



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 8 June 2021

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MTRPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V0510/W/21/3268504

26 Main Street, Coveney, CB6 2DJ

- 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 Lee Farming against the decision of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00739/FUL, dated 9 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing pair of semi-detached cottages and associated farm and outbuildings and the erection of five dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The permission granted in 2017 on this site lapsed in May of this year. Given its recency, it remains a material consideration that carries significant weight in the determination of this appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the appeal proposal would accord with the relevant local policy regarding location,
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the area; and,
 - Whether it would preserve the setting of the Grade II listed building, 24 Main Street.

Reasons

Location

4. Policy GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (the LP) directs the majority of new development in the district to identified market towns, with more limited development in villages which have a defined development envelope, thereby helping to support local services, shops and community needs. The policy identifies several types of development that in principle may be acceptable outside of a development envelope. Market housing is not included within that list.
5. The 2017 permission was for three houses on the site, retaining the existing pair of cottages. The cottages are in dilapidated condition, and their replacement as proposed in this appeal is acceptable in principle. This proposal

would therefore also result in five houses on this site, but with an extended development footprint resulting in one of the houses lying partly outside of the development envelope.

6. The development envelope excludes the barn at the rear of the site. While the development would replace this barn with a house on a broadly similar footprint, the existing barn is an open-fronted agricultural building of a scale and appearance typical of a rural setting. It is clearly agricultural in character and is separated by a significant distance from the cottages and other structures towards the front of the site. I do not therefore find that its exclusion renders the development envelope to be illogical, given that it generally appears to follow the extent of previously developed land within the village, which would exclude land occupied by agricultural buildings.
7. There is new residential development to the north of the site, and the site of these new houses lies outside of the development envelope. However, I do not have the details of that development before me, and in any case it follows the lineal form of development typical within the village, and lies between the cottages on the appeal site and another house included within the development envelope. For these reasons it differs from the appeal proposal and carries limited weight in the determination of the appeal.
8. The appeal proposal would therefore conflict with the relevant local policy regarding location.

Character and appearance

9. The appeal site lies at the edge of the settlement, and projects significantly beyond the built area of neighbouring plots with countryside to two sides of the site. It would create a substantially harder edge to this area of the settlement than presently exists, with much of the site comprising open land or occupied by agricultural buildings of a scale and appearance typical of a rural location.
10. The scale and depth of development would intrude into the countryside beyond the development envelope, resulting in an urbanising effect harmful to the rural setting of the village.
11. The appearance of the houses would, individually, be in keeping with the local character, and the appeal proposal is for a comprehensive development of the site including the replacement of the existing dilapidated cottages. However, the overall extent of development would result in it being out of keeping with the established character and pattern of development in the area, which generally follows a linear pattern of development with limited built form projecting significantly rearwards. While the layout and density of development is broadly similar to the 2017 permission, the addition of a further house at the rear of the site would result in a more prominent and intrusive form of development, clearly visible in the surrounding landscape and from public rights of way given its location at the edge of the settlement.
12. The new residential development to the north of the site is linear development following Gravel End and Gravel End Lane. It therefore differs from the appeal proposal in terms of its effect on the character and appearance of the area, so carries limited weight in the determination of this appeal.
13. The appeal proposal would therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would accordingly conflict with Policies GROWTH 2,

ENV 1 and ENV 2 of the LP, which taken together require that development proposals protect, conserve, and where possible enhance the settlement edge and their wider landscape setting.

Setting of the listed building

14. The site is next to No 24 Main Street, a Grade II listed building. This is a thatched roof cottage sited flush against the pavement edge, with the appeal site seen in context with it in longer views in the area. The significance of the listed building derives from its character, and the setting within which it is located. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building.
15. The appeal proposal would extend significantly beyond the rear of the cottage, albeit that the cottage has been extended rearwards itself, and has a detached garage set back from the front of the site on the boundary shared with the appeal site.
16. The depth of the development would result in it being prominent in wider views of the site. This would affect views of the listed building, in particular from the open countryside, and result in a more urbanised setting not in keeping with the wider rural character of the area.
17. The harm from the failure to preserve the setting of the listed building would be experienced mainly in longer views towards it and would be softened somewhat by the presence of the existing garage building which lies between the cottage and the application site. This would therefore amount to less than substantial harm when weighed against the significance of the listed building as a whole.
18. The Council's Conservation Officer has not objected to the proposed development. However, this is a matter of planning judgment and given the greater depth of the development over that approved under the 2017 permission I find that there would be unacceptable harm to the setting of the listed building from the proposed development.
19. The appeal proposal would therefore conflict with Policy ENV 12 of the LP. This policy requires, amongst other criteria, that a proposal which affects the setting of a listed building not materially harm the immediate or wider setting.

Planning Balance

20. The development would result in the creation of three new dwellings and would also replace the existing dilapidated cottages on the site, which have been unoccupied for some time. It would support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. While the Council can demonstrate that it has more than five years' supply of housing land, this is a minimum and does not diminish the value of new housing. The appearance of the new houses would, individually, be acceptable in this rural location. The principle of residential development in this general location has been established under the 2017 permission.
21. Set against these benefits I have found that there would be conflict with the relevant policy of the LP regarding location due to the extent of the site area, harm to the character and appearance of the area from the scale and siting of

the development, and harm to the setting of the listed building, which the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states must be given great weight irrespective of whether the potential harm amounts to less than substantial harm to its significance. Cumulatively, these considerations would in this instance outweigh the identified benefits that would result from the proposed development. The proposal therefore conflicts with the development plan and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict in this instance.

Conclusion

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

M Chalk

INSPECTOR