

GREAT WALDINGFIELD – PART SIDE GARDEN OF FOX COTTAGE, UPSHER GREEN.

Outline – Erection of detached dwelling and garage. Alterations to existing vehicular access.

Applicant: Mrs. J. Nicholls & Mrs. J. Lambert

Case Officer: Gemma Pannell

BACKGROUND

This application is being reported to Development Committee at the request of the Local Member. However, the application has to be presented to Development Committee as the applicant is a relation to a staff member of the Council.

The Monitoring Officer, who has discussed the procedures with the Case Officer, has reviewed the application file. The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the application has been processed normally.

SITE

1. The site measures approximately 0.04 hectares and is situated outside the built up area boundary of Great Waldingfield. The application site forms part of the curtilage of Fox Cottage and contains a dilapidated brick and galvanised iron garage, which stands adjacent to the highway and along the boundary of 2 Hope Cottages. The site is also within the Great Waldingfield Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

2. See report heading. The application is in outline form and is for the erection of a detached dwelling. All details are reserved from this application. The site plan submitted with the planning application indicates the position of the proposed dwelling as an illustrative layout to demonstrate how a dwelling might be sited.
3. A statement has been submitted in support of the application. These can be viewed in full by prior arrangement with the case officer. Comments made in connection with the application site are summarised as follows;
 - The established settlement of Upsher Green is approximately half a mile east of the village centre of Great Waldingfield and one mile from the school, shops, post office and social facilities within the western settlement of the village.
 - The removal of the existing garage will allow the front and side boundaries to be lowered, improving visibility to both the access of Fox Cottage and 2 Hope Cottages.
 - The proposed plot is a large area of garden land to the side of Fox Cottage having an established residential use and access.

- The application is previously developed land and lies within the established settlement of Upsher Green. The site is also ‘an undeveloped plot in an otherwise built up frontage’, which would be filled by one dwelling. Accordingly, the development constitutes infill development without adverse impact.

HISTORY

4. 1984 – Outline planning permission refused for erection of a dwelling (B/84/00239/OUT refers)
5. 1988 – Planning permission refused for erection of a two-storey dwelling with detached double garage. (B/88/00754/FUL refers)
6. 1989 – Appeal Dismissed for the erection of a two storey dwelling with detached double garage. (APP/D3505/ /A/88/108702 refers).

POLICY

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

7. Land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations should be brought forward to meet the expected needs for housing, taking into account issues such as sustainability and sustainable transport needs, the provision of essential infrastructure. Provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport, rather than having to rely on access by car, while recognising that this may be more difficult in rural areas.

PPG3 – Housing

8. To promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land, the focus for additional housing should be in existing towns and cities.
9. Not all development can take place within urban areas. How much development should take place outside existing areas will depend on the overall need for housing land, the capacity of existing urban areas to accommodate additional housing and the efficiency with which land is developed. Where development has to take place outside urban areas, the Government is looking to local planning authorities to utilise the most sustainable option.

PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

10. New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all.
11. Priority should be given to the re-use of previously developed ('brownfield') sites in preference to the development of Greenfield sites, except in cases where there are no brownfield sites available, or these brownfield sites perform so poorly in terms of sustainability considerations (for example, in their remoteness from settlements and services) in comparison with Greenfield sites.

12. Away from larger urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure these facilities are served by public transport and provide improved opportunities for access by walking and cycling.
13. In planning for housing in their rural areas, local planning authorities should apply the policies in PPG3. They should (inter alia) strictly control new house building (including single dwellings) in the countryside, away from established settlements or from areas allocated for housing in development plans.
14. Isolated new houses in the countryside will require special justification for planning permission to be granted. Where the special justification for an isolated new house relates to the essential need for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

