

Parish: HADLEIGH

Location: Valley Park, Hook Lane, Hadleigh, IPSWICH, IP7 5PH

Proposal: Erection of 1 no. two-storey detached dwelling (existing three-storey dwelling to be demolished).

Applicant: Mr C Clackson

Case Officer: Chris Tivey

Date for Determination: 04/01/10

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**This application is reported to the Development Committee because it relates to a replacement dwelling that is larger than that advocated by paragraph 3.45 of the supporting text of the Local Plan as normally acceptable and as such it is technically contrary to policy.**

#### **THE SITE**

1. Valley Park is situated to the south east of Hadleigh within the open countryside. It is a small Agricultural Holding of 30.6 hectares and is accessed via Hook Lane. The whole holding is within the Brett Valley Special Landscape Area.
2. The dwelling is predominantly a 3 storey building with a single storey rear wing, it was converted from a timber frame (unlisted) barn in 1973. The conversion predated current conversion policies and any character that was associated with the original timber framed barn has been lost.
3. A relatively modern timber framed garage and block work kennel and a brick built stable building dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a pantile roof are also situated within the dwelling's curtilage.

#### **THE PROPOSAL**

4. Planning permission is sought to demolish all of the buildings as cited above and to erect a part two, part single storey dwelling; and a range of attached outbuildings providing for incidental residential purposes (including garaging) and to act as a service function for the farm holding. An internal courtyard/parking area would be created in addition to a formally laid out walled garden and terrace.
5. The proposal follows consultation with Officers in early 2009 to discuss its feasibility. Consensus was reached that the existing dwelling is of limited architectural value and does not contribute particularly positively to the surrounding area. Furthermore the building is thermally inefficient and no longer satisfactory as it currently stands.
6. As a result of the original conversion in 1973, the existing dwelling does not create a good opportunity to better its thermal efficiency. The applicant cites a number of factors, including:
  - The ground floor construction contains no insulation. Retrospective installation would be difficult to install due to existing cill and threshold heights;
  - The attic space is used as a habitable area. Installation of additional insulation to the roof void would be problematic due to lack of available construction depth.

- The existing external wall construction is timber frame with render finish, and is likely to have little or no insulation. Additional insulation in this scenario could be achieved, however in view of the construction of the whole building would be ineffective;
  - All of the windows are single glazed and would require replacement.
7. The replacement dwelling would use a biomass boiler to provide for all space and water heating requirements, including a swimming pool (phase 2, see below). The applicant plans to plant fuel crops and to use waste from orchard management, all of which will be chipped and stored on site. Water demands of the new dwelling would also be managed by a grey water system to flush WC's and provide water for car washing and irrigation.
  8. The appearance of the new dwelling is that of a Farm House/Manorial Steading; using vernacular materials, traditional roof spans/pitches and vernacular joinery styles (purpose made). It is formed by 4 key elements which would be erected in two phases, phase 1 would consist of 3 elements:
    - The main core of the dwelling forming a L shape which would sit on the footprint of the existing dwelling;
    - A two storey, southern kitchen wing, built at right angles to the main core; and
    - A single storey garage and service accommodation built parallel to the main core on the eastern side to enclose the courtyard.
  9. Phase 2 consists of a single element:
    - Indoor swimming pool wing and walled garden built to the south of the kitchen wing.
  10. The existing dwelling and stable building extend to a total of 354m<sup>2</sup> total floor area and the existing garages to 50m<sup>2</sup>. Proposals for the phase 1 dwelling extend to 503m<sup>2</sup> and the garages to 68m<sup>2</sup>. As a percentage increase in the total floor area, this equates to 42% and 36% respectively. Phase 2 would be 128m<sup>2</sup>, which would give rise to a 78% increase in floor area of the replacement dwelling over the existing.
  11. In their Design and Access statement the applicants consider that the design is sympathetic to the location in a number of key approaches:-
    - (i) The core of the new house is to be an oak framed structure erected on the footprint of the original timber framed Barn;
    - (ii) The layout respects the Historic Farmstead location and layout, nestled into a small valley head;
    - (iii) The new dwelling house would be laid out around two courtyard enclosures respecting the original farmstead footprint.
    - (iv) A progressive approach to building elements would give a clear hierarchy, to avoid oversized forms and indicate amorphous growth.
  12. Furthermore the applicant's state that the scale of the proposed replacement dwelling is controlled to ensure that the visual intrusion into the landscape is no greater than the existing dwelling house:-

