



## Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 June 2021

**by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/21/3267194**

**Land West of Telephone Exchange, Bourn Road, Caxton, CB23 3PP**

- 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 Searle against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
  - The application Ref 20/02508/OUT, dated 18 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 December 2020.
  - The development proposed is described as "Outline planning application for the erection of a self-build dwelling and garage with all matters reserved except access."
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. The application was submitted in outline form, with all matters reserved other than access at this stage. I have determined the appeal accordingly, treating the submitted plans as illustrative on all other matters.

### Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
  - Whether the site accords with relevant local policies regarding location,
  - The effect on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

#### *Location*

4. Policies TI/2 and S/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 (the LP) collectively require that new development is sited where it reduces the need to travel, particularly by car, and direct new development to sites within defined development frameworks.
5. The appeal site lies outside of the Caxton development framework, albeit that the boundary includes all the houses on the opposite side of the road up to the bridge. Development on this side of the road is intermittent, and there is no footpath providing pedestrian access into the village. Furthermore, the village has few facilities, including no shops.
6. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. However, it also states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

While the appeal proposal is for a single dwelling, the site offers very little choice of transport modes with the nearest bus stop being 100 metres from the site and a lack of pedestrian access. Given the overall shortage of facilities and sustainable transport options near to the site, it is likely that occupiers of the proposed houses would be heavily reliant on private vehicles.

7. My attention has been drawn to permissions for two houses at and adjacent to No 30 Bourn Road, further from the built-up area of the village than the appeal site. However, one of those permissions is for a replacement house and would therefore not result in the creation of an additional dwelling outside of the development framework. The other new dwelling was approved at a time when the Council could not demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, which would have been a material consideration in granting permission. Given these differences, I am only able to give limited weight to these permissions in determining this appeal.
8. The site does not therefore accord with relevant local policies with regard to location.

#### *Character and Appearance*

9. The south side of Bourn Road is generally characterised by intermittent development, with a substantial gap between the appeal site and the built-up area of the village. This contrasts with the north side of the road, which is broadly characterised by large detached houses in a continuous row adjoining the built-up area.
10. The appeal proposal would extend the built frontage on this side of the road onto undeveloped land and further into the countryside. This green space contributes to the rural setting of the village, and while the scale and layout of development are reserved matters, any house built on this site would be prominently visible from the public right of way that runs along the site boundary and also visible from Bourn Road even if the hedgerow to the front were to be retained.
11. The appeal proposal would therefore result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policies HQ/1, NH/2 and S/7 of the LP which require, amongst other criteria, that development respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape.

#### *Planning Balance*

12. The appellant contends that Policy S/7 of the LP is out of date, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11(d) of the Framework would be engaged. However, the development framework boundary includes existing houses that are part of the lineal pattern of development in the settlement, while excluding the more intermittent houses to the south side of Bourn Road. While new housing development has been approved at and adjacent to No 30 Bourn Road, different considerations applied in those cases as set out above. I am satisfied that Policy S/7 is consistent with the Framework, and the conflict with this policy and the other policies of the LP identified above attracts full weight.
13. The development would result in the creation of one new dwelling, supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. While

the Council has five years' supply of deliverable housing land, this is a minimum and does not diminish the value of additional housing. The proposal is for a self-build dwelling, which would provide a more affordable home and this carries additional weight given the Council's shortfall in delivery of such plots. In addition, there would be economic benefits from the construction of the dwelling, and in the longer term from its occupation and support for local services and facilities. There would also be a social benefit from expanding the local community.

14. The appellant also contends that the development would deliver an environmental benefit through the provision of well related housing preserving the character of the area and the protection of trees. However, as set out above I do not consider that the site is well related to the settlement, nor that it would preserve the character of the area. Overall, I do not consider that there would be an environmental benefit from the development.
15. Set against the benefits of the development, the appeal site proposal would create new housing in a location where residents would be likely to be heavily reliant on private vehicles for access to day-to-day services and facilities. It would also result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. These considerations attract substantial weight, and in this instance the harm arising from the development would outweigh the identified benefits.
16. The proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, which outweigh that conflict.

#### *Other Matters*

17. The site lies adjacent to the Caxton Conservation Area (the CA), and I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. The Council has not raised any objection to the development on grounds of impact on the CA given that the application was for outline permission with all matters other than access reserved. I see no reason to disagree with this assessment.
18. My attention has been drawn to other appeal decisions where permission was granted for new housing in this district and in North West Leicestershire. Of these, two were for schemes of nine dwellings with accordingly greater benefits arising. The North West Leicestershire scheme would have been determined under a different policy regime in addition to being for thirty new homes with the attendant benefits. Given these differences, only limited weight can be attached to these decisions. The appeal decision granting permission for an additional dwelling at a self-build scheme in Caxton carries greater weight as it raises similar issues to this appeal and was determined against the same policies regarding location. However, in that instance the effect on character and appearance was not a main issue, which attracts additional weight in this instance.

#### **Conclusion**

19. For the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

*M Chalk*

INSPECTOR