

UTT/14/3791/FUL (LITTLE BARDFIELD)

(Referred to Committee by Cllr Perry if refusal due to impact on community and sustainability)

PROPOSAL: **Erection of 1 no. detached dwelling.**

LOCATION: **Land East Of Guivers, West Of Three Chimneys,
Little Bardfield Road, Little Bardfield.**

APPLICANT: **Mr R Jones.**

AGENT: **Mr D Walker.**

EXPIRY DATE: **10 February 2015.**

CASE OFFICER: **Samantha Stephenson.**

1. NOTATION

1.1 Outside Development Limits; adjacent Grade II listed building.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

2.1 This application site is located centrally in the small village of Little Bardfield on the southern side of Little Bardfield Road; this side of the road has an open loose knit pattern of development compared to the northern side which is much more dense. It relates to a rectangular shaped area of land that has an area of 570m², a road frontage of 30m and a maximum depth of 20m. It was once part of curtilage of Three Chimneys, the adjacent listed building, but is now in separate ownership. There are existing dwellings to the east, west and north with a cricket pitch and open countryside to the south. The land is currently very overgrown and unused with a number of trees and hedging to all boundaries, there is a small gated access.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 It is proposed to erect a two storey dwelling on this site. The dwelling would have three bedrooms and a footprint of approximately 75m². The dwelling would have maximum dimensions of 9.5m in width, 9.5m in depth with a ridge height of 7m. Proposed materials are brick, render, weatherboarding and clay tiles.

3.2 There would be two parking spaces and a cartlodge, the existing access would be modified to improve entrance visibility splays involving the removal of part of the existing hedge.

3.3 However there are discrepancies on the submitted plans that would need to be addressed should the proposal be recommended for approval these are;
The west elevation plan shows two windows at first floor level however on the submitted floor plan only one window is shown
The south elevation plan shows two openings on the ground floor however the floor plan shows three.

4. APPLICANT'S CASE

- 4.1 Outlined in Design and Access Statement, also submitted is a Lifetime Homes Statement, Protected Species Survey & Supporting Statement.

5. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- 5.1 UTT/1209/98/OP Erection of two-storey dwelling and garage. Refused 10.12.98 and dismissed at Appeal.
- 5.2 UTT/14/1958/FUL Erection of 1 no. detached dwelling. Refused 12.09.14.

6. POLICIES

6.1 National Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

6.2 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

- Policy S7 - The Countryside
- Policy GEN1 - Access
- Policy GEN2 - Design
- Policy GEN7 - Nature Conservation
- Policy GEN8 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- Policy ENV2 - Development affecting Listed Buildings
- SPD Accessible Homes and Playspace
- SPD Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Uttlesford Local Parking Standards 2013

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

- 7.1 Proposed dwelling is appropriate to “infill” what has been a long standing gap in the build line. Application is well presented and would sympathetically fit amongst the existing varied styles of adjacent properties. It is less so than the planning application recently approved for an additional building at “Fridays”. In relation to previously lodged objections the term “loose grouping” is in appropriate as it is being applied to this one gap in the existing build line. The proposed property would not “adversely affect the appearance of the village” but to contrary would remove what is currently an overgrown distraction. Misleading and irrelevant to refer to “unsustainable due to inaccessibility to local services”, all of the properties in Little Bardfield suffer from inaccessibility to local services but very few move away. No one walks to Thaxted or Great Bardfield as there are no safe or paved walkways out of Little Bardfield in any direction. All children of school age are either picked up by school bus or taken either directly to school or to another bus stop in Thaxted. The Parish Council fully supports this application. Expired 20.01.15.

8. CONSULTATIONS

ECC Ecology

- 8.1 Thank you for consulting us on the above application. I note the Ecology Survey dated November 2014. The report found the site to be unsuitable for protected species and considers no further surveys to be necessary. I agree with these findings. I have no objections to the proposals. Expired 13.01.15.

ECC Highways

- 8.2 From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal as shown in principle on Drawing No. 1109/PL02 is acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to conditions. Expired 13.01.15.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 16 Neighbours were notified. Consultation expired 20.01.15.
5 responses objecting to the application were received. Comments as follows;
Planning application was refused in September 2014 and the re-submission provides no substantial reason for the decision to be altered.

Site is not brownfield.

Development is not sensitive infilling. Site is of historic architectural merit; a modern chalet type property will detract from the appearance of this part of the village and be out of keeping, out of character, adverse impact on adjacent listed building. Will dwarf adjacent site Three Chimneys.

Site is not an eyesore

Road is dangerous with bends and speeding traffic another access opposite an existing access would be extremely dangerous.

Site is unsustainable due to inaccessibility of local services, Little Bardfield is 1.6km from the nearest local services. Little Bardfield has a church but no other local amenities. There is no footpath and the road from Little Bardfield to Great Bardfield and from Little Bardfield to Thaxted is a narrow and winding road.

There is no regular public transport. There is a community bus which runs only on a Wednesday. The bus picks up from Little Bardfield at 10.17am on route to Braintree. It then returns from Braintree at 13.16pm. This means we have one bus out and one bus back - hardly adequate. Residents rely primarily on private car as a means of accessing work, school, shops etc.

Application not discussed at a Parish Council meeting, no opportunity for local residents to discuss application.

Rising land elevation of site and subsequent run-off cause periodic flooding on the road, this will be exacerbated by development of a property on this site.

New dwelling would block sunlight of existing dwelling opposite and overlook it.

Plot is haven for wildlife.

10. APPRAISAL

The issues to consider in the determination of the application are:

- A Principle of development / Design (NPPF, ULP Policies S7, GEN2 and SPDs "Accessible Homes and Playspace and "Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy";
- B Whether access and parking arrangements would be satisfactory (ULP Policies GEN1 and GEN8, UDC Parking Standards);

- C Impact on adjacent residential amenity (ULP Policy GEN2).
- D Impact on adjacent listed building (ULP Policy ENV2)
- E Nature Conservation (ULP Policy GEN7)

A Principle of development and whether the proposed works would be of an appropriate design and scale

- 10.1 The application site lies beyond the Development Limits on land classed as countryside where policies are generally restrictive. ULP Policy S7 of the adopted local plan states that the countryside will be protected for its own sake and that planning permission will only be granted for development that needs to take place there or is appropriate to a rural area where dwellings are not normally considered as an exception to policy. The exception to this constraint is whether the proposal would qualify as an appropriate infill site as a small gap within a small group of dwellings outside development limits, but close to settlements subject to being acceptable in terms of design etc.
- 10.2 Officers are in agreement with the Appeal Decision APP/C1570/A/99/1017593/P8 on this site in 1998 in which it was stated that Little Bardfield is a small village within a predominantly linear form. Most of the development is on the north side of the road which runs through the village. Three Chimneys, a Grade II listed building, is one of a widely spaced group of three dwellings on the south side of the road. The village does not have a 2-sided street, there is a continuous ribbon of development on the north side of the road but the loose group of dwellings containing Three Chimneys has a character which is transitional between the built-up north side of the road and the surrounding countryside. I am of the opinion that the 55m wide gap between Three Chimneys and Guivers is too wide to count as a small gap in terms paragraph 6.13 and 6.14 of the Housing Chapter of the Uttlesford Local Plan. More importantly I consider that the erection of another house in that gap would begin to consolidate the existing loose grouping and would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the village and on the setting of the adjacent listed building. Even though much of the frontage hedge is proposed to be retained, the house would be clearly visible from the road, as demonstrated by the site block plan/elevation sketch submitted with the planning application. The proposal would not therefore be acceptable in terms of design, siting and appearance.
- 10.3 LPA's are now required under government policy to grant permission in favour of sustainable development where they cannot currently demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing within their districts. The Council is currently able to demonstrate a five year housing supply within its district, nevertheless even when the Council has a 5 year land supply it is important for the Council to continue to consider, and where appropriate, approve development which is sustainable, to ensure delivery in the future and to ensure that the level of housing supply is robust and sustained over time in the years to come.
- 10.4 Paragraphs 7 and 14 of the NPPF set out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The core principles of the NPPF set out the three strands of sustainable development. These are the economic role, social role and environmental role. The NPPF specifically states that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. To achieve sustainable development economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously. It is therefore necessary to consider these three principles in this case.
- 10.5 Economic role: The NPPF identifies this as contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, supporting growth and innovation and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of

infrastructure. Beyond the activity of its construction this proposal for one new home would not appear to deliver a lasting economic role.

- 10.6 Social role: The NPPF identifies this as supplying required housing and creating high quality built environment with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being. If permitted the proposal might make a contribution towards the delivery of the housing needed for Uttlesford District as a whole. However implementation of permission for one three bedroomed dwelling could not be considered to significantly address elements of the pressing locally arising need for a variety of new homes in and around the community of Little Bardfield. Indeed the Village Design Statement states that new construction should be tailored towards the elderly, first time buyers and low cost housing.
- 10.7 In assessing the sustainability of the application site in terms of its accessibility to local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being. Paragraph 29 of the NPPF advises - "...The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas". Little Bardfield is not listed as a defined settlement within the adopted local plan where it does not benefit from any local services or facilities. This lack of local provision and distance from a full range of services and employment opportunities is recognised by the applicant, although the applicant has argued that the site's location halfway between Thaxted and Great Bardfield and the existence of a local bus service through the village (times/frequency not specified) makes the site sustainable. However, whilst noting this, this is not a location that has good accessibility by a range of transport modes, there is a community bus but this runs only on a Wednesday. The bus picks up from Little Bardfield at 10.17am on route to Braintree. It then returns from Braintree at 13.16pm. Residents are likely to rely heavily on private vehicles for most journeys, the access road is very narrow, with blind bends on route and there are no pedestrian footpaths. It is considered from this and lack of service provision that the proposal would not represent a sustainable form of development at this location.
- 10.8 Environmental role: The NPPF identifies this as contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, including, inter alia, improvements to biodiversity and minimising waste. At present the application site is a well hedged area that represents an important gap in this sporadic pattern of development. In that guise it contributes to the visual and functional openness of the countryside which Policy S7 of the ULP seeks to protect. It follows that the site is fundamentally unsustainable in environmental terms.

B Whether access and parking arrangements would be satisfactory

- 10.9 The proposed access arrangement has been assessed by ECC Highways who have not objected to the intensification of the existing access on highway grounds despite the bends in the road either side of the site subject to existing visibility sight lines being improved where a 2.m wide visibility band should be achieved across the entire site frontage. As such, the proposal would comply with ULP Policy GEN1. Sufficient parking space is shown within the proposed hardstanding parking area to accommodate 3+ cars given the three bedroomed size of the dwelling, whilst sufficient on-site turning would be able to be achieved also. The proposal would therefore comply with ULP Policy GEN8 and UDC Parking Standards. .

C Impact on adjacent residential amenity (ULP Policy GEN2, ULP Policy ENV2)

10.10 With regards to the design, the submitted details indicate that the site would be capable of accommodating the indicated dwelling without impacting on the amenity of neighbouring properties. However if this were to be approved a condition would be imposed requiring the two first floor windows on the western elevation be obscure glazed to prevent overlooking to Guivers. The proposed dwelling would have sufficient amenity space in accordance with Local Plan Policy GEN2 and as advised by the Essex Design Guide (adopted 2005).

D Impact on adjacent listed building (ULP Policy ENV2)

10.11 Three Chimneys, a Grade II listed building lies adjacent to the proposed site; it is one of a widely spaced group of three dwellings on the south side of the road. The village does not have a 2-sided street, there is a continuous ribbon of development on the north side of the road but the loose group of dwellings containing Three Chimneys has a character which is transitional between the built-up north side of the road and the surrounding countryside. The erection of another house in that gap would begin to consolidate the existing loose grouping and would have an adverse effect on the setting of the adjacent listed building.

E Nature Conservation (ULP Policy GEN7)

10.12 Policy GEN7 seeks to ensure that development would not have a harmful effect on wildlife. As part of the application a Biodiversity Questionnaire and Protected Species Survey have been submitted. As part of the determination of the application the County Ecologist has been consulted who commented that as the report found the site to be unsuitable for protected species and considers no further surveys to be necessary, there are no objections.

11. CONCLUSION

The following is a summary of the main reasons for the recommendation:

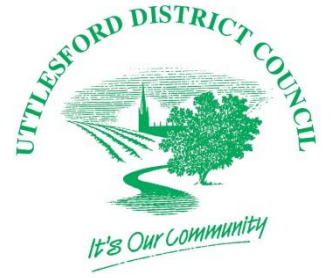
- A The erection of a house on this site would begin to consolidate the existing loose grouping and would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the village and on the setting of the adjacent listed building.
- B The site is not in a suitable or accessibly "sustainable" location accessibility to local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

RECOMMENDATION – REFUSAL

REFUSE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS

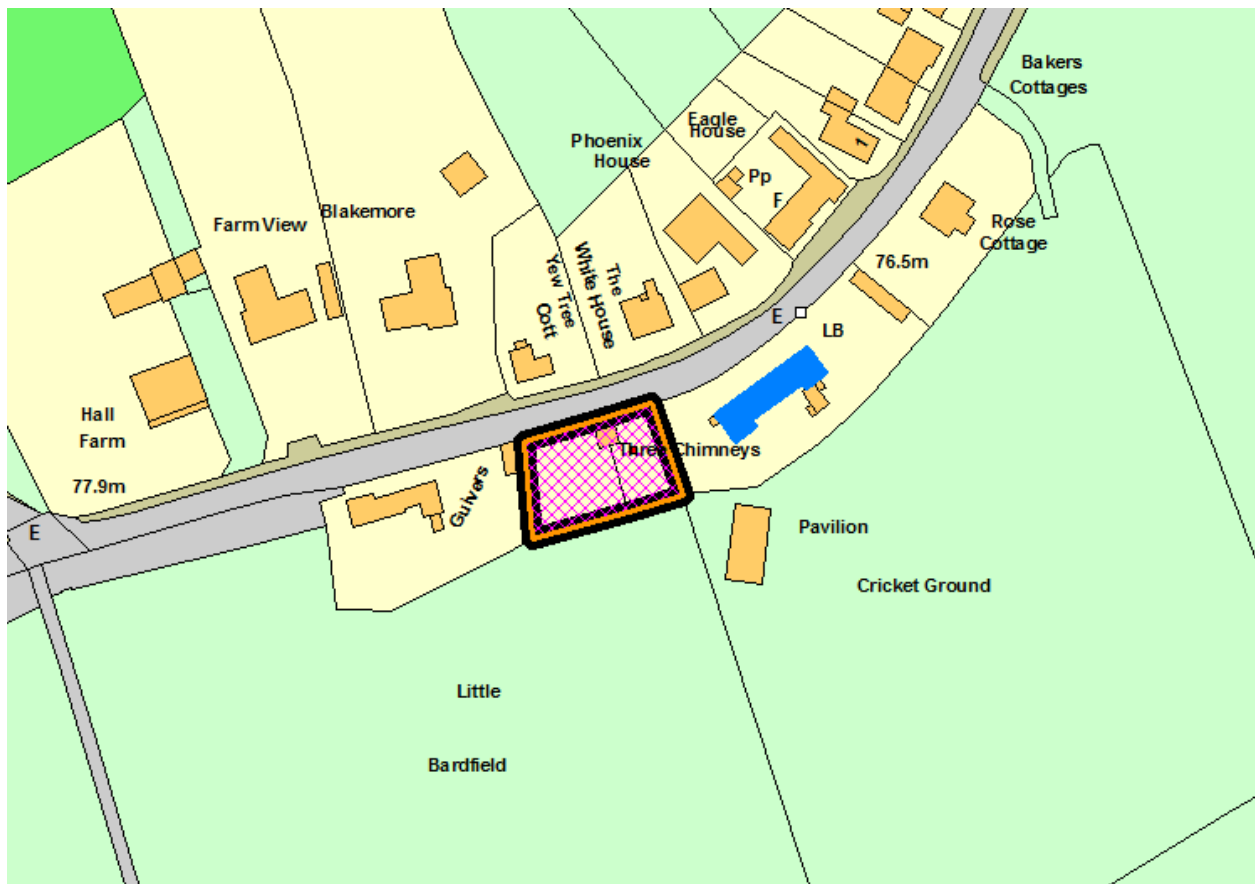
1. The application site is situated within a location where new development would begin to consolidate the existing loose grouping on the south side of the road and would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the village and on the setting of the adjacent listed building contrary to Policies S7, GEN2 and ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).
2. The application site forms part of the open countryside and the proposed development is fundamentally unsustainable by virtue of the location's relative inaccessibility to local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policy S7 of the

Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) and Paragraph 17 - "Core Planning Principles" (fifth, eleventh and twelfth bullet points) within the National Planning Policy Framework.



Application no.: UTT/14/3791/FUL

Address: Land East Of Guivers West of Three Chimneys, Little Bardfield Road,
Little Bardfield



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Organisation: Uttlesford District Council

Department: Planning

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