

## **8. FULL APPLICATION – 2 LOCAL NEED AFFORDABLE HOUSES, LAND ADJACENT TO HILLSIDE BUNGALOW, SCHOOL LANE, TADDINGTON (NP/DDD/0719/0744)**

**APPLICANT:** Mr Allen: DH & MA Developments

### **Summary**

1. The application is for the erection of 2 new affordable dwellings to meet local needs. The site is considered to be a suitable one for a development of this size and a scheme of affordable housing here would be acceptable in principle if an identified local need for the new houses can be demonstrated. However, the proposed occupiers of the new houses do not meet our definition of being in housing need. The opportunities for finding new sites for affordable housing in Taddington are very limited and it is essential that any suitable sites go to providing housing for local people who are in genuine need and that the housing is of a type that meets the identified need. The applicant has been invited to do further work to try and demonstrate whether or not there is need for two new houses of the type and size proposed. However, the applicant has declined to do this and has asked for the application to be determined as submitted. The application fails to show that there is an identified need for the new houses and that the houses are suitable to meet the need if one does exist. It must therefore be recommended for refusal.

### **Site and Surroundings**

2. The application site is a part of a field that lies to the southern side of School Lane at the western end of Taddington Village. The field is laid to grass and is enclosed by drystone boundary walls. The land level rises from north to south. There is an existing detached dwelling to the west and the grounds of Taddington and Priestcliffe primary school lies to the east. The junction of School Lane and the A6 lies a short distance to the north. The site is outside of Taddington Conservation Area and this end of the village is characterised by predominantly 20<sup>th</sup> century housing.

### **Proposal**

3. Planning permission is being sought for the erection of two new affordable local needs houses.
4. The proposed houses are a pair of semi-detached dwellings. Each would have three bedrooms, garden and parking to the front and private gardens to the rear.
5. The submitted information sets out that the new houses would be sold to local families who have local connections and who are currently in rented housing.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:**

1. **The application has failed to demonstrate that there is an identified local need for two new affordable houses in Taddington. If such a need does exist, it has also not been demonstrated that the proposed houses are of a type and size that would be suitable to meet the identified need. The application is therefore contrary to policies HC1, DMH1 and DMH2.**
2. **The application does not demonstrate that the development will make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources contrary to policy CC1.**

### **Key Issues**

- The need for new affordable housing in the village.
- The suitability of the site for new housing.
- The impact on the landscape character and special qualities of the National Park.
- Amenity Impacts.
- Highways Impacts.
- Ecology Impacts.

### **History**

6. There is no planning history for the site. The applicant did not engage in pre-application discussions prior to the submission of the application.

### **Consultations**

7. Highway Authority – No objections subject to conditions for the provision of access, parking and turning areas and measures to control surface water drainage.
8. Parish Council - *‘Members of Taddington and Priestcliffe Parish Council have been consulted on Planning Application DDD/0719/0744 - Land adj to Hillside Bungalow - and support the application in principle because it provides two affordable houses for owner occupation by local people and is on a site which has previously been considered acceptable in principle for housing.*

*The Council notes that the site may be capable of taking one or more additional affordable houses in the future and suggests that care be taken to ensure that the layout would not inhibit further development should the need arise, given the difficulty of finding sites for affordable housing.*

9. PDNPA Archaeology – No objections

### **Representations**

10. Four letters of support have been received. Two of these are from the intended first occupiers of the dwellings and one is from the applicant. One is from a local resident. The letters set out that the development would provide housing for local people and would encourage young people and families to set up home and stay in the village.
11. One letter of objection has been received from a neighbouring occupier. The grounds for objection are summarised as follows:
  - Lack of detailed plans.
  - No need for the housing and existing housing in the area is available.
  - Impact on biodiversity and protected species.
  - There are more suitable sites within the village.
  - Flooding and drainage problems.
  - The meadow should be protected.
  - Impact on neighbouring properties and possible conflict with a neighbouring small holding.
  - The development is speculative – no guarantee that the houses won't be sold for profit.
  - Highways impact and parking problems.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

12. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales: Which are; to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to; seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been revised (2019). This replaces the previous document (2012) with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In particular Paragraph 172 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
14. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and the Development Management Policies (DMP), adopted May 2019. These Development Plan Policies provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. In this case, it is considered there are no significant conflicts between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and government guidance in the NPPF.

## **Main Development Plan Policies**

### **Core Strategy**

15. GSP1, GSP2 - *Securing National Park Purposes and sustainable development & Enhancing the National Park*. These policies jointly seek to secure national park legal purposes and duties through the conversion and enhancement of the National Park's landscape and its natural and heritage assets.
16. GSP3 - *Development Management Principles*. Requires that particular attention is paid to the impact on the character and setting of buildings and that the design is in accord with the Authority's Design Guide and development is appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park.
17. DS1 - *Development Strategy*. Sets out that most new development will be directed into named settlements. Taddington is a named settlement.
18. L1 - *Landscape character and valued characteristics*. Seeks to ensure that all development conserves and enhances valued landscape character and sites, features and species of biodiversity importance.
19. HC1 – *New Housing*. Sets out that provision will not be made for housing solely to meet open market demand. Housing land will not be allocated in the development plan. Exceptionally, new housing can be accepted including where it addresses eligible local needs for homes that remain affordable with occupation restricted to local people in perpetuity.
20. Policy CC1 states that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources.

## Development Management Policies

21. DMC3 - *Siting, Design, layout and landscaping*. Reiterates that where developments are acceptable in principle, policy requires that design is to high standards and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape. The siting, mass, scale, height, design, building materials should all be appropriate to the context. Accessibility of the development should also be a key consideration.
22. DMC11 - *Safeguarding, recording and enhancing nature conservation interests*. Sets out that proposals should aim to achieve net gains to biodiversity or geodiversity as a result of development and that details of appropriate safeguards and enhancement measures for a site, feature or species of nature conservation importance must be provided in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan. For all sites, feature and species development proposals must consider amongst other things, the setting of the development in relation to other features of importance, historical and cultural.
23. DMH1 – *New affordable housing*. Sets out that Affordable housing will be permitted in or on the edge of Core Strategy policy DS1 settlements, either by new build or by conversion; and outside of Core Strategy policy DS1 settlements by conversion of existing buildings provided that:
- (i) there is a proven need for the dwelling(s); and
  - (ii) any new build housing is within the stipulated size thresholds:
- Self-building and custom building housing will be permitted on rural exception sites provided the proven need can be demonstrated and the size thresholds are met.
24. DMH2 – *First occupation of new affordable housing* states that:
- In all cases, new affordable housing must be first occupied by persons satisfying at least one of the following criteria:
- (i) a person (and his or her dependents) who has a minimum period of 10 years permanent residence in the Parish or an adjoining Parish inside the National Park and is currently living in accommodation which is overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory; or
  - (ii) a person (and his or her dependents) not now resident in the Parish but having lived for at least 10 years out of the last 20 years in the Parish or an adjoining Parish inside the National Park, and is currently living in accommodation which is overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory; or
  - (iii) a person who has an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of 10 years residence in a Parish inside the National Park, the essential need arising from infirmity.
25. DMT3 - *Access and design criteria*. Requires that a safe access should be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it. Whilst DMT8 - *Residential off street parking* sets out that off-street parking for residential development should be provided and the design and numbers of parking spaces associated with the residential development respects the valued characteristics of the area.
26. The Authority has adopted three separate supplementary planning documents (SPD's) that offers design guidance on householder development namely the Design Guide, the Building Design Guide and the Detailed Design Guide on Alterations and Extensions.

