UTT/15/1732/FUL (GREAT CANFIELD)

(Referred to Committee by Cllr K Artus. Reason: The issues need to be fully discussed by the committee.)

PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 7 no. detached

dwellings with garages and associated landscaping

LOCATION: Canfield Nursery, Bullocks Lane, Takeley

APPLICANT: Ms Jopson

AGENT: Mr M McGarr (English Architectural)

EXPIRY DATE: 28 August 2015

CASE OFFICER: Luke Mills

1. NOTATION

1.1 Countryside.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

2.1 The application site is located off Bullocks Lane in the hamlet of Hope End. It comprises a former nursery, which contains redundant greenhouses and workshop buildings.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The application is for planning permission to demolish the existing buildings and erect 7 detached dwellings, with associated garaging. Also part of the proposal is a new vehicular access, a meadow and a wildlife refuge.

4. APPLICANT'S CASE

- 4.1 It is suggested in the applicant's statement that:
 - The proposal would make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area
 - The proposal utilises previously developed land
 - The Parish Council was engaged early in the process

5. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- 5.1 Planning permission was refused under application number UTT/14/3347/FUL for the redevelopment of the site to erect two dwellings.
- 5.2 Since the above decision, a Lawful Development Certificate has been granted under UTT/15/0429/CLE for the industrial/commercial use of buildings and land in the northern part of the site.

6. POLICIES

6.1 National Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework

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 ENV14 Contaminated Land
- Policy H1 Housing Development
- Policy H9 Affordable Housing
- Policy H10 Housing Mix

6.3 Guidance

- SPD Accessible Homes and Playspace
- Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice
- Local Residential Parking Standards
- Developer Contributions Guidance
- The Essex Design Guide
- Great Canfield Village Design Statement

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

- 7.1 Great Canfield Parish Council supports the application, citing the following reasons:
 - Appropriate use of land associated with a now-redundant business use
 - The Parish Council has negotiated the access arrangements
- 7.2 The Parish Council requests that a condition be used to remove permitted development rights from all seven dwellings. It also requests the use of a legal agreement to prevent further development on the land proposed as grazing meadow and wildlife refuge.

8. CONSULTATIONS

Thames Water

8.1 No objection.

Highway Authority

- 8.2 No objection, subject to conditions relating to:
 - Construction traffic
 - Widening and construction of vehicular access prior to occupation of development
 - Surface water runoff
 - Surface treatment
 - Compliance with parking standards
 - Compliance with parking space standards

8.3 A further comment was made, that compared to what the lawful use of the site and the associated vehicles and movements could generate, the proposed development would reduce the vehicle sizes and movements to and from the site to the benefit of all users of the highway.

Essex County Council Ecological Consultant

- 8.4 No objection, subject to conditions relating to:
 - Construction Environmental Management Plan
 - Biodiversity Management Plan

Stansted Airport

- 8.5 No objection, subject to conditions relating to:
 - Landscaping scheme
 - Sustainable drainage system details

Access and Equalities Officer

8.6 The proposal complies with the SPD entitled 'Accessible Homes and Playspace'.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 Neighbours were notified of the application by letter and a notice was displayed near the site.
- 9.2 The submitted representations indicate that there is considerable support for the proposal. The following points have been raised:
 - Valuable contribution to local housing supply
 - The proposal would improve the appearance of the site
 - The proposal is well designed
 - The proposal would make use of previously developed land rather than open countryside
 - Positive effect on local economy
 - A financial contribution would be paid to the Parish Council for access to the site, having a positive effect on the community
 - Public open space would be beneficial to the community
 - Other former nursery sites in the District have been redeveloped to provide housing
 - Housing is preferable to commercial uses
 - Fewer vehicle movements than nursery use
 - The proposal is preferable to the alternative of a gypsy/traveller site
 - The alternative of a gypsy/traveller site would not comply with planning policies
 - The site is suitable for housing or a gypsy/traveller site
- 9.3 The letters written in support of the application also raise the following concerns:
 - The land between Ashcroft, Lime Tree Cottage and Plot 5 should be secured as public open space
 - The new access should not join the existing access road
 - No further, high-density development should be permitted
 - Loss of trees to facilitate new access

