
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September, 2016

by S. J. Buckingham, BA (Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI FSA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 30TH September, 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/W/16/3152185

Antler Ridge, Main Road, Willisham, Suffolk, IP8 4SP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Keith Cornforth against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 4244/15, dated 30 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 18 February 16.
 - The development proposed is erection of detached dwelling and garage and alterations to existing access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development would be consistent with the principles of sustainable development having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan.

Reasons

3. There is no dispute that the site sits out with a settlement boundary, being within Willisham Tye, designated since 2008 as a Countryside Village. Willisham is small settlement of dwellings set in isolation in the countryside, and surrounded by a scatter of equally small settlements. It is predominantly residential in character.
 4. There is no dispute either that the Council is not able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply, or that paragraphs 14 and 49 of the Framework therefore apply. As a result Policies CS1 and CS2 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Document relating respectively to development hierarchy and development in the countryside cannot be considered up to date. Paragraph 14 states that where relevant policies are out of date, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.
 5. The Framework defines the three dimensions to sustainable development, social, economic and environment. The Framework is clear that sustainability should not be interpreted narrowly, and that the dimensions of sustainable
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development are mutually dependent and should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

6. The proposal would contribute to the housing stock, which is an important consideration in the absence of an identified five year housing land supply, although the contribution would be a small one. There would be some economic benefit during the construction phase of any development, but this would be limited and temporary. Given that the Framework generally encourages the supply of new housing, and as these benefits contribute towards the aim of achieving sustainable development, I give them moderate weight however.
7. The Framework also, in paragraph 55, in seeking to promote sustainable development in rural areas, states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, and that except under special circumstances, local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside.
8. The appeal site sits within a group of other houses, and so is not isolated from other houses. However, from the evidence put before me, the services and facilities in Willisham itself and the adjoining small villages appear to be limited and generally at some distance from the appeal site. The proposed dwelling would therefore be isolated from the range of services and facilities likely to be needed for its residential use. For this reason, there would also be limited opportunity for the proposed single dwelling to contribute to enhancing or maintaining the vitality of this and the surrounding rural communities through supporting these services and facilities. Accordingly, the development of this site for residential purposes would be materially harmful, and would not meet the aims of paragraph 55 of the Framework.
9. Paragraph 17 of the Framework states that planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. While there are made footways within the area of the appeal site, these stop at the settlement edge, giving way to grass verges in some places, but generally to narrow lanes with no spaces for pedestrians. The lack of footpaths outside the settlement and widely spaced bus services mean that regular use of walking or public transport by the occupiers of the proposed dwelling would be very unlikely, and that they would be heavily reliant on private car journeys to access schools, shops and employment. While the number of journeys generated by a single dwelling would be small, there would still be some minor harm.
10. In this case therefore I conclude that the moderate benefits of the proposal in terms of economic activity and an addition to the housing supply would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by its harm in providing a new dwelling in a location which is not sustainable.
11. My attention has been drawn to a number of development proposals on sites elsewhere outside defined settlement boundaries, including permissions granted by the Council and a number of permissions granted on appeal. While I do not have full details of the background to these proposals or the decisions made, from the information available to me it appears that the circumstances of these cases, specifically the location of the sites involved and their relationship to nearby settlements, are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal. These examples do not, therefore, lead me to alter my findings in

respect of the appeal. In any case the existence of development or permission elsewhere is not an appropriate reason to allow a proposal that would cause harm.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Buckingham

INSPECTOR