PPG13 – Transport

15. By shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys. Consistent application of these planning policies will help to reduce some of the need for car journeys (by reducing the physical separation of key land uses) and enable people to make sustainable transport choices.
16. The following adopted and emerging Development Plan policies are considered relevant to this application;
 - Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 – Policies;
 - ENV4 (Protection of the Countryside)
 - ENV6 (New Housing in the Countryside)
 - ENV17 (Retention and appropriate management of existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands)
 - CS1 (Sustainable Development), and
 - CS3 (Location of new Housing Development).
 - Babergh Local Plan, Alteration No.2 – Policies;
 - HS02 (Housing),
 - HS03 (Villages),
 - HS04 (New Residential Development in the Countryside),
 - CR01 (Protection of the Countryside)
 - CR07 (Landscaping of development in the countryside)
 - CN01 (Maintaining local Distinctiveness).
 - CN08 (Conservation Areas)

** please note that details or extracts of policies are no longer included in reports - see page 4 of these papers*

OBSERVATIONS

17. PC – Views awaited
18. CHA – recommends imposition of standard conditions relating to improvements to the access and parking and manoeuvring areas.
19. One letter of objection has been received in connection with the planning application. The issues and objections raised are summarised as follows;
 - The proposal will lead to the loss of privacy and prevent us from laying out in the garden without fear of being overlooked as windows in the property will overlook our garden.
 - There will be an increase in noise of at least another one or two cars together will difficulties of access onto a narrow lane.
 - The views in the Conservation Area consists of mature trees and skyline, building adjacent to Fox Cottage would spoil the views and tranquillity presently enjoyed by use along with a reduction in natural light to our side window.

ASSESSMENT

20. Upsher Green lies outside of the defined built up boundary of Great Waldingfield and is therefore in the open countryside where rural area planning policies of restraint apply. There is therefore a firm presumption against further residential development here and local plan policy HS04 states that new housing will be integrated into the defined areas of towns and villages. It also states that in the countryside outside towns and villages it is intended that existing land uses will remain for the most part undisturbed. It should be noted that no justification has been made that the proposed additional dwelling is for key personnel to be employed in agriculture, horticulture or forestry, nor is the proposed dwelling cited as an ‘exceptions’ site for local needs housing.
21. The proposal should be regarded as development on a greenfield site in the countryside in an unsustainable location, contrary to established Government planning guidance and adopted and emerging Development Plan policies. Approval of this application would set a serious and undesirable precedent for similar developments in the locality, to the detriment of the countryside and District in general.
22. The other issue that is central to the outcome of this application is whether the proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development.

Sustainable development

23. Government Planning Guidance with regard to the location of new housing development and achieving sustainable development with regard to housing provision is well documented within the ‘Policy’ section of this report above.

24. The application site is situated within a small group of dwellings, and is devoid of local services, social and employment facilities. It follows that the occupiers of the proposed dwelling are likely to travel to access shopping, education, employment, recreation, and social facilities and the majority of these journeys would be by the motor car. Furthermore, the dwelling would create demand for additional trips for visitors and service vehicles. As such, the proposal for a new dwelling at this countryside location clearly represents an unsustainable form of development.

Other issues

25. Some concerns have been expressed that the erection of a dwelling at this site would lead to overlooking of existing dwellings nearby and reduce light to those properties. The siting, design and external appearance of the dwelling are matters reserved for a later date, but given the character and scale of existing boundary buildings, Officers are satisfied that a dwelling can be sited on and designed for the site without detriment to the amenities enjoyed by occupants of existing dwellings in the vicinity.
26. The application site lies within the Conservation Area where the erection of new buildings in a Conservation Area should be of an appropriate scale, form and detailed design to harmonise with its setting. In dismissing the appeal proposal in 1989 the Inspector summarised that “I can see no reason why a sensitively designed modern dwelling should not enhance or preserve the quality of the immediate environment.” I would concur with this view and do not feel the erection of a suitably designed dwelling in this location would be harmful to the Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission. Reasons -

- Unsustainable development – contrary to PPG3, PPG13, CS1, CS3, CS10, ENV6, HS02 and HS04

DECISION