1. The ridge height of the core element of the dwelling house is similar to the existing (approximately 8m);
2. The dwelling would sit at approximately the same level as the existing and would benefit from screening by land contours and mature trees;
3. The design of the new dwelling by progressive building elements would ensure that no single form would become oversized, with the most dominant element being the timber framed core; each element reduces down in scale from this;
4. Roof spans proposed are traditional dimensions and range from 6m to 4m; and
5. The buildings would be laid out around a courtyard which effectively conceals garages and limits the extent of any single elevation.

### **RELEVANT HISTORY**

13. Conversion of barn to residential accommodation (S/72/1200/HD Granted).
14. Conversion of barn to residential accommodation (S/73/150/HD Granted).
15. Notification under Part 6 of the Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 - Erection of building for storage of crops and machinery (B/02/00528/AGD Granted).
16. Conversion of redundant agricultural building to office as amended by letter dated 18/11/02 (B//02/01727/FUL Granted).
17. Change of use of agricultural building to the sale of equestrian equipment and feed (B/06/00431/FUL Refused).
18. Erection of general purpose agricultural building and associated re-contouring of land (existing packing sheds and cold stores to be demolished), as amended by plan 2235/06C, 2235/05C and 2239/09A received on 18/05/2009 (B/09/00359/FUL Granted).

### **NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

19. **PPS1** (Delivering Sustainable Development)
20. **PPS3** (Housing)
21. **PPS7** (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)
22. **PPS9** (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation)

### **PLANNING POLICIES**

23. 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:**

- **SS1** (Achieving Sustainable Development)
- **ENV7** (Quality in the Built Environment)

#### **Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) 2006**

- **EN09** (Conservation of Energy)
- **HS05** (Replacement Dwellings)
- **CR01** (Landscaping Quality)
- **CR04** (Special Landscape Areas)
- **CN01** (Design Standards)

**The relevant documents can be viewed via the internet. Please see page 3 for details.**

## **CONSULTATIONS**

24. PC - Hadleigh Town Council – Approval recommended
25. County Highway Authority – Do not wish to restrict the grant of permission.
26. SCC - Rights of Way Support Officer – No comments or observations to make.
27. Suffolk Wildlife Trust – Are satisfied with the findings of the Ecological Consultant. Should permission be granted they request that the recommendations in the Ecology report are implemented in full; as stated by the Consultants alternative bat roost sites should be in place prior to demolition commencing.
28. Natural England – Advise that the proposal as presented have the potential to affect protected species and refer the local planning authority to their Standing Advice, but the installation of bat boxes on the trees around the site will be appropriate mitigation.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

29. One letter of support has been received from the occupants of Pilgrims, Hook Lane who state that they are closest to Valley Park and consider that the proposal would greatly improve the local environment.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

30. Saved Policy HS05 permits the replacement of dwellings and ancillary outbuildings within the countryside subject to a number of criteria:
  - *The size and massing of the replacement is not significantly different to those of the original dwelling to be replaced;*
  - *The new dwelling is of a design which is sympathetic in scale, mass, materials and architectural details to the character of the surrounding development;*
  - *The proposals would not cause the felling or prejudice the retention of any significant trees that contribute to the environmental quality of the area;*
  - *The new dwelling has a safe vehicular access;*
  - *The new dwelling is no more visually intrusive than the original dwelling;*
  - *The existing dwelling is not a listed building; and*
  - *There is no increase in the number of dwellings on the site.*
31. The policy is intended to allow the replacement of a dwelling on or very close to the existing dwelling which has either reached the end of its useful life or which has some other problem attached to it.
32. Paragraph 3.45 of the supporting text states that the District Council will only consider a significant enlargement in the overall floor area of a replacement dwelling when the existing property is very small or where the extent of the site would enable a larger dwelling to be in proportion. Generally increases in the overall floor area of 30-35% (which includes the Permitted Development allowance) will be considered to be significant.

