
Parish:	BOXFORD	
Location:	Lynnfield Road	
Proposal:	Erection of 1½ storey detached dwelling (existing dwelling and outbuildings to be demolished)	
Applicant:	Mr Martin Boiling	
Case Officer:	Stuart McAdam	Date for Determination: 9 September 2009

This application is reported to Development Committee as it is a departure from Local Plan Policy HS05 and Officers are recommending approval.

THE SITE

1. The application site is located in Butchers Lane, outside the village of Boxford the north of the settlement in open countryside.
2. The existing bungalow was built in the mid 60s while it has the appearance of a bungalow, it has first floor accommodation of approximately 50 square metres. The property sits on a slightly elevated site within an extensive plot with mature gardens and is well screened from public view. The mature trees and existing planting along the frontage to Butcher's Lane ensures that only glimpses of the property are visible.
3. The nearest residential properties are the 'Bungalow' to the north east and 'Sunnybank' to the south east.

THE PROPOSAL

4. The application is for the total demolition of the existing bungalow and its replacement with a 1 ½ storey dwelling. The footprint of the proposed dwelling is a slight increase on the existing form although the floor area of the replacement dwelling would be 68% greater (existing floorspace 154.28 sq.m, proposed 260 sq.m). The building would have a significantly different appearance.
5. The existing house is 6.1m in height and 11.7m in width. The proposed house would be 7m in height, 13.3m in length.

RELEVANT HISTORY

6. S/65/378/C – Outline consent for erection of dwelling – allowed on appeal.
7. S/66/191/C – Erection of bungalow and construction of access – granted.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

8. **PPS1** (Delivering Sustainable Development)

PLANNING POLICIES

9. The Development Plan comprises the East of England Plan, adopted 2008, saved policies in the Suffolk Structure Plan, adopted 2001, and the Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) adopted 2006. The following policies are relevant to this proposal:

East of England Plan - 2008

- **SS16** (Quality in the Built Environment)

Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No.2) 2006

- **CN01** (Maintaining Local Distinctive)
- **HS05** (Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside)
- **CR01** (Development in the Countryside)
- **CR07** (Landscaping in the Countryside)

The relevant documents can be viewed via the internet. Please see Page 4 for details.

CONSULTATIONS

9. Boxford Parish Council has no objection.
10. Groton Parish Council has not responded at the time of writing the report.
11. Environmental Health - The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has indicated that there is no evidence to suggest that land contamination should stop the progression of this development.

REPRESENTATIONS

12. None received.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

13. The proposal is for the demolition of a single unlisted dwelling outside of a Conservation Area in the countryside and its replacement with a single dwelling. The proposal is the redevelopment of previously developed land. Therefore in accordance with local and national guidance the principle of the development is acceptable.

Design and Impact on Character

14. A key objective of PPS1 is to encourage and enhance the quality and character of an area. Policy CR01 of the Babergh Local Plan requires new development in the countryside to have due regard to the landscape characteristics and cultural heritage of the locality while Policy CN01 states that new development should maintain the local distinctiveness of Babergh.
15. Policy HS05 deals with replacement dwellings in the countryside and states that replacement dwellings in such locations should be of a size and massing which is not significantly different to those of the original dwelling it is replacing. Significant is defined in Paragraph 3.45 of the Local Plan as around 30-35% of the floor area. Policy HS05 also requires new development to be sympathetic to its surroundings.

16. The site is in an isolated location in the countryside and whilst in close proximity to Butcher's Lane, is not readily visible. The existing bungalow it is not a traditional 'Suffolk' style building and is of no significant architectural merit. Consequently the building offers little to the locality.
17. Following the policy guidance outlined above, a replacement dwelling at the site should take the opportunity to enhance the area and pay due regard to the cultural heritage and local distinctiveness of the district. The applicant is therefore proposing a built form in a traditional Suffolk style cottage on the front most wing and the dormer windows on the front elevation take their reference from the nearby listed building, 'Sunnyside' which is located further down Butcher's Lane.
18. The proposal before Members follows lengthy negotiations with Officers. The scale and mass (and resultant impact) of a 1½ storey dwelling is less bulky and imposing than a 2 storey house in this location. The increase in floor space as indicated above arises as the form of the house has changed from a bungalow to a 1½ storey house. While the design incorporates a rear projecting twin gable element, the impression from the entrance to the site will be one of a traditional vernacular cottage style. The other dimensional indicators to the scale of the replacement, such as depth and width, are similar to the existing bungalow. The front elevation would be slightly wider and the footprint would move to the north west (further into the site) and the slab level has been lowered from the existing levels in order to reduce the impact. The result is that the ridge height is no higher than the existing bungalow. The replacement dwelling does not represent an excessive increase in scale and mass.
19. The design is of a high quality which reflects the traditional Suffolk vernacular architecture. The house is well proportioned and will be constructed using a traditional hand crafted, oak frame and incorporates lime render walls on a brick plinth, brick chimneys, steep clay tile roofs and traditional porch features.
20. It is your Officers opinion that the dwelling would enhance the countryside setting of this rural location and would be a significant improvement compared to the existing bungalow. The scheme is therefore sensitive to the countryside location and is of a scale compatible with its surroundings. In this respect the proposal complies with Policies CN01, CR01 and parts of HS05.
21. Policy HS05 seeks to ensure replacement dwellings which are at the end of their useful life, or have some other inherent problem, are replaced by buildings which are appropriate to the context and are not too large. The applicant considers this to be the case in this instance and has confirmed that while the existing bungalow is habitable, it has poor insulation, poor central heating and is single glazed. It is likely that such matters could be remedied, but one has to question whether it is worth it given the inherent problem that the design and appearance is out of character with the rural setting and cultural heritage of the countryside.
22. One of the key aims of the policy is to ensure that small dwellings are not replaced by large ones which would be unaffordable to those on low incomes or first time buyers. Lynnfield is not an inconsiderable size and is set on a plot of some 0.27ha. The existing dwelling is not affordable to first time buyers or those on low incomes. Consequently its replacement with a new house that has a significant increase in floor space will not conflict with the aims of this part of the policy, even though the value of the new house would likely be greater than the existing bungalow.
23. As the existing bungalow is no longer affordable, a sensitive replacement would benefit the area, as apposed to further inappropriate extensions, given the traditional design solution proposed and the prominent location of the site.

24. The extensive landscaping around the site would be retained. However, a condition has been recommended to ensure that the landscaping is enhanced and safeguarded in line with Policy CR07 which requires high levels of landscaping relating to scheme approved in the countryside.
25. The proposal is, in part, contrary to Policy HS05 in that it represents a floor area increase on the original of 68%. However it would not be more visually intrusive than the existing and would clearly be an enhancement. The proposed dwelling would better fit with the aims of Policies CN01 and CR01 and national guidance in PPS1 than the existing bungalow. A balance needs to be struck between the enhancements the dwelling would provide, against the additional floor space delivered. In this instance, it is your Officers opinion that the increase in floor space is outweighed by the enhancements to the site and surrounding area provided by the replacement dwelling.
26. The high quality traditionally vernacular design of the proposed house (which is appropriate to such a rural setting), the poor design quality of the existing bungalow and the fact that the bungalow is no longer small or 'affordable' are considered relevant and justify a departure to HS05.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

27. There would be no adverse impact on neighbour amenity due to the separation distance between the proposed dwelling and the residential properties on the opposite side of Butcher's Lane.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

28. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies CR01 and CN01 of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 2 (2006). The site specific design solution would be an important enhancement to the setting and character of the site and area. In this instance, the enhancements outlined in this report outweigh the floor space requirements set out in Policy HS05 of the Babergh District Local Plan Alteration No. 2 (2006).

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions

- Removal of permitted development rights (extensions, outbuildings)
- Landscaping retention
- Levels
- Materials