

7. FULL APPLICATION – ERECTION OF AFFORDABLE DWELLING ON LAND OFF BUXTON ROAD, HIGHFIELD FARM, ASHFORD (NP/DDD/1014/1042, P10648, 419370/369801, 31/01/2015/KW/CF)

APPLICANT: MISS KATE BROCKLEHURST

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises the lower south-eastern corner of a steeply sloping field that abuts the gardens of properties on the northern side and at the eastern end of Buxton Road. The field was formerly allotment gardens, but there is now little evidence of this former use. The field slopes steeply upwards in a north-westerly direction and is visible from Buxton Road between the roadside terrace and the adjacent school to further to the east. There is currently no vehicular access to the site, but there is a pedestrian access linking the lower corner of the field to Buxton Road which passes alongside the eastern boundary of the rear gardens to the adjacent roadside terraced cottages.

The field is within the designated Ashford Conservation Area and is identified in the accompanying Conservation Area Appraisal Map and on the Local Plan Proposals Map as an important open space in the Conservation Area.

Proposal

The application proposes the erection of an affordable dwelling to meet a local need. The proposed dwelling would have three bedrooms, a traditional low two-storey, double-fronted form, and would be constructed in natural limestone with a natural blue slate roof. It would be sited within the lower eastern corner of the field and would be set into the steeply sloping ground the field such that only the upper storey of the rear of the dwelling would be visible above the finished ground level.

A footpath is to be provided to the front of the proposed dwelling, which links into the existing private pedestrian access between the site and Buxton Road, but there is no possibility of creating a vehicular access from Buxton Road. Vehicular access to the property would be gained by creating a 340m long access track the public road network at the north-eastern end of the Highfield housing estate, which is 230m to the north-east of the application site.

The route of the proposed access track would follow an existing grassed farm track along the north-western boundary of the Highfield housing estate, then cross a public footpath route to follow the lower corner of an adjacent field before entering the steeply sloping field that contains the proposed dwelling site. The access at this point cuts diagonally across the steeply sloping ground contours before turning sharply eastwards to enter the application site. Parking spaces would be provided on a slightly raised area to the rear of the dwelling.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

- 1. By virtue of its siting in an elevated position, above the existing residential properties that front on to Buxton Road, the proposed dwelling would be a prominent and incongruous addition to the street scene that would fail to reflect or respect the existing pattern of built development within the local area, would be unneighbourly, and would detract from the valued characteristics of the local area. Therefore, the proposals are contrary to national planning policies in the Framework, and do not accord with policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3 and L1 of the Core Strategy or saved Local Plan policies LC4 and LH1.**

2. **The proposed dwelling would fail to preserve the special qualities of the designated Ashford in the Water Conservation Area and would detract from the significance of this heritage asset because the newly-built house and associated track would be constructed on an important open green space in the Conservation Area but the proposed development would not be sensitive to the special qualities of the open space including its positive contribution to the setting of the village. Therefore, the proposals conflict with core planning principles in the Framework and do not accord with policy L3 of the Core Strategy or saved Local Plan policy LC5.**
3. **By virtue of the orientation of the access track, its overall length, its poor relationship with existing landscape features, and a section that would be especially visible from public vantage points, the access track would detract significantly from the character of the surrounding landscape and the setting of the Conservation Area in its own right, and the adverse visual impact associated with the track would be exacerbated by the prominent and elevated location of parking provision for the proposed dwelling. Furthermore, a demonstrably safe and convenient access to the property for emergency vehicles, service vehicles such as bin lorries and for future occupants of the property could not be achieved without further adverse impacts on the environmental quality of the local area. Therefore, the proposals conflict with core planning principles in the Framework and do not accord with policies T1 and T3 of the Core Strategy or saved Local Plan policies LT11 and LT18.**

Key Issues

1. Whether the proposed development meets the requirements of the Authority's Core Strategy and Local Plan policies in relation to the provision of affordable dwellings to meet local need;
2. Whether the proposed development would conserve the character and setting of designated Ashford Conservation Area and the established grain and pattern of the built development along the northern side of Buxton Road;
3. Access and parking provision; and
4. The potential impact of the proposed dwelling on the residential amenities of the nearby properties to the south of the application site.

History

1994 – Outline consent refused for the erection of a single detached dwelling on the same site as that currently proposed. The proposal was refused on grounds that the dwelling site was situated outside the physical confines of the village on a steeply sloping and prominent hillside within the Conservation Area. Consequently, the proposed development would detract from the appearance of the landscape and adversely affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The application was also refused on grounds of the unacceptably long and tortuous access to the site, which was considerably in excess of the recommended man-carry distance from the nearest public highway.

A subsequent appeal in 1995 was dismissed on grounds that the proposal would require substantial earthworks and these together with the proposed dwelling would change the appearance of the site to the detriment of the setting of the properties along Buxton Road and the north-west, and also the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Consultations

County Council (Highway Authority) – Require amended plans/additional information to address detailed comments on the proposed access arrangements.

District Council - No response to date.

Parish Council – Support the application for the following reasons:

- The proposed development is on land which is of limited agricultural use and currently presents an untidy appearance when viewed from the village. A former use of the site was as allotment gardens on terraced plots, and in the last two or three years, scrub was cleared away and the site advertised to re-establish that use. With only one expression of interest, the scheme was not viable and the land is likely to return to scrub.
- There is evidence that, historically, there were dwellings on the site, in the area of the proposed new dwelling.
- The applicant is clearly keen to remain and develop her new business in the village and this commitment and enterprise should be encouraged and supported.

The Parish Council also comment that the pedestrian access off Buxton Road should remain as it is and should not be made into a drive.

Representations

Three letters have been received from the occupiers of three of the nearby roadside properties along Buxton Road, which raise the following objections and concerns:

- the proposed house would be on a greenfield site, which is in a prominent location overlooking the village and the nearby houses;
- there has been a history of problems with water flowing down from the allotment field and entering the rear of the roadside properties, and the proposed access road will further channel water towards these properties;
- the proposed dwelling will directly overlook the gardens and upper rear windows of the nearest roadside properties and the proposed boundary fencing would not mitigate for a loss of privacy;
- there will be a right of way to the property via the existing pathway down to Buxton Road, which will directly overlook the rear patio, lounge and kitchen of the easternmost cottage;
- acceptance of this proposal could set a precedent for further development of the allotment field;
- likelihood of noise, disturbance and damage to the adjoining properties and gardens during the constructions works; and
- it is inappropriate to start building houses on agricultural land as opposed to redundant farm buildings or brownfield sites, both of which are available in the village.

It is also said in one of the letters that the author fully supports the need for affordable housing as long as strict rules are applied to prevent it becoming yet another holiday-let and that a local occupancy clause is enforced, and, if granted, it should be made clear that no other houses would be allowed to be built in the field in the future.

Main Policies

Relevant Core Strategy policies include: DS1, GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, GSP4, L1, L3, HC1, T1 & T3

Relevant Local Plan policies: LC3, LC4, LC5, LH1, LH2, LT11 & LT18,

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent national planning policies in the Framework with regard to the key issues that are raised in the determination of the current application for the following reasons:

In the first instance, it is considered saved Local Plan policy LH1 and policy HC1 of the Core Strategy provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. This is because policies HC1 and LH1 set out the relevant criteria for assessing proposals for newly built houses to meet local need. The Framework also supports the use of small sites specifically for affordable housing in small rural communities that would not normally be made available for the provision of open market housing subject to normal planning considerations.

The planning considerations that are key issues in the determination of the current application include design and amenity considerations and the impacts arising from siting the proposed house in an elevated and prominent location within an important open green space in a Conservation Area within a National Park.

In these respects, Paragraph 115 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks along with the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage, which is consistent with the aims and objectives of policies GSP1, GSP2 and L1 of the Core Strategy. The Framework otherwise states that local planning authorities should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, including safe and suitable access provisions. These provisions are consistent with the requirements of Policies GSP3, T1 and T3 of the Core Strategy and saved Local Plan policies LC4 and LT18.

The Framework also states that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance forms one of 12 core planning principles whilst Paragraph 132 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. These provisions are consistent with the criteria for assessing development within a Conservation Area set out in policy L3 of the Core Strategy and saved Local Plan policies LC5 and LT11.

Assessment

Issue 1 - Whether the proposed development meets the requirements of the Authority's Core Strategy and Local Plan policies in relation to the provision of affordable local needs dwellings.

Core Strategy policy HC1 says that exceptionally, new housing (whether newly built or from re-use of an existing building) can be accepted where the proposals would address eligible local needs and would be for homes that remain affordable with occupation restricted to local people in perpetuity. The provisions of HC1 are supported by policy LH1 of the Local Plan, which gives

more detailed criteria to assess an application for a newly-built house, which is intended to be affordable and meet local need.

LH1 states exceptionally residential development will be permitted either as a newly built dwelling in or on the edge of Local Plan settlements provided:

- i. there is a proven need for the dwelling;
- ii. the need cannot be met within the existing housing stock;
- iii. the intended occupants meet the requirements of the National Park Authority's local occupancy criteria (policy LH2);
- iv. the dwelling will be affordable by size and type to local people on low or moderate incomes and will remain so in perpetuity; and
- v. the requirements of Policy LC4 are complied with.

Need and affordability

The application proposes an affordable house to meet a local need that would be sited within a named settlement in the Core Strategy (DS1). It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle and would warrant approval if the application met the five criteria set out in LH1 first taking account of whether there is a proof of need. The application proposes a single dwelling. Therefore, the need for the newly built dwelling should be judged with reference to the current circumstances of the applicant.

The accompanying supporting information states that the applicant is a local resident, who has lived all her life in Ashford. She is currently living with her parents at Highfield Farm, which is an inconvenient living arrangement for the present house is not conducive to the requirements and needs of two families. The house is also held on an agricultural tenancy by her father, so this will not be available for her to live in as an independent household when her father retires.

The applicant has looked for many years for alternative accommodation in and around Ashford, but has been unable to find anything that she can afford on her low income. Her only earnings are from the small business she operates and due to the nature of her business; she needs to stay in Ashford, as Highfield Farm is the source of her raw material for the business.

The accompanying information also states that Ashford is a parish where local property fetches exceptionally high prices, yet no affordable housing has been built in the village for decades. Reference is made to the Annual Monitoring Report for the PDNPA for 2012-13, which reveals that there has not been a single completion for local needs housing in the parish in the period 1991-2013.

The applicant is in a position, however, to build a small dwelling on a corner of the proposed site at Buxton Road. This is possible because her father will make the plot available to her and because her partner, who is starting out as a self-employed builder, can build the house economically.

Officers consider that in terms of her local qualification and current living circumstances, the applicant readily meets the terms of the Authority's policies. Whilst no detailed information has been submitted in respect of whether her housing needs could be met within the existing housing stock, it is acknowledged that because of her existing living and financial circumstances, she would not be able to purchase an open-market property and it is also likely that she would not be considered a priority for social housing. The agent has also confirmed that there is no other land or buildings available on her father's farm holding as this is a tenanted holding.

It is also considered that the size and floor area of the proposed dwelling is commensurate with the Authority's size guidelines for affordable local needs dwellings, and additional information has been supplied by the applicant's agent that seeks to demonstrate the cost of building the dwelling and providing access provision would not be so great as to take the dwelling, once built, beyond affordability.

It is therefore considered that the applicant's circumstances and the size of the proposed dwelling readily meet the terms of the Authority's affordable housing policies whilst the actual build costs for the dwelling would be with the normal parameters for the construction of affordable housing. Consequently, it is considered that the current application meets the requirements of HC1 and criteria (i)-(iv) of saved Local Plan policy LH1.

However, in addition to the above considerations, criterion (v) of policy LH1 states that the proposal must also comply with the requirements of policy LC4. Amongst other things, saved Local Plan policy LC4 says that where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is of a high standard that respects, conserves and where possible it enhances the landscape, built environment and other valued characteristics of the area. These issues are addressed under the Issue 2 section of this report.

Issue 2 - Whether the proposed development would conserve the character and setting of designated Ashford Conservation Area and the established grain and pattern of the built development along the northern side of Buxton Road.

In the first instance, it is important to note that the proposal can be described as 'backland development' because the proposals involve the provision of housing on a 'landlocked' site behind existing buildings, which does not have a frontage onto the public highway. Backland development is typically much more difficult to integrate with the existing built environment than infill development where new housing is proposed in a gap between existing residential properties, rather than behind them.

Therefore, compliance with design and conservation policies as indicated by LH1(v) is an especially important issue in this case, also taking into account the proposed house would be sited on an important open space within a designated Conservation Area.

As noted above, Local Plan policy LC4(a) says where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is of a high standard that respects, conserves and where possible it enhances the landscape, built environment and other valued characteristics of the area. Local Plan policy LC4(b) goes on to say, amongst other things, particular attention will be paid to scale, form, mass and orientation in relation to existing buildings, settlement form and character, landscape features and the wider landscape setting.