33. As can be deduced from "The Proposal" section above, the replacement dwelling would give rise to a percentage increase in total (residential) floor area of 42% (phase 1); and phase 2 which includes a swimming pool addition would give rise to a 78% increase in floor area over the existing dwelling. However there are key material considerations in the determination of this proposal, namely: the specific location within which the proposal finds itself situated; and the detailed design and layout of the replacement dwelling.
34. Whilst the size and massing of the replacement dwelling is significantly different (over 35% greater floor area) to those of the original dwelling to be replaced the new dwelling is of a design which is sympathetic in scale, mass, materials and architectural details to the character of the surrounding countryside. A high degree of articulation and a clear hierarchy of form and function would be achieved.
35. The appearance of the new dwelling would be that of a Farm House/Manorial Steading; using vernacular materials, traditional roof spans/pitches and purpose made vernacular joinery styles.
36. Furthermore, the site sits within a basin at the head of a small valley and already benefits from extensive garden areas, together with large, spring fed ponds. In the wider landscape the site is screened from all directions and therefore public views of it are already very limited.
37. The proposed replacement dwelling, designed in a manner that is sympathetic to the Suffolk vernacular in its valley location would not give rise to harm to the Special Landscape Area, with the new dwelling being no more visually intrusive than the original one.
38. Pursuant to the other criteria of Saved Policy HS05, the proposals would not cause the felling or prejudice the retention of any significant trees that contribute to the environmental quality of the area; the new dwelling has a safe vehicular access; the existing dwelling is not a listed building; and there would be no increase in the number of dwellings on the site.
39. PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, sets out government planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. Local
40. Planning Authorities are required under PPS9 to make planning decisions which are based upon up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of areas, including the presence of legally protected species and designated sites for nature conservation. In the context of development proposals, Local Planning Authorities are directed to ensure that species of principal conservation importance are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate, by using planning conditions or obligations. The conservation of such species should be promoted through the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity designs within developments.
41. The results of the great crested newt survey work indicate that the species is not present in the ponds within the site and the proposed works would therefore not impact upon individual great crested newts or on the local great crested newt population.

42. The results of the bat emergence survey work indicate that relatively low numbers of both common and soprano pipistrelle bats are using features on the exterior of the roof in which to roost. Therefore, because bats are present and the proposed works have the potential to impact on individual bats and actual roosting locations, an EPS licence will need to be applied for from Natural England before any works with the potential to affect roosting bats are undertaken, subject to planning permission being granted.
43. The Ecology report concludes that provided that appropriate mitigation and compensation is carried out for bats, as would be outlined in a detailed method statement which would be part of an EPS licence application, there should be no adverse impacts on individual bats or to the local bat population.

## **CONCLUSION**

44. In view of the fact that no demonstrable house would be caused by the proposal it is recommended for approval despite not strictly according with the % increased range advocated in paragraph 3.45 of policy HS05 of the Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) 2006.

## **REASON FOR DECISION**

45. The proposed replacement dwelling designed in a manner that is sympathetic to the Suffolk vernacular, set within a valley location it would not give rise to harm to the Special Landscape Area or the wider countryside within which it finds itself situated. The new dwelling would be no more visually intrusive than the existing one being of a design which is acceptable in terms of scale, mass, materials and architectural detailing. Furthermore no harm would result to protected species. The proposal therefore complies with Policies SS1 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008, saved Policies EN09, HS05, CR01, CR04 and CN01 of the Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) 2006 and Planning Policy Statements 1,3,7 & 9.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

46. Grant planning permission subject to conditions covering the following:
  - Standard Time Limit
  - Samples of materials to be submitted
  - Landscaping scheme
  - Bat mitigation measures to be implemented
  - Removal of permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings