

SCHEDULE A: Applications with Recommendation

14/0360

Item No: 03

Date of Committee: 29/08/2014

Appn Ref No:
14/0360

Applicant:
Mr Thompson

Parish:
Wetheral

Agent:
Holt Planning Consultancy
Ltd

Ward:
Great Corby & Geltsdale

Location: Land Adj Greenacre, Burnrigg, Warwick Bridge, Cumbria

Proposal: Erection Of 2no. Dwellings (Including 1no. Affordable Housing) (Outline Application)

Date of Receipt:
28/04/2014

Statutory Expiry Date
23/06/2014

26 Week Determination

REPORT

Case Officer: Stephen Daniel

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 It is recommended that this application is refused.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Whether The Proposal Is Acceptable In Principle
- 2.2 Whether The Scale & Design Would Be Acceptable
- 2.3 Impact Of The Proposal On The Living Conditions Of The Occupiers Of Neighbouring Dwellings
- 2.4 Affordable Housing
- 2.5 Highway Matters

3. Application Details

The Site

- 3.1 This application was deferred at the last meeting of the Development Control Committee in order to allow further discussions to take place between the applicant and County Highways about the proposed access and visibility splays and in order to undertake a site visit.

- 3.2 The application site forms a field that is currently used for the grazing of horses. A dwelling (Greenacres), which has some stables within the curtilage, lies to the south of the site and is separated from it by a track that provides access to fields. A track, which is a Public Right of Way and which provides access to Warwick Mill Business Centre and Warwick Bridge adjoins the site to the north, with a dwelling (St Christoph) being located beyond this. A dwelling (Wood House) and fields lie to the west of the site, with fields also adjoining the site to the east (rear).
- 3.3 The road from Warwick Bridge to Burnrigg runs to the front of the site, with Warwick Bridge being located approximately 350m to the north of the site. A hedge and a narrow verge separates the field from the road. There is an existing field gate in the centre of the hedge, which provides access to the field.

The Proposal

- 3.4 The proposal is seeking outline planning permission for the erection of two dwellings on this site, one of which would be an affordable bungalow. The indicative plan that has been submitted with the application, shows a three-bed detached bungalow on the northern part of the site, with a four bed detached dwelling shown on the southern part of the site. A detached double garage is shown to the north of the dwelling.
- 3.5 The existing access gate would be used to provide access to the site. Part of the hedgerow along the front of the site would need to be transplanted back from the road in order to improve the visibility and this would need to be maintained at 1m in height. The new access would provide access to two parking spaces for the bungalow, two visitor spaces and to the detached double garage. The indicative plan also shows a new footpath link being created to the rear of the site and this would link into the Public Right of Way that runs along the northern boundary of the site and which provides pedestrian access to Warwick Bridge.
- 3.6 The applicant has also applied for outline planning permission for the erection of one affordable dwelling on a further site that lies approximately 240m to the south, towards Burnrigg (14/0332). The two sites could be linked by a S106 Agreement.

4. Summary of Representations

- 4.1 This application has been advertised by means of a site notice as well as notification letters sent to nineteen properties. Nine letters of support and one letter of objection have been received. The letters of support make the following points:
- support the proposals as they will give much needed affordable housing in the Parish where house prices are at their peak in the Carlisle area;

- more affordable housing for local people is very important to the community and is essential to retain local people in their local area;
- younger generation can't pay the house prices in rural areas and are forced to live in the city, when their core support is in the rural area;
- it is heartening to see that the Parish Council is in support of the proposals and recognises that there is significant need for these type of proposals in order to deliver affordable housing in the parish;
- the dwellings would a few minutes walk away from a vast number of local services including supermarkets, doctors, butchers and regular bus services in Warwick Bridge;
- the proposal can only benefit the local community and keep the village flourishing;
- more development would mean more options and choice both to people looking to move within and into this area;
- the sympathetic arrangement of the proposed dwelling, coupled with the proactive approach taken in relation to providing affordable housing should carry great positive weight for this application;
- the proposal appears a well designed and considered application that in the context of the current housing situation, nationally and locally, should be viewed favourably and therefore approved;
- this application is a suitable use for the existing land;
- the new dwellings will blend in well with the local landscape and existing neighbouring dwellings which adjoin the proposed development;
- application 13/0941 at Broadwath Holdings was granted planning permission earlier this year;

4.2 The letter of objection makes the following points:

- the proposed development would be positioned in open countryside and the effect on the landscape character would still be inappropriate for (market) housing and so on balance the proposals would still cause net harm;
- concerned about drainage and the possible impact on nearby watercourses;
- vehicles drive significantly over the speed limit on this road, which has a history of accidents, particularly down the hill from the proposed development site - it would not make sense to increase the volume of traffic on this section of the road, particularly slow moving vehicles joining and departing the road just over the brow of a hill.

5. Summary of Consultation Responses

Cumbria County Council - (Econ. Dir. Highways & Transportation): - no objections subject to conditions and the applicant submitting a revised plan to show the proposed access/ visibility splays;

subs to the proposal as the required visibility splays cannot be achieved;

Wetheral Parish Council: - objects on the grounds of highway concerns - this is a busy local road and the site is situated just over the brow of a hill, with poor visibility;

Local Environment - Environmental Protection: - no objections;

Cumbria County Council - (Highway Authority - Footpaths): - comments awaited;

Northern Gas Networks: - no objections;

United Utilities: - no objections. Surface water should drain in the most sustainable way. All hard standing areas should be permeable;

Housing: - the sites are not ideally located for affordable housing (in respect of proximity to public transport, services & amenities), as they are both in the countryside outside Warwick Bridge – although neither is particularly deeply rural. Application 14/0360 is the better located of the two sites, as it is slightly closer to Warwick Bridge, and there is a footpath adjacent to the proposed dwellings. Carlisle's Housing Need and Demand Study (November 2011) identified that 71% of the affordable housing need was for social or affordable rental accommodation. However, these sites would be unlikely to be suitable/viable to a local Housing Association. If the applicant wished to let them on an affordable rental basis themselves, the rent must be no more than 80% of a market rent (to be assessed by a RICS qualified surveyor and agreed with the Council) The applicant would need to provide the Council with a policy or proposal for allocating the properties to local people in need of affordable housing. Alternatively, there is a smaller need for low cost home ownership properties. The Council manages a discounted sale scheme with properties sold at a 30% discount from open market value, which also applies upon each successive resale. Smaller properties would be preferable, as we have had problems in the past on rural schemes where even with a 30% discount they weren't affordable. The Housing Need and Demand Study states that the largest requirement for affordable housing by property size in the Rural Carlisle East Housing Market Area is for 45.9% 2-bed properties, followed by 24.1% 3-bed.

6. Officer's Report

Assessment

6.1 The relevant planning policies against which the application is required to be assessed are Policies DP1, H1, CP3, CP5, CP12 and T1 of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2001-2016. The proposal raises the following planning issues:

1. Whether The Proposal Would Be Acceptable In Principle

6.2 The proposal is seeking to erect two new dwellings within a field that is

located approximately 350m from the edge of Warwick Bridge. Whilst dwellings adjoin the site to the north, south and west, the area is characterised by sporadic development, with dwellings interspersed with gaps. Given that the site is not located within or adjacent to a settlement (it is approximately 350m to the edge of Warwick Bridge), the proposal would be contrary to Policies DP1 and H1 of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2001-2016.

- 6.3 Para 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It also states that Local Planning Authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside, unless there are special circumstances. The applicant has put forward a number of reasons why he considers that the erection of a dwelling on this site should be permitted:

- one of the dwellings would be an affordable bungalow and an additional affordable dwelling would be provided on a further site (14/0332) for which there is a desperate need in the area;
- there is a dire under supply of affordable housing in the rural area and a lack of bungalows;
- there is a need to boost housing supply and greater flexibility and latitude should be given to proposals that provide additional housing;
- the NPPF has a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development';
- dwellings on this site would be within 0.3 miles of Warwick Bridge and would support services in this settlement;
- development on this site would be a logical consolidation of this characteristically developed roadside landscape;
- the scheme has been reduced from 5 dwellings to 2 dwellings in order to reflect more sympathetically the 'grain' of the surrounding housing development both along the ribbon down to Burnrigg as well as the appreciable cluster at this junction with the pedestrian access to Warwick Bridge;
- the proposed dwellings would be infill with no demonstrable significant harm;
- in landscape terms the impact would be marginal;
- the scale and layout of the houses would nestle effortlessly behind the retained mature boundary hedges;
- the benefits of the scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the marginal adverse impacts of the proposals

- 6.4 Whilst the above special circumstances are noted, these are not considered to be sufficient enough to justify the erection of new dwellings in this location. Members should note that the Council does have a five year supply of housing plus a 20% buffer and is allocating housing sites to take account of the backlog in the delivery of housing.