Local Plan policy LC4 is now also supported by the more recently adopted policy GSP3 of the Core Strategy which says development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings that are subject to the development proposal. GSP3 goes on to say, amongst other things, particular attention will be paid to:

- A. impact on the character and setting of buildings
- B. scale of development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park
- C. siting, landscaping and building materials
- D. design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide

In this case, it is highly relevant to the application of LC4 and GSP3 that the application site is on land that is a designated important open space within the designated Conservation Area. In these respects, policies LC5 of the Local Plan, and policy L3 of the Core Strategy are also highly

relevant to the current application.

LC5 seeks to preserve and enhance the National Park's historic built environment and respectively address development that would affect the special qualities of a designated Conservation Area and its setting. L3 also seeks to ensure the National Park's historic built environment is conserved and enhanced for future generations.

L3 set out three criteria under which the current application should be assessed because of the potential impacts of proposed development on cultural heritage assets of archaeological, architectural, and historic significance:

- A. Development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal the significance of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic assets and their settings, including statutory designations and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;
- B. Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to cause harm to the significance of any cultural heritage asset of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance or its setting, including statutory designations or other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest;
- C. Proposals for development will be expected to meet the objectives of any strategy, wholly or partly covering the National Park, that has, as an objective, the conservation and where possible the enhancement of cultural heritage assets. This includes, but is not exclusive to, the Cultural Heritage Strategy for the Peak District National Park and any successor strategy.

These policies are consistent with national planning policies in the Framework that require high quality design, which should be sensitive to local distinctiveness, and the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. In this case, the significance of the application site as an important open space is related to it being on the steeply sloping and prominent hillside to the rear of the properties along Buxton Road.

The Conservation Area Appraisal illustrates that it is the constraining influence of this steeply sloping land that has shaped the pattern and grain of the built development in this part of the village. In particular, existing housing development has a linear form that fronts on to Buxton Road with the steeply sloping hill forming a natural boundary to the settlement limits. Siting a house 'perched up' above these properties, as proposed in this application, would be incongruous with the existing character of this part of the village and the newly-built house would have a significant impact on the character and setting of the existing buildings fronting on to Buxton Road.

When viewed from Buxton Road, the dwelling would appear unduly prominent and poorly related to the existing houses, and would seriously impede views of the higher ground and the backdrop to the village beyond. This is an important consideration as the application site and the remainder of the field are included within the designated Conservation Area because they form a fine backdrop and setting to the village. The application site is also visible from Buxton Road from the gap between the roadside properties and the Ashford School building, and in the vicinity of the junction of Buxton Road with Fennel Street.

It is therefore considered that a newly-built house would be visible from public vantage points and would fail to conserve or enhance the special qualities of the Conservation Area. These problems would be exacerbated by the provision of the adjacent vehicular parking area and the access drive that would double back on itself across the application site, which would increase the visual impact of the newly-built house, further detracting from the setting of the designated Conservation Area, and resulting in additional harm to the character of the village.

Although the application site and surrounding field was used quite intensively as allotments, and the terraced profile of the former allotments can still be seen, this was some time ago and the site and surrounding field now has the general appearance of rough grazing land. Therefore, the application site cannot be classified as previously developed land or 'brownfield' site, and officers do not consider a newly-built house on the site is required to achieve enhancement purposes or to relocate a non-conforming use.

In these respects, the most tangible public benefits arising from any permission for this application would be the delivery of an additional affordable dwelling that would meet the needs of a person with a local qualification in the first instance but would be available to the local community over the longer term. This is an important consideration and affordable housing has been allowed on important open spaces in Conservation Areas exceptionally (in Monyash and Sheen most recently) where it has been found that there would be less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

However, where houses have been permitted on important spaces they can be characterised as infill developments that would follow the existing pattern of development with their respective villages. In this case, the newly-built house would not be properly integrated into the existing pattern of development along Buxton Road and it would be an incongruous addition to the village. Consequently, it is considered that the public benefits of granting planning permission for the new house would not outweigh or offset the demonstrably harmful impacts arising from the proposal.

