

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2017

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 27th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/16/3164676

Land adjacent Bridge House, Debenham Road, Crowfield IP6 9TD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr A Copeman against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 3952/16, dated 19 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of detached dwelling and garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a detached dwelling and garage at land adjacent to Bridge House, Debenham Road, Crowfield IP6 9TD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3952/16, dated 19 September 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) Details of the access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale, (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development takes place and the development shall be carried out as approved.
 - 2) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than three years from the date of this permission.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Procedural Matter

2. The planning application was in outline with all matters reserved. I have had regard to the Location Plan which shows the appeal site outlined in red and have based my decision on the principle of a single dwelling on this site.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed development would provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the character and appearance of the area and the accessibility of services and facilities.

Reasons

4. Crowfield is a small village surrounded by open countryside. Most of its properties are situated along Stone Street and Debenham Road in a linear form
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- of development. The appeal site forms part of the garden to the side of Bridge House and is enclosed from the adjoining fields to the east and south by trees and other vegetation. Residential development continues to the north of the appeal site and lines the road on the opposite side to the west.
5. While details of the proposed development would be dealt with at the reserved matters stage, the appeal site appears sufficiently large and screened to ensure that a detached dwelling and garage would have little negative effect on the character and appearance of the area, including the adjoining countryside. The large oak tree in the corner of the site would be unlikely to be harmed by development given its location and the size of the site. The proposal would continue the linear form of development and would not be physically isolated.
 6. Crowfield has very few services and facilities for day-to-day needs and is considered to be a countryside village by Policy CS1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 ('the Core Strategy'). Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy restricts development in the countryside to defined categories excluding new market housing, which reflects Policies H7 and H10 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 ('the Local Plan').
 7. Occupiers of the proposed development would need to travel beyond the village in order to access most services and facilities. The nearest settlements of Coddensham, Pettaugh and Stonham Aspal are beyond a reasonable walking distance along roads that contain national speed limits and lack pavements or lighting, which also makes cycling less attractive. Larger settlements such as Debenham are further away still along similar types of road.
 8. A bus service between Ipswich and Debenham stops within reasonable walking distance of the proposed development and provides a realistic alternative to the private motor car on Mondays to Saturdays, including for commuters to Ipswich. Nevertheless, the service is not particularly frequent which means that there is still likely to be a reliance on the private motor car. This would result in negative environmental effects in terms of the use of natural resources and negative social effects in terms of accessible local services.
 9. The proposed development would thus not accord with Policies CS1 and CS2 of the Core Strategy and Policies H7 and H10 of the Local Plan. However, it is recognised by the Council and the appellant that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date in line with paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policies CS1, CS2, H7 and H10 are relevant policies for the supply of housing. While not rendered redundant, they seek explicitly to restrict the delivery of housing in the countryside and so I can only afford them limited weight.
 10. It is also recognised by both main parties that where relevant policies are out of date, paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that 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 NPPF taken as a whole or specific policies of the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review 2012 (CSFR) follow the approach of paragraph 14.
 11. Considering the benefits of the proposed development first, there would be social benefits from the provision of a new dwelling in terms of housing land

supply. Social and economic benefits would also arise through the construction and maintenance of the dwelling and helping to sustain local services and facilities. These benefits are tempered by the scale of development, but nevertheless carry modest weight in favour of the proposal.

12. Turning to the adverse impacts, there would be little negative effect on the character and appearance of the area as outlined above. While there would be negative environmental and social effects arising from a reliance on the private motor car, a single dwelling is unlikely to generate a significant number of vehicle movements. As a consequence, and conscious of the limited weight I have attached to Policies CS1, CS2, H7 and H10, the weight I can attribute to the adverse impacts of development is modest.
13. In the context of paragraph 14 of the NPPF and Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the CSFR, the adverse impacts of the development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies which points towards the grant of planning permission.
14. In these circumstances, the proposed development would provide a suitable location for housing having regard to the character and appearance of the area and the accessibility of services and facilities. Thus, it would accord with Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the CSFR which have a presumption in favour of sustainable development and require proposals to conserve and enhance the local character of the district. It would also accord with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy which seeks to maintain and enhance the local environment.
15. The proposed development would meet the aims of paragraph 55 of the NPPF which seeks to maintain the vitality of rural communities and avoid new isolated homes in the countryside. It would also represent sustainable development as described by the NPPF and protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Conditions

16. I have imposed standard conditions relating to the submission and timing of reserved matter applications and the commencement of development. The Council has requested a condition requiring development to be conducted in accordance with the plans, but as an outline application with no plans other than a location plan, such a condition is not necessary. Conditions requested by the Highway Authority in terms of vehicular access, visibility splays and the storage of refuse/recycling bins are not necessary as they are elements of the development that can be dealt with under the relevant reserved matter application.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR