

**Case No:** 0900034FUL (FULL PLANNING APPLICATION)

**Proposal:** ERECTION OF DWELLING AND STABLES

**Location:** LAND REAR OF PRINCE OF WALES RECTORY ROAD

**Applicant:** MR J WADSWORTH

**Grid Ref:** 537055 274328

**Date of Registration:** 14.01.2009

**Parish:** BLUNTISHAM

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### RECOMMENDATION - REFUSAL

#### 1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

1.1 This site is located on the southern side of the A1123, to the rear of the Prince of Wales P.H. It measures approximately 30m by 48m and has a 58m long access to the main road. Within the site there is a range of pole barns used as loose boxes, and a modern storage building constructed of profiled sheeting. The grazing/paddock land to the south of the site is within the applicant's ownership. Development along this side of Rectory Road is, apart from the public house, made up from detached and semi-detached dwellings fronting the highway with their gardens and open countryside to the south.

1.2 The proposal is to demolish some of the small agricultural buildings, and to erect a single dwelling with attached stables. The buildings are to be laid out in a "u" shape and are designed mainly as single storey but with a roof space element to provide bedroom accommodation with the maximum height to the ridge being 7m. The design is intended to follow a farm building style, and will include a substantial amount of timber cladding for the walls. Other materials used will be brick and pantiles. The stables will occupy one wing of the "u", and will adjoin the retained buildings. Three parking spaces will be provided, and an access to the paddocks will be retained on the eastern side of the site.

#### 2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 **PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.

2.2 **PPS3 – "Housing" (2006)** sets out how the planning system supports the growth of housing completions needed in England.

2.3 **PPS7 – Sustainable development in rural areas (2004)**. Sets out the Government's planning policies for rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas and makes clear that the overall

aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty.

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

### 3. PLANNING POLICIES

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance, Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live

3.1 East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008) Policies viewable at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk> then follow links to Planning, Regional Planning then Related Documents

- **ENV7** – Quality in the Built Environment – requires new development to be of a high quality which complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration.

3.2 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) Saved policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning policy and Structure Plan 2003.

- None relevant

3.3 Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995) Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95)

- **H23** Outside Settlements - general presumption against housing development outside environmental limits with the exception of specific dwellings required for the efficient management of agriculture, forestry and horticulture.
- **H31**: “Residential privacy and amenity standards” – indicates that new dwellings will only be permitted where appropriate standards of privacy can be maintained and adequate parking provided.
- **En17** “Development in the countryside” – development in the countryside will be restricted to that which is essential to the efficient operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, permitted mineral extraction, outdoor recreation or public utility services.
- **En25**: “General Design Criteria” – indicates that the District Council will expect new development to respect the scale, form, materials and design of established buildings in the locality and make provision for landscaping and amenity areas.

3.4 Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002) Saved policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan) - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002)

- **STR1** – Huntingdonshire settlement hierarchy
- **STR5** – Bluntisham is a group village
- **HL5** – Quality and density of development – sets out the criteria to take into account in assessing whether a proposal represents a good design and layout.
- **HL8** – Rural Housing – identifies that in group villages, groups of dwellings and infilling will be permitted on appropriate sites within the village limits and where the development is sensitive to the scale and character of the village.

3.5 Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007

- **P8** – development in the countryside is limited to that which is essential to, amongst other uses, the efficient operation of agriculture.
- **B1** – Design quality; a development proposal should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of its layout, form and contribution to the character of the area
- **B4** – Amenity; a development proposal should not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of a existing/future occupier
- **T1** – transport impacts, a development proposal should be capable of being served by safe and convenient access to the transport network for all users.

3.6 Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008

- **CS3** – The Settlement Hierarchy – Bluntisham is a smaller settlement where residential infilling will be appropriate within the built up area. Outside the built-up areas of the defined settlements is countryside and residential development will be strictly limited to that which has an essential need to be there.

3.7 The SPD Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2007 is a material consideration.

#### 4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 9900603FUL. Erection of field shelter and hay store. Approved 16th June 1999.

- 4.2 0801437FUL. Erection of dwelling and stables. This proposal was identical to the present one, but the applicant sought to justify it on agricultural grounds in that the dwelling was required for the security of the horses. An independent report commissioned by the District Council concluded that there was no justification for the dwelling in terms of the guidance contained in PPS7. The application was due to be considered by the Panel on the 13th October 2008, with a recommendation of refusal, but was withdrawn by the applicant prior to the meeting.

## **5. CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 **Bluntisham Parish Council – NO OBJECTION** (copies attached)
- 5.2 **CCC Highways – NO OBJECTION** in principle, subject to conditions relating to access width and construction; the setting back of any gates; the permanent provision of turning, parking and loading.
- 5.3 **Environmental Health Services** – comments received regarding the disposal of manure and stable waste.
- 5.4 **Building Control Officer** – suitable access required for refuse vehicles and fire brigade. Unprotected area may have been exceeded.

## **6. REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 One letter of objection has been received from the occupier of 15 Rectory Road. The following points have been raised:-
1. There would be a loss of amenity due to overlooking.
  2. The buildings will block the view of the river
  3. The proposal will set a precedent for backland development along this stretch of Rectory Road.
  4. The yard is used for a plant hire business but this could be unauthorised. The dwelling could be used as an office. Any increase in traffic would be detrimental on amenity and highway safety grounds.
  5. The increased use of the access could cause damage to adjacent properties.

## **7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

- 7.1 The main issues to consider in this instance are the principle of a dwelling in this location; the suitability of the design, scale and proportions of the proposal; the impact of the proposal on the amenities of neighbouring properties; and the highway implications.

### **Principle**

- 7.2 Policies of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 as altered by the Local Plan Alteration 2002(H23, En17, STR1 and HL8) together with the Core Strategy Submission (CS3) all indicate that housing development outside the settlement limit or built-up framework should only be permitted where there is an essential need for it to be there. These policies have their derivation in well-established national policy of which PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas is key.

- 7.3 The built up area of a settlement is defined in paragraph 5.15 of the Core Strategy, and is taken to be the existing built form but excluding buildings which are clearly detached from the main body of the village, gardens and agricultural buildings where they are on the edge of the settlement. The built up area is often more tightly drawn than the environmental limit. The applicant has commented that the site is used for stables and a yard in association with the keeping of horses, and that it is technically, in agricultural use. However, there is no evidence that these horses are used for agricultural purposes, and therefore this conclusion may be tenuous. What is clear, however, is that the site is separated from the main body of the village by the rear garden and car park of the public house, and, considering the definition contained in the Core Strategy, is clearly detached from the principal built up area of the village. If the connection with agriculture is accepted, the case that the land is outside the built up form of the village is emphasised by reference to the definition given in paragraph 5.15.
- 7.4 Para 1 of PPS7 states that 'New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled.....all development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness'.
- 7.5 Para 10 of PPS7 makes it clear that isolated new houses in the countryside require special justification for planning permission to be granted. One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time workers to be at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work.
- 7.6 The applicant has not sought to justify this application in terms an overriding need to care for the horses although this is still the reason he wishes to live on the site. An independent assessment of the applicant's case in respect of the previous application concluded that there was no agricultural justification for a dwelling in this location. The applicant's justification in respect of the current case lies with his view that the site is within the built up area of the village, and development is, therefore, consistent with the settlement strategy for the village. As argued above, this site is not within the built up area, and there is no reason to make an exception to policy in this instance.

#### **Other matters**

- 7.7 There are no objections to the demolition of a number of the existing buildings as these are of little merit, and do not enhance the character of the area. Notwithstanding the policy objections to this proposal, if the principle of residential development on the site was accepted, the layout and design of the dwelling and stables would be generally acceptable.
- 7.8 The impact upon the amenities presently enjoyed by neighbours is minimal and is only likely to relate to some additional movements and activity associated with residential occupancy. This would not be sufficient reason to justify a refusal.

- 7.9 The additional use of the access given the conditions suggested by the Highway Authority is acceptable.

### **Conclusion**

- 7.10 The site of the proposed dwelling is outside the built-up framework and settlement limits of Bluntisham and is, therefore, in the countryside where policies of restraint operate. Only where an essential need for a dwelling can be proven can such a proposal be supported. In this instance no argument on the grounds of essential need has been put forward, and the justification rests with the applicant's submission that the site is within the built form of the village.
- 7.11 Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is recommended that planning permission should be refused in this instance.

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### **8. RECOMMENDATION – REFUSE, for the following reason:**

- 8.1 The proposal would be contrary to the provisions of policy CS3 of the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008, policy P8 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007, and policies H23 and En17 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 in that development outside the environmental limits and existing built form of settlements will be restricted to that which is essential to the efficient operation of agriculture and other rural activities, alterations, replacement or changes of use of existing buildings in accordance with other policies, and limited and specific forms of development. The proposal would result in an unacceptable consolidation and intensification of development beyond the built up area of Bluntisham, which would be detrimental to the form, character and appearance of the site and the locality in general.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003  
Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995  
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations 2002  
Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007  
Policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008  
SPD Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2007

### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

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