- Safety of vehicular access
- Lack of security as a result of the new access
- Damage to highway verges from construction traffic
- The site is not currently an eyesore
- 9.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the alleged alternative use of the site as a gypsy/traveller site is not a material consideration in the determination of this application. Planning permission is required for such a use and no application has been submitted. In any event, all planning applications must be assessed on their own merits so the possibility of another development coming forward should have no bearing on this decision.

10. APPRAISAL

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

- A Accordance with the development plan
- B Material considerations

A Accordance with the development plan

Location of housing

10.1 Policy H1 indicates where housing should be located during the Plan period, including sites within development limits, previously developed land and allocated sites beyond development limits. Policy S7 prevents most housing beyond development limits, in order to protect the countryside by restricting development to that which is necessary or appropriate in a rural area. The proposal breaches these policies by introducing housing, an urban form of development, to a countryside location.

Sustainable transport

10.2 Policy GEN1 requires development to encourage movement by means other than driving a car. The nearest settlement with services, facilities and employment opportunities is Takeley, the centre of which is a 1.6 km journey to the north-west. It is considered that the lack of footpaths and street lighting along Bullocks Lane and Great Canfield Road, which account for approximately 1 km of the journey, would discourage walking. However, there is a reasonable probability that occupiers would cycle. Furthermore, regular bus services operate from the B1256 in Takeley to Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Airport and Great Dunmow. Overall, it is considered that there would be a realistic choice of sustainable transport modes. This conclusion is consistent with appeal decisions on application numbers UTT/1044/06/OP and UTT/12/5809/FUL, which relate to nearby sites.

Road safety

10.3 Policy GEN1 includes a number of requirements in the interests of road safety. The proposal includes a new vehicular access off Bullocks Lane, which would join a shared driveway within the site which would also connect to the existing access. Taking into account the comments of the Highway Authority, it is considered that the proposal would not compromise road safety. The suggested road safety conditions are generally appropriate.

Design

- 10.4 Policy GEN2 requires compatibility with the design of surrounding buildings. While the dwellings are scattered within the site, compared with the existing linear pattern of development, they would be laid out at a low density with similar building and plot sizes. They would not have a significant effect on views from the street, but would in any event be compatible with the varied designs of surrounding buildings. The dwellings would reflect local distinctiveness with respect to their form, use of dormer windows and the selection of materials including brick, weatherboard, render, plain clay tiles and slates.
- 10.5 Policy GEN2 requires developments to provide an environment which meets the reasonable needs of all potential users, and requires compliance with supplementary planning guidance. This includes the Supplementary Planning Document entitled 'Accessible Homes and Playspace'. Taking into account the comments of the Access and Equalities Officer, it is considered that the proposal complies with the accessibility requirements of the SPD.
- 10.6 Policy GEN2 requires development to have regard to guidance on layout and design adopted as supplementary planning guidance. The Essex Design Guide provides such guidance, including on garden sizes and loss of privacy and daylight affecting residential occupiers. The proposed gardens would far exceed the minimum standard of 100 sq m, and the dwellings would be designed and laid out to prevent contravention of the guidance on loss of privacy and daylight.

Biodiversity

10.7 Policy GEN7 seeks to avoid harmful effects on wildlife. Taking into account the comments of the Ecological Consultant, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would cause harm to wildlife. Conditions should be used to secure appropriate consideration of biodiversity during construction and in the design of the development.

Vehicle parking

10.8 Policy GEN8 requires vehicle parking provision in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. These are contained in 'Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice' and 'Local Residential Parking Standards'. The standards indicate that the 3-bed dwellings should be served by at least 2 parking spaces, and that the 4-bed dwellings should have at least 3 spaces. The proposed garages meet the minimum size standards of 3 x 7 m. Taking into account the proposed garaging and large driveways, the minimum standards would be met. While the Highway Authority has suggested conditions in relation to vehicle parking, these are considered unnecessary because the submitted plans demonstrate compliance.

Contaminated land

10.9 Policy ENV14 requires appropriate investigation where it is known or strongly suspected that a site is contaminated. Taking into account the comments from the Environmental Health Officer on the previous application, it is considered that the site may be contaminated. It is therefore considered appropriate to use a condition to secure appropriate investigation and, if necessary, remediation.

Affordable housing

10.10 Policy H9 states that the Council will seek to negotiate on a site by site basis an element of affordable housing of 40% of the total provision of housing on appropriate allocated and windfall sites, having regard to the up to date Housing Needs Survey, market and site considerations. The most recent evidence on affordable housing provision is contained in the Council's 'Developer Contributions Guidance Document', which requires developments of fewer than 10 dwellings with a gross floor space exceeding 1000 sq m to make a financial contribution of £250,000 towards affordable housing provision. This applies to the proposed development so a legal agreement would be necessary to secure payment.

Housing mix

10.11 Policy H10 indicates that the development must provide a significant proportion of market housing comprising small properties. Small properties are those with 2 or 3 bedrooms. Only 2 of the 7 dwellings would have three bedrooms or less, in breach of this policy.

B Material Considerations

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

10.12The latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment was published in March 2013. It indicates on page 35 that the size mix of housing requirement in Uttlesford is mainly 3 or 4 bedrooms, with some requirement for 5-bed dwellings. It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with this required mix, overcoming the above breach of Policy H10.

Great Canfield Village Design Statement

10.13The Village Design Statement identifies that Hope End is the largest; most densely occupied and most stylistically mixed part of Great Canfield. It identifies that traffic and pressure from both business and residential development threaten the integrity of the hamlet, and notes concerns over the future of the nursery site. Taking into account the above design assessment, it is considered that the proposal respects its surroundings and accords with the design guidelines for new buildings. These include a requirement to use traditional materials, and an encouragement for the use of chimneys.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 10.14Paragraph 14 explains that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This states that, where relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole.
- 10.15 Policy H1, which identifies locations for housing, is out of date because it only relates to the period 2000 2011. Related to this, Policy S7 contains an 'in principle' restriction on certain types of development in the countryside, including housing. It is therefore considered that these relevant policies are out of date with respect to this proposal. The other relevant policies have varying degrees of consistency with the NPPF.
- 10.16An assessment against the policies of the NPPF is made below.

- Core planning principles:

- 10.17Paragraph 17 states that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. It is considered that the proposal would have both positive and negative effects on the character of its countryside setting.
- 10.18The positive effects would be the reduction in visual impact of the buildings compared with the existing greenhouses and workshop buildings, and the provision of a meadow, wildlife refuge and woodland which would assimilate the development into its rural surroundings better than the existing site. Full details of the landscaping would need to be secured using a condition.
- 10.19The negative effect arises from the change in character of the site, from a rural enterprise which has an inherent association with the countryside to a more urban form of development which could be located in a town or village. This would be mitigated to some extent by the low density of development, which is compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and its location adjacent to an existing hamlet.

- Promoting sustainable transport:

- 10.20 Paragraph 34 encourages the use of sustainable modes of transport, although it accepts that opportunities are more limited in rural areas. It is considered that this policy is no more onerous than Policy GEN1 above, so the above assessment demonstrates compliance.
- 10.21 Paragraph 39 updates national policy on parking standards. It does not significantly alter the approach which should be taken to setting residential parking standards so it is considered that the above assessment in relation to Policy GEN8 demonstrates compliance.
- 10.22 Paragraph 41 requires identification and protection of sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice. Taking into account the comments of Stansted Airport, it is considered that landscaping on the site could affect aerodrome safeguarding. Relevant wording could be inserted into the landscaping condition to ensure this issue is adequately addressed. While the comments refer to a potential sustainable drainage system, this does not form part of the proposal.

- Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes:

10.23 Paragraph 55 aims to steer rural housing to locations which would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, and to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside. Taking into account the above assessment in relation to local services and facilities, and the location of the site adjacent to a hamlet, it is considered that the proposal complies with paragraph 55.

- Requiring good design:

10.24 Paragraph 58 includes a number of design criteria, which should be met. Taking into account the above assessment of design, it is considered that the proposal would meet the criteria in relation to design and layout, and the creation of a safe and accessible environment.

- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment:

- 10.25 Paragraph 111 encourages the re-use of land that has been previously developed. The workshop buildings and associated land in the northern part of the site have a lawful industrial/commercial use. Therefore, development on this land is supported by the NPPF.
- 10.26 Paragraph 118 is permissive of development if significant harm to biodiversity can be adequately mitigated. Taking into account the above assessment in relation to Policy GEN7, it is considered that this requirement would be met.
- 10.27 Paragraphs 120 and 121 seek to prevent unacceptable risks from pollution, and remediation of contaminated land. Taking into account the above assessment in relation to Policy ENV14, it is considered that the proposal complies with this policy subject to appropriate conditions.

- Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals:

10.28 Paragraph 144 indicates the development should not normally be permitted if it might constrain future mineral workings. A site at Little Bullocks Farm (Ref: A23) has been identified in the Minerals Local Plan as an extension to the Crumps Farm Quarry, approximately 90 m to the east of the application site. Taking into account the comments of the Minerals Planning Authority on application number UTT/12/5809/FUL, it is considered that landscaping could be used to reduce the visual impact of the quarry extension. This can be achieved with some relevant wording within a landscaping condition. It is likely that any planning permission for the quarry extension would suitably control noise and dust impacts, taking into account the survey undertaken in connection with application number UTT/12/5809/FUL during the appeal process.

11. CONCLUSION

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

- A The proposal does not accord with the development plan, and it is necessary to consider whether material considerations indicate that permission should be granted.
- As relevant policies in the development plan are out of date, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework applies. There would be a negative effect on the character of the countryside from the replacement of rural buildings with housing. However, there would be positive effects from a reduction in visual impact, the introduction of appropriate rural landscaping and the use of some previously developed land. The adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits so planning permission should be granted in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION – <u>CONDITIONAL APPROVAL SUBJECT TO S106 LEGAL AGREEMENT:</u>

(I) The applicant be informed that the Planning Committee would be minded to refuse planning permission for the reasons set out in paragraph (III) unless the freeholder owner enters into a binding obligation to cover the matters set out below under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, in a form to be prepared

by the Assistant Chief Executive - Legal, in which case he shall be authorised to conclude such an obligation to secure the following:

- (i) secure a financial contribution of £250,000 towards the provision of affordable housing
- (ii) pay Council's reasonable legal costs
- (II) In the event of such an obligation being made, the Assistant Director Planning and Building Control shall be authorised to grant permission subject to the conditions set out below
- (III) If the freehold owner shall fail to enter into such an obligation by 29 September 2015 the Assistant Director of Planning and Building Control shall be authorised to refuse permission in his discretion anytime thereafter for the following reasons:
 - (i) Lack of suitable provision of affordable housing

Conditions

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2. Prior to commencement of the development, details of the external finishes (including samples and/or photographs as appropriate) must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - REASON: To ensure compatibility with the character of the area, in accordance with Policy S3 and Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005). This condition must be 'pre-commencement' to ensure that the development is only carried out in accordance with the above details.
- 3. Prior to commencement of the development, details of hard and soft landscaping (including retained landscape features, planting, hard surfaces and boundary treatment) must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping should take account of the visual impact associated with Site A23 in the Essex Minerals Local Plan. All hard and soft landscape works must be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - All planting, seeding or turfing and soil preparation comprised in the above details of landscaping must be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings, the completion of the development, or in agreed phases whichever is the sooner, and any plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased must be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation. All landscape works must be carried out in accordance with the guidance contained in British Standards, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure compatibility with the character of the area and in the interests of aerodrome safeguarding, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. This condition must be 'pre-commencement' to ensure that the development is only carried out in accordance with the above details.

- 4. No development shall take place until an assessment of the nature and extent of contamination has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This assessment must be undertaken by a competent person, and must assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. Moreover, it must include:
 - (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination
 - (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to: human health, service lines and pipes, adjoining land, and the water environment
 - (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

The assessment must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11' and with the Essex Technical Guidance for the redevelopment of land affected by contamination third edition.

REASON: To ensure that site is suitable for residential habitation, in accordance with Policy ENV14 of Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) and the National Planning Policy Framework. This condition must be 'pre-commencement' because contamination is an important issue which may require further works to the site prior to the implementation of the scheme and details of an investigation is required to be submitted and approved by the authority.

5. Should the details approved under Condition 4 identify that remediation is required, no development shall take place until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, site management procedures and a timetable of works. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

REASON: To ensure that site is suitable for residential habitation, in accordance with Policy ENV14 of Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) and the National Planning Policy Framework. This condition must be 'pre-commencement' because contamination is an important issue which may require further works to the site prior to the implementation of the scheme and details of an investigation is required to be submitted and approved by the authority.

6. Should a remediation scheme be approved in accordance with Condition 5, the approved remediation scheme must be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable of works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a validation report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that site is suitable for residential habitation in accordance with Policy ENV14 of Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005)

7. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority and once the Local Planning Authority has identified the part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination development must be halted on that part of the site. An assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Condition 4, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme, together with a timetable for its implementation, must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the requirements of Condition 5. The measures in the approved remediation scheme must then be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a validation report must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with Condition 6.

REASON: To ensure that site is suitable for residential habitation in accordance with Policy ENV14 of Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005)

8. No development shall take place (including demolition, groundworks, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The CEMP: Biodiversity shall include the following:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities;
- b) Identification of biodiversity protection zones;
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements);
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features;
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works:
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication;
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works or similarly competent person; and the
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP: Biodiversity shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the construction period of the development hereby approved.

REASON: To make appropriate provision for conserving and enhancing the natural environment within the approved development, in the interests of biodiversity and for compliance with Local Plan Policies. This condition must be 'pre-commencement' to ensure that the construction process is carried out in accordance with the approved details.

9. No development shall take place until a Biodiversity Mitigation and Compensation Plan and a Biodiversity Management Plan have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The Biodiversity Management Plan must include:

- a) A description and evaluation of features to be managed;
- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management;
- c) Aims and objectives of management;
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving the aims and objectives of the project;
- e) Prescriptions for management actions;
- f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period);
- g) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan;
- h) On-going monitoring and remedial measures.

The development hereby permitted must be implemented in accordance with the approved plan.

REASON: To conserve and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. This condition must be 'pre-commencement' to ensure that the development is only carried out in accordance with the above details.

- 10. Prior to commencement of the development, the areas within the curtilage of the site for the purpose of loading/unloading/reception and storage of building materials and manoeuvring of all vehicles, including construction traffic shall be provided clear of the highway.
 - REASON: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy GEN1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) and the National Planning Policy Framework. This condition must be 'pre-commencement' to ensure that the construction process is carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 11. Prior to occupation of the development, the existing vehicular access must be widened to 5.5 metres at its junction with the highway and must be retained at that width for 6 metres within the site and must be provided with an appropriate dropped kerb vehicular crossing of the highway verge.
 - REASON: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy GEN1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 12. Prior to occupation of the development, the proposed vehicular access must be constructed at right angles to the highway boundary and to the existing carriageway. The width of the access at its junction with the highway must not be less than 5.5 metres, must be retained at that width for 6 metres within the site and must be provided with an appropriate dropped kerb vehicular crossing of the highway verge.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy GEN1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Application number: UTT/15/1732/FUL

Address: Canfield Nursery Bullocks Lane Takeley





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