



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2017

by J J Evans BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/W/17/3179322

Little Thatch, Main Road, Bouldnor, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight PO41 0XA

- 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 Matthew Kirby against the decision of the Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref P/00554/17, dated 2 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 26 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as "to build 3 bungalows on previously undeveloped land to help satisfy a local need".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the development has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated the description of the development has not changed, but a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of the development has been agreed. Accordingly I have used the one given on the original application above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would provide a suitable site for three bungalows, having regard to the principles of sustainable development and the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a paddock laid to grass, positioned to the southern side of Main Road. There are several trees within the site, and three of the boundaries of the paddock are defined by mature hedgerows and trees. To the east of the site is the detached house Little Thatch and its garden, whilst to the south and west are agricultural fields. To the north of the road opposite the appeal site there are woodlands and scattered detached houses set within large grounds.
5. Fields and playing fields separate the appeal site from the edge of Bouldnor. Although there are other dwellings near the appeal site, they have a sporadic and dispersed position, separated by large gardens, woods and agricultural land. Consequently, the appeal site does not form part of a settlement as defined within Policy SP1 of the Island Plan: the Isle of Wight Core Strategy (2011) (CS), nor is it immediately adjacent to one. The three bungalows would

be outside the settlements defined in CS SP1, in the countryside, whereby an objective of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is to avoid isolated new homes in the countryside, unless there are special circumstances.

6. CS Policy SP1 allows for development outside of defined settlements provided a specific need is identified, with CS Policy DM4 requiring that it is demonstrated how affordable housing would benefit the community. The appellant has explained that there is a need for affordable homes within the area, and that two of the bungalows would be offered at a discounted sale price to local owner-occupiers with reduced retirement income.
7. Nevertheless, the Framework makes it clear that low cost market housing is not considered as affordable housing for planning purposes. A means of securing two of the bungalows as affordable has not been provided, and although it is stated that they would be offered at a reduced price when first sold, no mechanism is in place to ensure that the bungalows would remain affordable to successive occupiers. Moreover, the Council consider that there are other sites in more appropriate locations for accommodating the need identified. Based on the limited evidence before me, I am not convinced that the provision of three dwellings in a countryside position is essential to meeting the housing needs identified.
8. Furthermore, future occupiers would be some distance from any settlement in which there would be a range of services and facilities to serve day-to-day needs. The bungalows would be located along a busy main road which has neither a footway nor is it lit. There is a bus stop with a regular daily service close to the site, and this could provide future occupiers of the bungalow with an alternative means of transport other than a private vehicle. To get to the bus stop would necessitate either walking along a grass verge of varying depth or within the carriageway of the busy road. Walking or cycling along this road particularly at night would not be an attractive and safe alternative to a private vehicle.
9. Turning now to the impact of the bungalows upon the character and appearance of the area, the proposal would introduce residential development into the countryside, unacceptably eroding the undeveloped nature of the southern side of Main Road. The three bungalows would be served by a single access onto the highway and would share a road within the site. However, the density of the development would not reflect the generous plot sizes of those houses that are present nearby, and the concentration of bungalows around a short cul-de-sac would unacceptably urbanise the area.
10. The appellant points out that the bungalows would be built of quality materials in a style to reflect that of Little Thatch. Nevertheless, the three dwellings and the associated infrastructure, garden boundaries, outbuildings and domestic paraphernalia would appear both incongruous and cluttered compared to the open nature of the area. As such the proposed development would appear unacceptably cramped.
11. I note that the appellant considers the bungalows would be secluded and well screened by mature trees and hedges. Nevertheless, my objection to the residential development of the site applies even though it would be screened by landscaping, as the requirements of the Framework and the CS apply irrespective of whether the development would be publically prominent or

highly visible. Furthermore, although it is stated that no trees would be felled, the bungalows would be very close to the boundary hedges and also to trees within the site and nearby. Whether these would survive the development of the site has not been demonstrated.

12. I have considered the proposal in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in the Framework. In paragraph 7 it is made clear that sustainable development has economic, environmental and social dimensions, none of which should be undertaken in isolation. The appellant considers that the site is redundant and unproductive. There would be a limited economic benefit arising from the construction of the dwellings and they would increase the choice of homes available. The bungalows would be constructed using modern insulation standards and also could provide lifetime homes. However, these benefits would be limited, and would not outweigh the significant environmental harm that I have found. Taken as a whole the proposal would not be the sustainable development required by the Framework.
13. My attention has been drawn to a 2016 appeal decision for a single dwelling nearby (ref: APP/P2114/W/16/3154694), and I note the concerns of the Parish Council as regards the creation of a precedent if I allowed the appeal and granted planning permission. Whilst I have had regard to this appeal decision, I have based my decision on the merits of this particular case in accordance with the requirements of the current development plan and all other material considerations.
14. Given my findings, it follows that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly outweigh the benefits of this proposal. Thus the three bungalows would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area and would not be the sustainable development sought by the Framework or by CS Policies SP1 and DM2. These seek amongst other things to direct development to within or adjacent to settlements, and high quality and inclusive design that would enhance and have a clear understanding of its environmental context and the character of the surrounding area, reflecting the Framework.

Other Matters

15. The Solent Special Protection Areas Supplementary Planning Document (2014) explains the requirements and justification for contributions for mitigation measures to address the presence of additional residents and the resultant pressures upon the protected Solent Special Protection Areas. A signed and dated deed was provided by the appellant to mitigate the impacts. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons I have not considered the deed in any detail and have not therefore reached a finding upon it.

Conclusion

16. Thus, for the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

J J Evans

INSPECTOR