## **Assessment**

### **Principle of Development**

27. Policy HC1 makes it clear that provision will not be made in the National Park for new housing to meet general demand. However, on an exceptional basis, new housing may be permitted if it is to meet an eligible local need for houses that will remain affordable in perpetuity.
28. The application is for two new houses that fall within our size guidelines for five person houses, with both being at the maximum size of 97 square metres. The submitted information sets out that both houses will be occupied by people who have lived in Taddington for 10 out of the last 20 years but *“moved away to find affordable rental accommodation but now look to return to set up a family home of their own for the first time.”* This sentence is contradictory – if the families are already living in rented accommodation then they have already set up home for the first time.
29. Policies DMH1 and DMH2 make it clear that new affordable housing can only be permitted when there is a proven need for the new housing. To be ‘in need’ a person must be in accommodation which is overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory.
30. The supporting text to policy DMH1 states that:

*“In this area, accommodation is considered unsatisfactory when it is in poor condition or lacking in basic facilities. It is also common that accommodation is unsatisfactory because it is too small for the size of the household and is too expensive for the household to sustain.”* Overcrowding would also amount to a housing need. The supporting text also sets out that people forming a household for the first time can amount to housing need.
31. We know that the proposed first occupiers are not forming household for the first time. No information has been provided to demonstrate that the intended first occupiers are in accommodation that is lacking in basic facilities, is too small, or that it is overcrowded.
32. The applicant has stated that “Both families currently live in rented accommodation that they consider too expensive to sustain”. Again, this contradicts the earlier statement that they *“moved away to find affordable rental accommodation”*. No details or evidence has been put forward to substantiate the claim that the existing rental accommodation is too expensive to sustain, or how buying one of the proposed dwellings would be any more affordable. In fact, one of the letters in support of the application from one of the intended first occupiers says that they are currently living in social rented accommodation. This would appear to contradict the applicant’s statement that the existing rented accommodation is too expensive to sustain.
33. It is essential to note that the wish to move from rented accommodation to owning a house does not in itself comprise a housing need. This is an aspiration rather than an essential need. The Authority is tenure neutral, meaning that we are only concerned with whether accommodation is fit to address the housing need and not whether it is rented or owned. Our policies do not categorise a wish to change tenure as an essential need to be met.
34. We could only consider the identified first occupiers to be in housing need if it had been demonstrated that the existing rented accommodation is overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory. That has not been demonstrated by this application. The application is therefore clearly contrary to policies HC1, DMH1 and DMH2 and cannot be supported.

35. As is discussed further below, the site may be a suitable one for the provision of affordable housing if a need for it can be demonstrated. Suitable sites for affordable housing in the National Park, and particularly in Taddington are scarce. It is essential that the sites that are suitable, provide housing for those who are truly in housing need.
36. Paragraph 6.25 of the DMP states that:
- “Where an individual is proposing to build homes for wider housing need (more than one), and the scheme is otherwise acceptable in terms of impact on the built environment, the individual also needs to establish the housing need through a Parish-wide Housing Need Survey and/or other credible evidence from choice based lettings registers such as Home Options. If there is credible evidence of a wider community need for housing, the applicant may be permitted to build more than one house.”*
37. We have encouraged the applicant to work with the Housing Authority to try and demonstrate whether or not there is a need for the proposed houses. However, the applicant has requested that the application is determined as submitted.
38. There is an existing housing needs survey for Taddington and the adjoining parishes (excluding Tideswell). This was done in 2016 and sets out an identifiable need for four houses for rent. Four affordable local needs houses have been approved at the eastern end of the village and are under construction. These are to be managed by the Peak District Rural Housing Association and will be made available rent. Based on the 2016 survey, the previously identified need has been met.
39. There is a separate housing survey for the neighbouring parish of Tideswell. This again identifies a need for rented affordable homes.
40. As such, based on the information available to us, it cannot be said that there is an identified need for the two houses. If such a need does exist, there is no evidence to show that 5 person three bedroom houses for sale would meet the need.
41. It must therefore be concluded that the principle of development is not acceptable.

