the proposal will be for self-build plots as opposed to a developer or market housing.
- 2.3 The application has been presented to Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Steve Cheetham. He had been approached by the Parish Council who have had a number of residents raise issues with regard to the application and the applicant is the Chairman of the Parish Council.
- 2.4 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
- |              |                            |         |            |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------|------------|
| 87/00773/OUT | RESIDENTIAL<br>DEVELOPMENT | Refused | 10.08.1987 |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------|------------|

## 4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The site is to the rear of 2 pairs of semi-detached 2 storey dwellings on Main Street in Wentworth. The site is currently used as a horse paddock and is immediately to the rear of number 3. The site itself sits slightly higher than the road and is open on the remaining sides to the rural area, with no built form. Adjacent to the site is an open field which has a Tree Preservation Order upon it. The site is not within the development Envelope or a Conservation area.

## 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.

Cambridgeshire Archaeology – No objection subject to a condition requiring a Written Scheme of Investigation.

Local Highways Authority – No objections raised. Conditions recommended to be attached to any grant of approval.

CCC Growth & Development - No Comments Received

Senior Trees Officer (Consultant) – the comments from the Tree Officer are copied below for information;

*“This development impacts adversely on the character the village and its setting. New housing sites should relate to the character of the existing place and show an understanding of the existing settlement pattern. The site is in a location where, at present, the housing development is reducing in its effect and giving way to open countryside. Despite the varied pattern of development in the village, it is generally characterised by mostly spacious linear housing on single plots depths with significant landscaping. As backland development which would be readily perceptible from surrounding public viewpoints, it would appear alien and out of keeping with the pattern of development in the locality, Therefore, it is undesirable for this pattern of development to be extended further into countryside and would set a precedent for future development.”*

Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions relating to contamination and hours of working being attached to any planning permission issued.

Waste Strategy (ECDC) - No Comments Received

Parish – Have got concerns with the proposal and at the Parish Council Meeting a number of residents attended the meeting and shared their concerns

Ward Councillors - The application has been presented to Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Steve Cheetham. He had been approached by the Parish Council who have had a number of residents raise issues with regard to the application and the applicant is the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Infrastructure & Strategy Manager - ECDC - No Comments Received

National Grid – No objection, however the applicants attention is drawn to the fact there is apparatus in the area.

5.2 Neighbours – 7 neighbouring properties were notified and 1 response was received and is summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council’s website. A site notice was also displayed at the site on 19<sup>th</sup> November and was advertised in the Cambridge Evening News as a potential departure from the Local Plan.

- The proposal is outside of the development envelope
- Loss of linear development
- The road is unsuitable for more traffic
- Increase in traffic
- The village has a lack of amenities

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 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 5	Dwellings for rural workers
ENV 14	Sites of archaeological interest

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
- 11 Making effective use of land
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

6.4 Submitted Local Plan 2018

LP27	Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets
LP1A	presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
LP2	Level and Distribution of Growth
LP17	Creating a Sustainable, Efficient and Resilient Transport Network
LP22	Achieving Design Excellence
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 Principle of Development

- 7.1.1 The local planning authority is not currently able to demonstrate that it has an adequate five year supply of land for housing. Therefore, all Local Planning 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.
- 7.1.2 The benefits of this application are considered to be: the provision of up to three additional residential dwellings built to modern, sustainable building standards and the positive contribution to the local and wider economy in the short term through construction work.
- 7.1.3 The site is located outside the established development framework of Wentworth, however, the site sits adjacent to the settlement boundary and is therefore considered to be well connected to the settlement, alongside a number of residential dwellings and within close proximity to the facilities and services on offer in the village.
- 7.1.4 The fact that the Council cannot currently demonstrate that it has an adequate five year supply of housing does not remove development envelopes. It does however restrict the application of policy GROWTH 2 within the Local Plan, which states that outside defined development envelopes, development will be strictly controlled and restricted to the main categories set out within the policy.
- 7.1.5 For the purposes of assessing the proposal in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the proximity of the site to the settlement boundary is considered to be sufficient to consider the site as being in a sustainable location.
- 7.1.6 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.

### 7.2 Residential Amenity

- 7.2.1 The proposed site is to the rear of 2 sets of semi-detached 2 storey dwellings each having a garden length of approximately 10 to 15 metres. Access will run along the boundary of number 3 Main Street which is approximately 8 metres from the dwelling.
- 7.2.2 It is considered that the site can be designed to ensure the neighbours amenities can be maintained using the distances between the existing and proposed dwellings in accordance with the Design Guide SPD. This can be achieved through the final design of the dwellings and landscaping. As such the proposal complies with policies ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015 and LP22 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.

