

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/2(a)

Parish:	Boughton	
Proposal:	OUTLINE APPLICATION SOME MATTERS RESERVED: Site for construction of four dwellings	
Location:	South of Jubilee Lodge Mill Hill Road Boughton King's Lynn	
Applicant:	Mr B M Burton & S R Chalmers	
Case No:	16/00753/O (Outline Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs H Wood-Handy	Date for Determination: 16 June 2016 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 8 July 2016

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Referred at the request of Councillor Sampson

Case Summary

The site amounts to approx. 0.3ha and is located on the west side of Mill Hill Road, Boughton. The site abuts Boughton Conservation Area.

The proposal is for outline permission for four dwellings with all matters reserved bar access. The indicative site plan indicates 4 large dwellings with garages to the front of the plots. The plan indicates that existing field accesses will be retained with one being upgraded to serve the dwellings and the other (adjacent the south boundary) being retained to serve the field to the rear of the site.

A public footpath is located to the south of the serve which is not affected by the proposal.

The proposal has been advertised as affecting the setting of the Conservation Area as well as a Departure from the Development Plan.

Key Issues

Principle of development
Form and character and the impact on the Conservation Area
Highways
Any other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of the application

Recommendation

REFUSE

THE APPLICATION

The site amounts to approx. 0.3ha and is located on the west side of Mill Hill Road, Boughton. The site abuts Boughton Conservation Area.

The proposal is for outline permission for four dwellings with all matters reserved bar access.

The indicative site plan indicates 4 large dwellings with garages to the front of the plots. The plan indicates that existing field accesses will be retained with one being upgraded to serve the dwellings and the other (adjacent the south boundary) being retained to serve the field to the rear of the site.

A public footpath is located to the south of the serve which is not affected by the proposal.

SUPPORTING CASE

The application site is within the village of Boughton, an established settlement. This is not an application for an isolated dwelling in the open countryside. It is development of an “infill” nature, between Woodstock and the main village to the south and Jubilee Lodge and other properties to the north.

It is possible for people to live in rural areas and thrive in a community without their own transport if they choose to.

Boughton is located only 6.4 miles by road from the centre of Downham Market. There is a bus service into Downham Market. Further bus services are available from Stoke Ferry.

Schools for primary and junior education are available in Stoke Ferry, which is only a 10 mins cycle ride from the proposed site. Local bus companies run school bus services to collect children and take them to and from High School in Downham Market.

Grocery shopping – Local supermarkets offer online shopping and delivery service to Boughton.

Internet- Fibre broadband is available in Boughton. Working from home is possible, thus further reducing the need for reliance on the private car.

Boughton has its own Health Surgery which is a long established small country practice, committed to providing local medical care to the villages it serves. Services are offered for the whole family covering all aspects of health care for adults, children and infants. It is supported by a team of Administrative staff, Receptionists, Practice nurse, Healthcare Assistant as well as attached District Nurses, Health Visitors and Community Matron.

The proposed dwellings will be built with very high fabric insulation standards and fitted with an Air Source Heat pump (ASHP). They will be designed to exceed current Building Regulation standards, looking toward the regulation changes expected in 2016. The ASHP provides fairly low cost space heating and hot water and, because it uses only electricity, is more sustainable than using gas or oil because electricity is the only potentially “green” energy source. This is recognised by the fact that an ASHP installation is eligible under the Government Renewable Heat Incentive payments scheme.

In order to encourage the use of an electric vehicle, the proposed dwellings will be offered with an EV Charging Point. Such an installation is accredited by the Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) to access the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme funding. Providing the occupiers use an electric vehicle, this funding subsidises the cost of installing a residential electric vehicle charging station for owners/primary users of electric vehicles.

It is suggested, therefore, that this proposal does meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and, as such, is indeed sustainable.

CONTAMINATION

The site has only ever been used as agricultural land and there are no contamination issues. A brief report is included with the application.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Although there are some findings of archaeological importance in the Boughton area, there is nothing specific recorded in the area of the application site. An archaeological investigation is therefore not considered necessary.

ECOLOGY

The site is not considered notable for any protected or faunal species and is of limited botanical interest. The proposed development is unlikely to negatively impact upon any protected species.