- 6.5 Whilst Policy H6 (Rural Exception Sites) does allow affordable housing in locations where market housing would not usually be permitted, the sites still have to be well related to the settlement where the need is identified and respect local landscape character. This site is not considered to be well related to Warwick Bridge. Indeed, the Council's Housing Development

Officer has stated that the site is not ideally located for affordable housing, in respect of proximity to public transport, services and amenities.

- 6.6 The erection of new dwellings in this location would, therefore, be contrary to policy.

2. Whether The Scale And Design Of The Proposals Would Be Acceptable

- 6.7 The application is in outline, with all matters (except access) reserved for subsequent approval. The scale and design of the dwellings would, therefore, be dealt with in a Reserved Matters application.

3. Impact Of The Proposal On The Living Conditions Of The Occupiers Of Neighbouring Dwellings

- 6.8 Given the relationship of the site to existing dwellings, any dwelling on this site would comply with the Council's standards on minimum distances between dwellings.

4. Affordable Housing

- 6.9 The site covers an area of 0.28 hectares and so an affordable housing contribution of 10% would be required. In order to deal with this requirement the applicant is proposing to provide one affordable unit on this site which would equate to 50%. He is also proposing to erect an affordable dwelling on another site (14/0332). If the two sites are considered together, this would equate to a 66% contribution. The two sites could be linked by a Section 106 Agreement if this was considered appropriate.

- 6.10 This site with or without the addition of site 14/0322 provides for affordable housing with a cross subsidy to pay for that development from open market housing. The NPPF has introduced the potential for cross subsidy of market housing to assist with affordable housing delivery. Paragraph 54 states that Local Planning Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs. This application is for only two dwellings and with application 14/0322 the total number of units is 3. This does not comply with the intention of the NPPF to assist in affordable housing delivery which is aimed at more comprehensive schemes rather than piecemeal development throughout the countryside.

- 6.11 The Council's Housing Development Officer considers that the proposed affordable dwelling would be unlikely to be suitable/ viable to a local Housing Association property. If the applicant wanted to rent the property on an affordable basis themselves, the rent must be no more than 80% of a market rent and the applicant would need to provide the council with a policy or proposal for allocating the properties to local people in need of affordable housing. The Housing Development Officer has raised concerns about the location of the housing, which he considers is not ideally located for affordable housing, in respect of public transport, services and amenities.

5. Highway Matters

- 6.12 Wetheral Parish Council has objected to the proposal on highway grounds. It notes that the access would be onto a busy road, situated just over the brow of a hill, with poor visibility.
- 6.13 County Highways, however, has no objections to the proposals subject to the imposition of conditions. This is following clarification that the roadside hedge would be set back for about 3/4 of its length to form the visibility splays and the remaining hedge fronting Burnrigg Road would be reduced in height to 1m to ensure that the two properties would be clearly visible above the line of the hedge; the access would be 4.8m wide and have a splayed tarmaced crossing of the verge which would be 10m wide at the edge of the carriageway; (the existing field gate is about 3m wide and so the proposed access would be considerably larger and would be much more distinct than existing); and to further highlight the access a black/white bollard with a red/white reflector would be installed in the verge either side of the access.

Conclusion

- 6.14 In overall terms, the proposed dwellings would be sited in a field that does not lie within or adjacent to a settlement. Whilst the applicant has put forward some special circumstances these are not considered to be sufficient enough to justify the erection of dwellings in this location. The erection of dwellings on this site would, therefore, be contrary to Policies DP1 and H1 of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2001-2016 and Paragraph 55 of the NPPF. In addition, County Highways has recommended that the application should be refused as the required visibility cannot be achieved.

7. Planning History

- 7.1 In July 2013, an outline application for the erection of 5no. dwellings (including 2no. affordable housing) was withdrawn prior to determination (13/0396).

8. Recommendation: Refuse Permission

1. **Reason:** The application site lies outside a settlement in an unsustainable location. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that Local Planning Authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. The special circumstances put forward by the applicant are not considered to be sufficient to justify new dwellings in this location. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to Policies DP1 & H1 of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2001-2016 and Paragraphs 54 and 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
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No.	Date	Revision	Initial

ALPHA DESIGN

Architectural Services
 Member of the Chartered Institute of
 Architectural Technologists

Tel: 01900 829199 email: go@edcumbria.co.uk

Project

LAND ADJACENT TO 'GREENACRES',
 WARWICK BRIDGE,
 CARLISLE

Client

NIGEL THOMPSON
 DEVELOPMENTS LTD

Drawing

REVISED SITE PLAN

Scale 1:200 @ A1 Drawn GB

Checked Date FEBRUARY 2014

Drawing No.

13/01/790 - 04

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