### 7.3 Visual Amenity

- 7.3.1 The site sits to the rear of semi- detached dwellings and visually will have limited impact from the view from the front of the existing dwellings. However it will be prominent when viewed from the playground and Main Street where there is a gap in the residential development. As such it is considered that the provision of 3 dwellings in this rural location, where the land sits higher will be detrimental to the visual character and amenity of the area. As such the proposal is considered to be contrary of the provisions of policies ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015 and LP22 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.
- 7.3.2 In consultation with the Tree Officer (who is a Consultant with a background in landscape design) concerns with the proposal and its impact on the landscape have been raised and these comments are copied below and are also shown above in Section 5. These comments encapsulate the opinion of the planning officer.

*“This development impacts adversely on the character the village and its setting. New housing sites should relate to the character of the existing place and show an understanding of the existing settlement pattern. The site is in a location where, at present, the housing development is reducing in its effect and giving way to open countryside. Despite the varied pattern of development in the village, it is generally characterised by mostly spacious linear housing on single plots depths with significant landscaping. As backland development which would be readily perceptible from surrounding public viewpoints, it would appear alien and out of keeping with the pattern of development in the locality, Therefore, it is undesirable for this pattern of development to be extended further into countryside and would set a precedent for future development.”*

- 7.3. The street is characterised with linear development and this would push behind this linear pattern of development which would be out of keeping with the character of the area. A dwelling has been approved on land to the rear of the Old School House on Main Street in Wentworth. However this was originally recommended for refusal by the case officer and later approved by the Planning Committee. Whilst, the site is to the rear of an existing dwelling, it backs onto a cul de sac of Church Farm Close, which is group of 2 storey dwellings. It could be argued that this site has already strayed from this pattern of linear development, however this is set closer to a cluster of dwellings and was for a single dwelling. This proposal would be for an in depth development of 3 dwellings on land which has not been previously developed and would protrude into the open countryside, creating substantial detrimental harm to the rural character and appearance of the settlement. Despite the Council being unable to demonstrate a five year housing supply, the significant visual harm of the proposal is considered to outweigh the provision of up to three dwellings and is contrary to the provisions of policies ENV2 of the Local Plan 2015 and LP22 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.

### 7.4 Historic Environment

- 7.4.1 The site is not within a Conservation Area nor is it in close proximity to a Listed Building, however is in close proximity to an area of archaeology. In consultation with the County Archaeologist no objection has been raised however conditions requiring a Written scheme of Investigation is required. On this basis the proposal complies with policies ENV15 of the Local Plan and LP27 of the Submitted Local Plan.
- 7.5 Highways
- 7.5.1 In consultation with the Highways Officer no objection to the proposal subject to conditions relating to no gates to be erected across the access within 6 metres of the highway; width of the access to be 5 metres for a distance of 10 metres and that parking and turning can be provided within the site. Main Street can in places accommodate 2 cars passing each other, and in places there are passing places where the road narrows. The proposal would increase traffic but it is not considered to the detriment of highway safety and as such complies with policies COM7, COM8 of the Local Plan 2015 and LP17 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.
- 7.6 Ecology
- 7.6.1 The site is unlikely to be of a sensitive nature for protected species, the site is not overgrown and has a horse grazing on the site. Whilst there are ponds within the area these are in excess of 100 metres away and do not link to the site. On this basis the proposal is unlikely to cause harm to protected species. Any planning permission that is issued for approval would require a condition for biodiversity measures in the final build of the proposal. As such the proposal complies with policies ENV7 of the Local Plan 2015 and LP31 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018.
- 7.7 Flood Risk and Drainage
- 7.7.1 The site is within Flood Zone 1 where you would expect vulnerable development such as dwellings to be located. On this basis the proposal complies with policies ENV8 of the Local Plan 2015 and LP25 of the Submitted Local Plan 2018. A scheme for foul and surface water drainage could be secured by condition.
- 7.8 Planning Balance
- 7.8.1 The site is outside of the development envelope for Wentworth, however as the Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply in some circumstances can consider some development outside of these boundaries acceptable. However there are other considerations which need to be assessed and the impact on the visual landscape, back land development are considered to cause demonstrable harm and as such not considered to be an acceptable form of development.

18/01464/OUT

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National Planning Policy Framework -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](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>