ACCESS

The existing field entrance will be improved to provide access for plots 1 & 2 and a new vehicular access will be formed to serve plots 3 & 4. Both these access points will be constructed to Norfolk County Highways specification TRAD 5 and both will have visibility well in excess of 2.4m x 43m in each direction, the standard required for the 30mph speed restriction on Mill Hill Road.

The access will lead to two individual driveways to courtyard turning and parking areas, surfaced with permeable rolled gravel surfacing.

Tegula Priora permeable setts, or similar, suitable for wheelchair use, will be used for paths and terraces leading to the access doors. The new dwellings will have a level access threshold, to be accessible to all.

DESIGN

It is considered that, bearing in mind the form and character of development in this area of the village, the new development should be quite low density, with reasonably wide frontage, suitable for either single storey or one-and-a-half storey dwellings. No design details are being submitted with the application and will be reserved for later consideration.

It is not considered that the proposal will have any detrimental effects on the amenities of the adjacent properties. The design and materials will be considered carefully to blend with the character of the area and the local vernacular. Landscaping is also reserved for later consideration. The plot enjoys existing boundary hedging, which will be retained.

PLANNING HISTORY

DM6906 – Site for residential development – Refused – 27.07.73

DM4501 – Site for residential development – Refused – 27.09.68

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: No Response

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION subject to a condition regarding vehicular access details.

Historic England: No Comment

Historic Environment Service: No Comment

Conservation Officer: Boughton is essentially a linear village with frontage development along the roads running east/west and to a lesser extent north. It derives its character from the mix of buildings, mainly in local materials but also from its sense of openness and its rural setting - the village is surrounded by open countryside and there are views out between the buildings.

The buildings are largely contained within the conservation area except on Mill Hill Road where there are further small clusters of buildings with development with large open spaces between. This proposal is to infill one such space will have some impact on the setting of the CA particularly as the curve in the road means the site is clearly visible from both directions.

However, given the spasmodic development which already exists on Mill Hill Road I think that four frontage properties could be acceptable subject to design and detail. Individual properties would be more in keeping than four the same and single storey would have less impact than two storey, particularly if the buildings at each end are low level.

It's disappointing that the planning statement which accompanies the application covers much of the NPPF but makes no mention of the sections dealing with the historic environment.

Environmental Health & Housing – Environmental Quality: No Comment

Housing Strategy Officer: NO OBJECTION subject to the provision of 20% affordable housing in accordance with Policy CS09.

REPRESENTATIONS

THREE letters of **OBJECTION** regarding:

- Out of character – would change the look and feel of one of the main roads, disrupting last remaining open southerly view;
- Infill ribbon development;
- The Conservation Area Statement states that the character of Boughton is derived partly from its sense of openness and rural setting and indeed the views;
- 4 dwellings in a quiet rural area will cause disturbance in both noise and increased traffic;
- The new access to two of the properties is close to the water supply;
- The southernmost access is on a dangerous corner and crosses a public footpath and concerned that this is the preferred option rather than water disruptions;
- Increase in fast moving traffic;
- No details are provided about the dwellings, two or more storeys would have an oppressive impact.
- Other development in the village to the east has spoilt the character of the village and it would be a shame if this proposal was allowed.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS12 - Environmental Assets

CS09 - Housing Distribution

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PRE-SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

OTHER GUIDANCE

Conservation Area Character Statement

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues are:

- Principle of development
- Form and character and the impact on the Conservation Area
- Highways matters
- Any other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of the application

Principle of development

Boughton is defined as a Smaller Village & Hamlet within Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2011. Smaller Village & Hamlets are locations where there are little or no services and it would be inappropriate to seek further development in these places.

However, in order that such settlements do not stagnate, Policy DM 3 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document 2015 provides:

“...The sensitive infilling of small gaps within an otherwise continuously built up frontage will be permitted where:

- The development is appropriate to the scale and character of the group of buildings and its surroundings; and
- It will not fill a gap which provides a positive contribution to the street scene.

In exceptional circumstances the development of small groups will be appropriate where the development is of a particularly high quality and would provide significant benefits to the local community.”

However, if the development fails to comply with the aforementioned criteria, it falls to be determined against paragraph 55 of the NPPF and Policy CS06 of the Core Strategy 2011 where the presumption is to protect the character and appearance of the countryside and the development of greenfield sites will be resisted unless for agricultural or forestry purposes.

Form and character and the impact on the Conservation Area

In considering this development, there are two elements; the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and whether the development complies with DM3 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Submission Document 2015.