The proposed dwelling, taken together with the associated access and parking provision, would fail to conserve the significance of the designated Ashford Conservation Area because it would be constructed on an important open green space within the designated Ashford Conservation Area, and building on this land would not be sympathetic to the established grain and pattern of built development on the northern side of Buxton Road. The proposed development would also fail to reflect or respect the special qualities of the open space, its positive contribution to the setting of the village, or the manner in which the prominent position of the dwelling within this open space would impede views of the higher ground beyond.

Therefore, the current application is contrary to national planning policies in the Framework and does not meet the requirements of design and conservation policies in the Development Plan including saved Local Plan policies LC4, LC5, and LH1, and policies GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, L1 and L3 of the Authority's Core Strategy.

Issue 3 – Access and Parking Provision

As there is no vehicular access to the site from Buxton Road, the submitted scheme proposed the creation of a 340m long access track which accesses on to the public road network at the north-eastern end of the Highfield housing estate. The proposed access route follows an existing grassed farm track along the north-western boundary of the Highfield housing estate, then crosses a public footpath route, then follows the lower corner of a field before entering the steeply sloping field that contains the proposed dwelling site. The access at this point cuts diagonally across the steeply sloping ground contours before turning sharply eastwards to enter the proposed dwelling site. Parking spaces would be provided to the rear of the proposed dwelling.

As set out in the above section of the report, there are concerns that these arrangements for access and parking provision for the proposed dwelling would harm the character of the local area in their own right because of the potentially unacceptable adverse visual impact associated with the access track and parking spaces. There are also concerns that the access would not be safe and the Highway Authority has already sought amendments and additional information to address a number of issues related to the accessibility of the proposed development.

In these respects, policies T1 and T3 of the Core Strategy provide the strategic context for transport management and infrastructure within the National Park, stating that conserving and enhancing the National Park's valued characteristics will be the primary criterion in the planning and design of transport infrastructure. The Framework requires new developments to be provided with safe and suitable access provisions. Saved Local Plan policies LT11 and LT18 provide further detail on what this means in practice.

LT11 states that the design and number of parking spaces associated with residential development must respect the valued characteristics of the area, particularly in Conservation Areas. LT18 states that the highest standards of environmental design and materials should be used in transport infrastructure to conserve and enhance the valued characteristics of the area. T18 goes on to say that the provision of safe access arrangements will be the prerequisite of any development but where the provision of safe access would damage the valued characteristics of the area, the Authority will consider refusing planning consent.

The applicant's agent has submitted amended plans seeking to address the Highway Authority's concerns. These plans show an amended layout for the length of track from the edge of the application site to the public highway. This length of track would be surfaced with limestone chippings or tarmac and have a width of 5m. A turning head for a refuse lorry is also proposed at the south-western end of the track on a fairly level area of ground above the steeply sloping former allotment field. From the turning head, the final part of the track to the site of the new house would revert back to the original 'cart track' arrangement (i.e. a track that has two strips of limestone chippings with grass down the centre) as shown on the submitted drawings.

Notwithstanding the visual impact of a 5m wide surfaced track running through open fields, the turning head would be some 100m from the proposed house, which is a significant distance to take a bin out for collection for anyone with mobility problems or in difficult weather conditions. It is also considered that it is unreasonable to expect other service/delivery vehicles and visitors to park on the turning head and carry loads down the remaining 100m down the remainder of the access to the dwelling itself. Furthermore, the remaining length of the track is on a relatively steep gradient and has a 'hair pin' bend where it doubles back on itself. It is therefore considered that there is a real risk that emergency vehicles would not be able to get any closer to the house than the turning head.

Furthermore, concerns have been raised about the adequacy of the construction methods and the gradients of this final section of the access track, which crosses diagonally across the steeply sloping former allotment field that contains the application site. It is likely therefore that the access drive would have to be constructed to a higher specification using a bound surface, such as tarmac rather than limestone chippings as proposed. Surface water drainage from the track would also have to have a properly engineered solution, so as not to cause drainage problems further down the field to the rear of the existing roadside properties.

All such measures would serve to exacerbate the adverse impact of the access drive on the character of the allotment field and consequently, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area of which the allotment field forms part. Furthermore, the widening of the remainder of the access track through the fields at the top of the allotment field and along the rear boundary of the Highfield estate would in itself detract from the landscape character of the surrounding area and would be visible from the existing public footpath that crosses the route of the proposed access track.

It is therefore considered that by virtue of its layout and design, including its length, gradient and inadequate surfacing, the proposed access track would not provide a suitable or safe access to the property and would detract significantly from the character of the surrounding landscape, the Conservation Area and the valued characteristics of the area. The visual impact of the track would otherwise be exacerbated by the provision of a parking area to the rear of the proposed house would not be screened from view by the house itself and this area would either need some extent of cut and fill or to be partially dug in to the hillside to be level that would increase its visual

impact.

In conclusion, the proposals conflict with the aims and objectives of national planning policies in the Framework and the Authority's Core Strategy and do not meet the specific requirements of Saved Local Plan policies LT11 and LT18. In these terms, it is also extremely difficult to consider the house would readily meet the needs of future occupants other than in very specific circumstances because it would not be sufficiently accessible. Consequently, these issues significantly diminish the public benefits that might otherwise be derived from the provision of an affordable house with safe and suitable access arrangements.

Issue 4 - The impact of the proposed dwelling on the residential amenities of the nearby properties to the south.

As noted previously in this report, Core Strategy policy GSP3 states, amongst other things, that when assessing development proposals particular attention will be paid to the form and intensity of the proposed use or activity and its impact on the living conditions of communities. Local Plan policy LC4 further states, amongst other things, that where development is acceptable in principle, particular attention will be paid to the amenity, privacy and security of the development and of nearby properties. The Framework states that local planning authorities should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

As noted in the above section of this report, there are concerns that the problems with providing adequate access to the proposed house would mean that future occupants of the new house would not have a good standard of amenity. There are also concerns that the new house would detract from the residential amenities of the nearby roadside properties fronting on to Buxton Road. These concerns arise because the new house would be a form of backland development, which can often cause a significant loss of amenity to existing properties including loss of privacy, loss of daylight, overlooking, visual intrusion by a building or structure, and noise disturbance.

In this case, the proposed dwelling would be situated on the higher ground levels in the field, which abuts the rear terraced garden boundary with the roadside properties along Buxton Road. Due to the steeply sloping ground levels, the finished floor level of the proposed dwelling is about 2.2m above the level of the adjacent rear gardens. The proposed dwelling would be set back about 7.0m away from the boundary of the neighbouring gardens, and its main front elevation would look towards the rear elevations of the roadside cottages below.

By virtue of the significant difference in ground levels between the proposed dwelling and the roadside cottages and the distance between them (c. 27.5m), it is not considered that there would be significant overlooking of the rear elevations of the roadside cottages. Nonetheless, the proximity of the proposed dwelling to the rear upper garden terrace of the roadside cottages and its elevated position, means the new house would be unneighbourly because the proposed dwelling would adversely impact upon the quiet enjoyment of the use of the rear garden areas abutting the application site, primarily, through the loss of privacy and, to a lesser extent, the impact of the proposed development on the outlook from the roadside properties.

Therefore, the impact of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupiers of the nearby roadside cottages would give rise to further conflict with the Framework and policies GSP3 and LC4 beyond the potential impact of the dwelling on the character and appearance of the village and its designated Conservation Area.

Moreover, due to the steeply sloping nature of the site, significant earthworks would be required not only to construct the dwelling itself and adjacent vehicular parking area, but also to provide the access drive. Therefore, it is likely the roadside cottages would experience significant noise disturbance during the construction phase of the development if it were to be granted permission, alongside the risk of other potential problems arising, as raised in representations on this

application. Whilst these issues do not constitute a reason for refusal of the current application, it should be noted that the imposition of conditions specifying construction methods and hours of operation should be carefully considered if permission is granted for the current application.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are some planning considerations that support granting planning permission for the current application: the applicant has a local qualification, the proposed house would be affordable, and the house would be on the edge of a named settlement. The provision of an affordable house to meet the needs of the local community would also provide wider public benefits. However, the adverse impacts of the proposed development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the need for the proposed house, when the current application is assessed against policies in the Framework and the Development Plan when taken as a whole.

The proposed house and the provision of its access and parking area would harm the character, appearance and amenities of neighbouring buildings, detract from the setting of the village and fail to conserve and enhance the special qualities of its designated Conservation Area, and detract from the significance of an important open space in a Conservation Area. These adverse impacts of granting planning permission for the current application are further exacerbated by the absence of a safe and suitable access, which would mean the property would not be accessible to a wide range of people and would not provide a high quality of amenity for any future occupant.

Accordingly, the current application is recommended for refusal.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil