



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 May 2020

by David Carter BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V0510/W/20/3245787

58 Swaffham Road, Burwell CB25 0AN

- 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 Terry Jacobs against the decision of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00950/OUT, dated 30 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is an outline planning application (all matters reserved except access) for the erection of five dwellings with a new access from Swaffham Road and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The planning application is in outline seeking approval for 5 new dwellings with all matters reserved except for access. An illustrative layout has been submitted.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a single dwelling, No 58 Swaffham Road (No 58) in a site of c0.3 hectares which encompasses a disused farmyard and buildings. The 5 dwellings proposed shown on the illustrative plan would be located behind the line of the rear elevation of No 58. This would leave an open area to the front of the site, currently used as a meadow, which would be used, in part, to provide a separate access to the new dwellings. The access road into the site would also lead to grazing land beyond. The local plan defines a settlement envelope for Burwell and a relatively small part of the appeal site lies outside the defined boundary thus representing an encroachment into the countryside.
5. The pattern of development along the section of Swaffham Road close to the appeal site is characterised by single depth residential development comprising mainly detached properties. The site is close to the outer limits of Burwell and in such circumstances, it is important to ensure the visual impact does not lead to a harmful urbanising effect. Apart from No 58, the existing buildings on the

appeal site are all single storey, mainly former agricultural buildings, and do not therefore, in themselves, justify the introduction of the amount of mainly 2 storey buildings proposed.

6. The limited encroachment into the countryside that would be caused by building beyond the defined settlement boundary would add to the urbanising effect of the development by enabling dwellings on the site to a depth of 4 dwellings (including the existing dwelling). This would have a harmful effect on character and appearance through the degree of urbanisation. It could also encourage other proposals to come forward beyond the settlement envelope which would add to those concerns.
7. Most existing properties nearby, on both sides of Swaffham Road, are set in large gardens. The density of the development proposed, as shown by the illustrative plans would be significantly higher, and No 58 would be left with a rear garden significantly smaller than most in the vicinity and, the proposed chalet bungalow (Plot 5) would have an irregular L-shaped garden. The density of the appeal proposal is thereby contrary to the density prevailing in the area.
8. The appellant has submitted a statement on Landscape and Visual Matters, although this document incorrectly indicates throughout that the appeal site and all of the proposed buildings lie within the defined settlement envelope. Notwithstanding this, the main findings are that the appeal proposal would have a relatively low adverse visual impact and a negligible to slight adverse impact on the local landscape. I do not agree with the findings since the encroachment into the countryside would have a harmful impact on the intrinsic value of that part of the defined countryside as well as enabling a greater scale and more intense form of urban development across the site as a whole.
9. Taking these observations together, I conclude that the proposed development is excessive in-scale given its sensitive location close to the edge of Burwell, introducing a degree of urbanisation that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the appeal proposal conflicts with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2015) (LP). These policies seek to achieve a high quality of development which will be complementary and sympathetic to existing development and its setting.
10. Additionally, Policy GROWTH 2 of the LP provides for limited development to meet local needs within identified settlement envelopes. As highlighted above, a small proportion of the appeal site extends beyond the defined settlement envelope. Accordingly, the appeal proposal conflicts with Policy GROWTH 2 of the LP which, through the definition of development envelopes, seeks to steer new development into defined locations.

Other Matter

11. The determination of the planning application was based on the premise that the Council could not identify a 5 year housing land supply (5YHLS). However, under the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), where local plans are more than 5 years past adoption, the housing requirement used in assessing the supply will be based on the standard method for determining local housing needs for the LPA area. In accordance with this national planning policy, the Council issued a new Five

Year Land Supply Report on 21 April 2020, the 5th anniversary of the LP adoption. This report identifies a 6.61 years supply of housing.

12. Given the new position and that I have been supplied with no substantial evidence that would lead me to a different view, I conclude that the Council can identify a 5YHLS which means that the tilted balance is not engaged.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons stated above, the appeal is dismissed.

David Carter

INSPECTOR