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MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 21 December 2016

AGENDA ITEM NO	2
APPLICATION NO	4114/16
PROPOSAL	Erection of detached dwelling
SITE LOCATION	Little London Farm, Elmswell Road, Wetherden IP14 3LQ
SITE AREA (Ha)	0.25
APPLICANT	Mr & Mrs Potter
RECEIVED	October 3, 2016
EXPIRY DATE	November 29, 2016

REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason :

The applicants agent is currently employed by the Local Authority on a consultancy basis.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

1. No pre-application advice was sought from the Local Planning Authority regarding this application.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2. The site is a plot of land set on the southern side of Elmswell Road, on land associated with and adjacent to Little London farm, an isolated farmstead to the north west of Wetherden. The localised rural development follows a traditional form of linear development along the highway. The plot is domestic garden land, associated with the existing property Little London Farm, a 17th Century listed building bounded by a well-established margin of trees on all borders.

HISTORY

3. The planning history relevant to the application site is:

0079/14	Erection of single storey rear extension.	Granted 12/03/2014
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| 0078/14 | Notification of a proposed larger home extension to extend from the rear wall by 5.5m, with a maximum height of 4m and 2.4m to the eaves. | 27/01/2014 |
| 2745/13 | Works to a building and construction of a cartlodge within the curtilage of a listed building. Conversion of barn to dwelling house. Erection of single storey side extension. Installation of 3no. Solar panels. Erection of two bay cartlodge. | Granted
27/11/2013 |
| 2227/13 | Conversion of barn to dwellinghouse, with lean-to single storey extension and detached cartlodge | Granted
27/11/2013 |
| 1554/12 | Replace 7no. windows; remove blocked up window in south elevation and make good with oak framing; replace 3no. external doors; replace rainwater goods; install 1no. rooflight on east elevation; install new drainage/sewerage system; install central heating system including new boiler; internal works as described in submitted schedule. | Granted
13/08/2012 |
| 0790/12 | 1. Replace all 8 existing rotten softwood windows 2. Replace all 3 external 1970's style softwood doors 3. Replace plastic guttering and downpipe 4. Install heritage style roof light in new bathroom 5. Install new drainage / sewerage system 6. Under-pin sections of the house foundation 7. Repair and lime render chimney stack 8. Install central heating system with external boiler 9. Replace collapsed bedroom ceiling 10. Erect internal partition to create upstairs bathroom 11. Replace the three quarter height (1.8m high), 1930's softwood partition on first floor 12. Install bathroom sanitary ware, plumbing and drainage 13. Install kitchen plumbing and drainage 14. Install toilet / utility room plumbing and drainage 15. Replace unsafe electrical wiring and equipment 16. Remove blocked up window in south elevation 17. Open up inglenook fireplace 18. Remove and re-lay brick floors 19. Replace internal hardboard faced doors | Withdrawn
04/04/2012 |
| 4303/11 | Render exterior of building with lime plaster (existing concrete render to be removed). Re-roof building (existing | Granted
09/02/2012 |

pantiles to be reused). Replace existing concrete tiles on rear single-storey extension with slate. Repairs and/or replacement of defective timbers (as necessary following investigation of frame timbers during render replacement).

PROPOSAL

4. Planning permission is sought for the erection of a part 2 storey, part 1.5 storey detached dwellinghouse. The dwelling is proposed to accommodate 4 bedrooms (3 ensuite).

The dwelling would be 7.8 metres to the ridge (4.1 metres to eaves) with the building generally measuring 16.8 metres x 12.4 metres in width and length.

POLICY

5. **Planning Policy Guidance**

See Appendix below.

CONSULTATIONS

6. **Wetherden Parish Council** – No comments received.

MSDC Environmental Health Officer [Land Contamination] - The Environmental Health Officer confirmed there were no adverse issues regarding land contamination, and had no objection to the proposed development.

MSDC Heritage Team – The Heritage Team considers that the proposal would cause

- Less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset as the erection of such a large timber framed barn style dwelling would dilute the character of the historic farmstead and undermine the significance of the site. **OBJECTION.**

SCC Highways Authority – County Council Highway Authority recommended that any permission which the Planning Authority may give should include the appropriate conditions.

SCC Archaeological Service – No comments received.