The site is located directly adjacent to the west boundary of Boughton Conservation Area. The Council has a duty to preserve or enhance the setting of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Character Statement describes the village as being surrounded by agricultural land in all directions. The setting is one of linear settlement along the main east/west roads (Chapel Lane, The Green, Mill Hill Road) interspersed with pockets of mature landscape located between and beyond the buildings, containing trees, grass verges and hedgerows. Attractive views of the countryside beyond are afforded between these components. It is stated that all these components contribute to the overall quality of the conservation area and in combination, form an attractive and varied series of spaces and vistas.

The site is part of an open field network located between the public footpath to the south (linking Boughton and Wereham) and Jubilee Lodge to the north. All properties north of the site represent sporadic development leading to the wider countryside beyond. This gap represents a natural settled gap between the western edge of the village and sporadic properties along Mill Hill Road. There are views from the site through to Wereham (with its own Conservation Area) and the wider countryside. In turn, there are views of the site from the Cavenham Road to the south west which indicates a clear gap between the main part of the village and sporadic development beyond.

In light of the above and notwithstanding the Conservation Officer's comments, it is considered that this gap contributes positively to the setting of the Conservation Area and therefore its loss to residential development (with the trappings of domestication) would have a detrimental impact and thus affect the significance of the heritage asset contrary to paragraph 134 of the NPPF and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2011. Historic England and the Historic Environment Service make no comments on the application.

In terms of assessment against Policy DM3 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Submission Document 2015, again for reasons outlined above, the gap positively contributes to the street scene and for that reason, the proposal is not considered sensitive infilling and thus fails Policy DM3 and Policy DM15.

As a result, the proposal is for new development in the countryside that is not supported in policy terms. There is no exceptional justification put forward as part of the Applicant's case that would override policies of the Development Plan. The Council has in excess of a 5 year deliverable housing supply and thus and thus paragraph 49 does not apply.

The proposal is therefore contrary to paragraph 17, 55 and 134 of the NPPF, Policy CS06, CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM2 and DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Submission Document 2015.

Highways matters

The applicant proposes to remove hedgerow to facilitate two access points to serve the dwellings; one to serve Plots 1 & 2 and the other to serve Plots 3 & 4. The existing field access to the south of the site would be retained.

The Local Highway Authority raises no objection subject to conditions.

Any other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of the application

The Housing Officer states that affordable housing is required in accordance with Policy CS09 of the Core Strategy 2011. However, in accordance with the recently altered NPPG, Affordable housing is no longer required on sites of 5 or less provided that the gross internal area across the site does not exceed 1000m². The Agent has confirmed that the GIA is unlikely to exceed 1000m² across the site but this could be dealt with via condition.

The Environmental Quality Team has no comment to make on the application.

Crime and Disorder

The application raises no issues regarding crime and disorder.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development results in the loss of a gap which contributes positively to the setting of the Conservation Area as well as the street scene as a whole. The Council maintains in excess of a five year deliverable housing supply and as a result paragraph 49 and paragraph 14 do not apply. The site is in the countryside where protection policies apply, and given the harm identified above, there is not considered to be suitable justification to approve dwellings in this location. As a result, the proposal is contrary to Paragraphs 17, 55 and 134 of the NPPF, Policies CS02, CS06, CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Policies DM2, DM3 and DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Submission Document 2015.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE for the following reason(s):

- 1 The site lies in part of an open field which is identified by the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 1998, the Core Strategy 2011 and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Submission Document 2015 as countryside and thus where countryside protection policies apply. The applicant has not provided any special justification why countryside protection policies should be relaxed. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the provisions of Paragraphs 17 and 55 of the NPPF, Policy CS06 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM2 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Submission Document 2015.

- 2 The application site comprises part of an agricultural field on the western periphery of Boughton where the character of the surrounding area is undoubtedly rural in nature, characterised by hedgerows and an open agricultural landscape and sporadic development. The provision of 4 new dwellings in this location, along with the associated hard surfacing required for parking and turning, the necessary removal of the existing hedgerow and introduction of domestic paraphernalia, would consolidate development resulting in the loss of a gap which contributes positively to the street scene and the setting of the Conservation Area and would therefore completely alter the existing rural appearance and be harmful to the established form and character of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), Policies CS01, CS06, CS08 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2011), and draft Policies DM3 and DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Submission document (2015).