### **Design and Appearance**

42. As set out above, the proposed dwellings are a pair of semi-detached houses that are at the upper limit of our size guidelines for affordable dwellings. They are of traditional appearance with horizontal form, reasonably narrow gables and would sit under a pitched roof. They would sit comfortably at this end of the village which is characterised predominantly by 20<sup>th</sup> century housing of varying scale and types. The development would not impact on the character of the Conservation Area due to the intervening distance and other buildings. Subject to appropriate detailing, the appearance of the houses is broadly acceptable. The application accords with policy DMC3 in this respect.

### **Landscape Impacts**

43. The site lies in-between existing buildings in the form of the school to the east and an existing dwelling to the west. As such, the proposed dwellings would form an in-fill plot. Unlike gaps within the more historically significant area of the village (i.e. within and close to the Conservation Area) the field is not identified as being important open space. The scale of the development is broadly acceptable and it is considered that it would not have any significantly detrimental impact on the landscape character or special qualities of this part of the National Park. The application accords with policy DMC3 in this respect.

### **Amenity Impact**

44. The nearest neighbouring residential property is sited to the west of the application site is Hillside Bungalow. The proposed dwellings would have their main openings to the north and south facing elevations and there would be no unacceptable levels of overlooking between the proposed houses and this neighbouring dwelling. The position of the proposed houses would not lead to unacceptable overshadowing or oppressive impacts to Hillside Bungalow. It is considered that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of occupiers of this neighbouring dwelling.
45. A letter of objection has raised concerns about possible conflict between residential development at the site and the operation of a small-holding business at the neighbouring property. Given that the site is within the village and adjacent to the school, there is already an amount of activity in close proximity to that property. It would be difficult to substantiate how the introduction of two residential properties would conflict with the neighbouring small-holding in this established village setting. The objection has raised concerns about pets causing problems for livestock. This would be a civil matter entirely outside of the control of the Local Planning Authority and would not be a material planning consideration. This concern does however also relate to appropriate boundary treatments between the site and neighbouring land which could be addressed by condition.
46. To the east of the site is the primary school. The school itself is set some 60m away but the playing field is next to the application site. The introduction of two new houses at the site would not result in any amenity conflicts between the school and a new residential use.
47. The position of the proposed development would not result in harm to the amenity of occupiers or users of any other properties in the locality.
48. Overall, it is considered that new housing could be an appropriate use of the site that would not cause harm to the amenity of any neighbouring users and residents and would not conflict with any established land uses in the locality. The application accords with policy DMC3 in this respect.

### **Highway Impact**

49. The proposed houses would be accessed from School Lane with parking and turning areas provided to the front of each dwelling. The Highway Authority has confirmed that there are no objections, subject to conditions. The scheme accords with policies DMT3 and DMT8.

### **Ecology Impact**

50. A letter of objection has raised concern about the harm to the ecology value of the field and potential harm to bats. There are no existing buildings or trees that would need to be removed to facilitate the development. The proposal would take up only a small proportion of the existing field and it is considered that it is unlikely to have a significantly detrimental impact on the ecology value of the surrounding area or on protected species. There is a need to achieve biodiversity net gain. Had the scheme been acceptable in principle we would have sought specialist advice on the ecological value of the site and how net gain could be achieved through the development. However, as the principle of the development has clearly not been established in this application, this work has not been advanced. This should however be addressed in any future applications at the site.

### **Environmental Management**

51. An Environmental Management and Mitigation statement has not been provided and no information has been provided to set out how the application would address policy CC1. The application should be refused for this reason. Had the application been acceptable in principle we would have invited the applicant to try and correct this shortcoming of the application.

### **Conclusion**

52. The application fails to demonstrate that there is an identifiable need for the two proposed houses. The identified first occupiers are not in housing need and no evidence has been put forward to show that there is a demonstrable need. The application fails to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist that would justify the building of new homes within the National Park. The application is clearly contrary to policies HC1, DMH1 and DMH2 and is recommended for refusal.

### **Human Rights**

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

54. List of Background Papers (not previously published)

55. Nil

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