LOCAL AND THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

7. Third party representations were received in support of the application.

ASSESSMENT

8. There are a number of considerations which will be addressed as follows:
- Principle of Development
 - Design and Layout
 - Heritage
 - Highway Safety
 - Residential Amenity
 - Biodiversity

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

National planning guidance and adopted development plan policies support new housing development in existing settlements. The application site is situated in the countryside, as defined by the 1998 Local Plan, where under normal circumstance development would only be acceptable in exceptional circumstances in accordance with policy CS2.

The NPPF states that districts should have a 5 year land supply plus an appropriate buffer. Mid Suffolk's land supply does not meet this requirement, and for the purposes of this report the housing land supply was calculated in July 2016, and stated to be 3.3 years.

Given that Mid Suffolk cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing supply it is considered that Policy CS1 and the housing policies on land supply should be not considered to be up to date. The NPPF sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development referring (at paragraph 14) to this being a 'golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. It notes that, for decision takers, this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. Section 6 of the NPPF for housing specifically states in para 49 that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review 2012 reaffirms the guidance as contained in the NPPF on sustainable development.

NPPF nevertheless requires that the development must be considered to be sustainable in order to be acceptable. The context of this site has been

carefully considered, in particular the facilities that would be available to the occupiers of the proposed dwelling. The proposal site is in a rural location, and isolated from settlement.

The site is situated along a stretch of road between the settlements of Elmswell and Wetherden. For the purposes of assessment, consideration has been given to the influence of and impact on the village of Elmswell, whilst a sizeable village, Wetherden is a 'countryside village', as defined by Policy CS1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008), to which development is only allowed in exceptional identified circumstances. Elmswell, as a 'Key Service Centre' is where the main focus of development is directed outside of towns and accommodates a range OF services including a pub, a shop and a school.

The proposed site is 600 metres south east of Elmswell, along Wetherden Road. to be considered sustainable development, the generally accepted walking distance from a settlement, is 800 metres. However, in this case there is no public footway along the roadside. Furthermore, the site is within a national speed limit zone that is un-lit country road. Utilising the nearest public footpath (which would still require occupants to walk the roadside for a stretch of 300 metres), has a total length of over 1km to the edge of the settlement. For the reasons stated, the site is not considered to have sustainable access to local services in this respect.

The nearest bus service operates through both the nearby settlement of Wetherden and Elmswell; providing access to Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds. Although a good service is offered, given the distance to these villages, it would be considered inappropriate for supporting sustainable travel options, with particular regards to employment. Consequently it is highly likely that future occupiers would choose to drive rather than use this limited bus service.

Therefore whilst not remote from other dwellings, the proposal would nonetheless result in the development of a new dwelling in the countryside that would not be sustainably located with regards to accessing services, facilities and employment.

With regards to the other strands of the environmental role of sustainable development it is noted that the proposal offers no benefits to protecting and enhancing our natural environment or improving biodiversity. Given the countryside character of the site, it offers the potential to support a range of species. While there are no records of any protected species on the site, the proposed development is to be erected on the site of a demolished detached garage and domestic garden. While it is considered

there may be some impact, the extent of harm is not unacceptable to a degree to considered refusal for this reason.

It is recognised as set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF that the roles of sustainable development should not be undertaken in isolation, therefore whilst the proposal is not considered to represent sustainable environmental development the economic and social roles should also be considered.

With regards to the economic role of sustainable development the proposal for the erection of a single dwelling would provide some benefits with regards to the construction industry, would support the public house and services in Elmswell and adjoining settlements, regardless of how they are accessed. However, this is not considered to be a significant benefit given that other housing developments would also provide these benefits, and in more sustainable locations.

In respect of the social role of sustainable development, it is set out in paragraph 7 of the NPPF within the social role that the supply of housing should have accessible local services. Given the limited services within walking distance, the benefits in this respect are further considered to be limited.

Whilst it is recognised that there are some minor benefits with regards to the economic and social role of sustainable development, facilities and services available in local settlements are considered beyond reasonable walking distance and as such any occupiers would be fundamentally reliant on the private motor car in a typical day. Furthermore the potential impact on biodiversity is not considered to be outweighed, such that the proposal is not considered to be sustainable development.

Taking all of these factors on board, the Mid Suffolk District Council's current 5 year Housing Land Supply and the NPPF position on this matter it is considered that, under these particular circumstances the principle of residential development is not acceptable.

Design, Layout and Heritage

Planning permission is sought for the erection of single part 2 storey, part 1.5 storey dwelling, with associated cartlodge, access and landscaping. The proposed dwelling has the appearance in the style of a barn conversion, reflecting the character of the rural locality, with the inclusion of traditional features such as a substantial glazed element reflecting a barn-style structure to the southern elevation.

Footnote 9 of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF requires that those policies

relating to designated heritage assets are protected, and shall not be considered out-of-date as may be.

Section 12 of the NPPF states the Local Planning Authority, when determining applications should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, their positive contribution to the economic viability of communities and their character and distinctiveness. Any alterations should not detract from the architectural or historic character of the building and its setting.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF suggests that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Consideration should be given to the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability.

Policies HB1 places high priority on protecting the character and appearance of buildings of architectural and historic interest. Core Strategy policy CS5 requires all development to maintain and enhance the historic environment.

Official comments received from the Heritage Team considered the proposal will result in harm to the designated heritage asset as the proposal is considered to "dilute the character of the historic farmstead and undermine the significance of the site".

As noted above, Little London Farm is a modest Grade II listed building dating from the 17th Century, situated within a cluster of ancillary, utilitarian agricultural outbuildings, one of which, the brick barn, has been recently converted. The pastiche dwelling would have a fake, contrived appearance, seeking to imitate agricultural architecture which does not exist on the site. The barn conversion to the east of the dwelling is brick built, utilitarian in appearance and scale, and is authentic former farm building. The existing farm buildings and shelters around the site are predominantly brick. Officers consider that the sprawling design is unsympathetic to Little London Farm and would harm the character and significance of the site.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that where development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefit.

Whilst it is accepted that the provision of a single dwelling would add to the local housing stock this limited public benefit would not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset. Heritage Officer comments

illustrate that this proposal would be detrimental to the character historically associated with the site. The harm created by the newly introduced incongruous form is considered to cause considerable, but less than substantial harm.

Highway Safety

The layout proposes creation of a new access and parking area off, to be served by School Road. The Highway Authority, having considered the application, do not wish to restrict the grant of outline planning permission but seek the inclusion of an appropriate condition to secure frontage enclosure.

It is considered that the use of the access by an additional dwelling would not be prejudicial to either pedestrian or vehicular highway safety and that adequate parking can be achieved within the application site and secured by a planning condition.

Biodiversity

The application site is an established informal garden, laid to grass. There are no records of protected species in the vicinity of the application site. Furthermore the proposal is for the construction of a single dwelling; works which will not include the loss of any potential habitats, as such the proposal is not considered to risk harm to protected species.

Conclusion

Taking into account the circumstances surrounding the 5 year Housing Land Supply, the countryside location and lack of accessibility to local services, it is considered the proposal does not represent a sustainable form of residential development. Furthermore, the proposed design of this development would diminish the historic significance of the existing listed building and for these reasons cause unacceptable harm to designated heritage asset which is not outweighed by the public benefits. As such, the proposal is not in accordance with the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

That Full Planning Permission be **refused** for the following reasons:

The application proposes a new dwelling in an unsustainable location where residents are likely to rely on the private car for access essential services and community facilities. As such it cannot be considered to comprise a sustainable form of development and conflicts with the aims and requirements of paragraph 7, 8 14, 49 of the NPPF, CS1 and CS2 of the Core Strategy (2008), Focused Review policies FC1 and FC1.1 and Local Plan policy H7.

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Furthermore, the proposal would be detrimental to the setting of a designated Heritage Asset and as such conflicts with the aims and requirements of the NPPF paragraphs 126, 129, 131 and 134, CS5 of the Core Strategy (2008), Focused Review policy FC1 and FC1.1 and Local Plan policy HB1.

Philip Isbell

Professional Lead - Growth & Sustainable Planning

Lindsey Wright

Planning Officer

APPENDIX A - PLANNING POLICIES

1. Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Core Strategy Focused Review

Cor1 - CS1 Settlement Hierarchy

Cor2 - CS2 Development in the Countryside & Countryside Villages

Cor5 - CS5 Mid Suffolks Environment

CSFR-FC1 - PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CSFR-FC1.1 - MID SUFFOLK APPROACH TO DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2. Mid Suffolk Local Plan

H16 - PROTECTING EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

HB1 - PROTECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

GP1 - DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF DEVELOPMENT

H17 - KEEPING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AWAY FROM POLLUTION

3. Planning Policy Statements, Circulars & Other policy

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework

APPENDIX B - NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

Letter(s) of representation(s) have been received from a total of **2** interested party(ies).

The following people **objected** to the application

The following people **supported** the application: