

Reference:
17/00167/FUL

Site:
Land Adjacent To Landings
Outings Lane
Doddinghurst
Essex

Ward:
Brizes &
Doddinghurst

Proposal:
Construction of 3 four-bedroom detached dwellings.

Parish:
Doddinghurst

Councillor Parker referred the previous application on the site, which was withdrawn. Therefore, his referral has been carried forward onto this application and is on the basis that the 'reasons for refusal do not match the LDP in relation to infill sites and the closeness to a listed building'.

Plan Number(s):
PLANNING STATEMENT; HERITAGE STATEMENT; 8270_100_00;500/11; 600/03;
601/01; 700; 701; 800/01; 801/01; 900/01; 1000;

Applicant:
Mr Lambourne

Case Officer: Mr Nick Howard

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application. The proposal seeks to create three detached dwellings, which the applicant states are of a similar scale to those approved at the adjacent development of the Surgery Site and Landings. Plot One, located to the front of the site is served off an existing access and is a full two storey dwelling. Plots two and three are located to the rear of the site and are to be served from the access road for the adjacent development.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the edge of the village of Hook End, part of the parish of Doddinghurst. The site is located to the western side of Outings Lane, to the immediate southeast of the former Landings doctors' surgery and immediately northwest of the Grade II Listed Barfield Farmhouse. The site is situated within the Green Belt as defined in the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan.

The site comprises some 0.175 hectares of land, is undeveloped, with no buildings or structures on it and includes several trees, mainly along the boundaries. The plot is fairly regular in shape, with a frontage of 23m to Outings Lane and a maximum depth of 75m. The site slopes naturally from the southwest to the northeast.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

- 16/0727/OUT: Outline application for two dwellings: Withdrawn

The history set out below relates to the adjacent former surgery site.

- 15/00267/FUL: Demolition of former doctor's surgery and adjacent dwelling known as The Landings and construction of 6 no. detached dwellings and 2 no semi-detached dwellings. -Approve (Subject to Section 106)
- 14/00627/FUL: Demolition of former doctor's surgery and adjacent dwelling known as The Landings and construction of 5 no. detached dwellings. - Application Refused
- 13/00578/FUL: Construction of 2 No dwellings. -Application Refused
- 13/00008/OUT: Outline application for the demolition of former doctor's surgery and construction of two detached dwellings. Access, layout and scale to be determined. appearance and landscaping reserved. -Application Permitted
- 12/01280/OUT: Outline Application with all matters reserved for 2 No detached residential dwellings. -Application Permitted (Adjacent site Surgery)
- 12/00718/OUT: Outline application with all matters reserved for 3 no. detached residential dwellings. -Application Refused

4.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Detailed below is a summary of the consultation responses, if any received. The full version of each consultation response can be viewed on the Council's website via Public Access at the following link: <http://publicaccess.brentwood.gov.uk/online-applications/>

- **Parish Council-**

The Parish Council strongly objects to this application for the following reasons:

(a) The land is virgin Metropolitan Green Belt in that it has no building or structure on it whatsoever.

(b) The land proposed for development provides a "Green" space between the new development of 8 dwellings on the land that used to be a Doctors Surgery / the garden and land of "The Landings" to the North West and the adjacent listed building that is "Barfield Farm" to the South East.

(c) Whilst it will be claimed as an infill opportunity this Green belt space has been zoned as such to maintain the openness of character that is already put at risk by excessive development at the North-West end of Outings Lane by the merging together of two

previous building sites (the old doctor's surgery and the Landings) and the replacement by 8 houses in a "mini" estate type development. This existing, and in progress development, makes the preservation of this green space even more precious.

(d) Any development on this Green Belt land will create a cramped and crowded street scene especially inappropriate next to Grade 2 listed timber framed buildings that form Barfield Farm.

(e) There are no exceptional circumstances that exist that could be considered relevant to permit development of this Green Belt land.

(f) The current and adjacent development is proving how out of place and detrimental to the street scene these developments are proving to be with over bearing and over dominant houses being provided visually too close to the narrow highway that Outings Lane is.

(g) Application 16/00727/OUT for 2 x 4 bedroomed detached dwelling on this site was refused

- **Highway Authority-**

No objections subject to conditions

- **Essex & Suffolk Water-**

We have no objection to this development subject to compliance with our requirements, consent is given to the development on the condition that a water connection is made onto our Company network for the new dwelling for revenue purposes.

- **Environmental Health & Enforcement Manager-**

No objections subject to conditions relating to hours of operation whilst constructing, minimise noise to machinery, wheel washing and no bonfires on site.

- **Arboriculturalist-**

The application states that there are no trees on site, however the 2014 aerial photographs show considerable tree cover. The trees have been removed prior to the submission of the application and the Council have not been able to assess the merits of any of the trees. If they had not been removed then a full arboriculture report would have been required.

- **Essex Badger Protection Group-**

No badger report submitted with the application. Request a condition for a full habitat survey if the Council are minded to approve the application.

- **Historic Buildings and Conservation Officer-**

Strongly object on the grounds the proposal will cause material harm to the setting of the listed building. The content of the HBC's officer's objection is addressed within the assessment part of the report.

5.0 SUMMARY OF NEIGHBOUR COMMENTS

This application has been advertised by way of individual neighbour notification letters, press advert and public site notice which has been displayed nearby.

Detailed below is a summary of the neighbour comments, if any received. The full version of each neighbour response can be viewed on the Council's website via Public Access at the following link: <http://publicaccess.brentwood.gov.uk/online-applications/>

6 letters of objection on the grounds the site is within the Green Belt, potential flooding, precedent for similar development, it would mar the presence of the adjacent Grade II listed building, the lane is too narrow for a two-way flow and the site entrance is at the narrowest width of the lane.

6.0 POLICY CONTEXT

The starting point for determining an application is the development plan, in this instance, the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan (BRLP) 2005. Applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant material considerations for determining this application are the following RLP policies: CP1, GB1, GB2, H9, T2 and C16. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) 2014.

RLP Policy: CP1, GB1, GB2, H9, T2 and C16

Local Development Plan:

The Local Development Plan is currently at the Draft Stage (Regulation 18) and as there are outstanding objections to be resolved, only limited weight can be given to it in terms of decision making, as set out in paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework. As the plan advances and objections become resolved, more weight can be applied to the policies within it. Nevertheless, the draft Local Plan provides a good indication of the direction of travel in terms of aspirations for growth in the Borough and where development is likely to come forward through draft housing and employment allocations. The next stage of the Local Plan is the Pre-Submission Draft (Regulation 19) which is currently anticipated to be published in late 2017. Following this, the Draft LDP will be submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public. Provided the Inspector finds the plan to be sound it is estimated that it could be adopted in late 2017 or early 2018.

7.0 ASSESSMENT

The main issues for consideration are:

- Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Whether there would be harm to the openness of the Green Belt
- Impact on the adjacent Heritage Asset

- Other Issues

Background

In February 2016, planning permission was granted for the demolition of the former doctors' surgery and adjacent dwelling known as The Landings and construction of 6 no. detached dwellings and 2 no. semi-detached dwellings, under reference 15/00267/FUL. This development is currently under construction and abuts the application site. It should be noted that the site is within the development boundary of Hook End as defined by the BRLP.

Green Belt

In contrast this application site is situated within the Green Belt as defined in the BRLP. The way in which the LPA handles new development in the Green Belt is set out in the NPPF (The Framework). All new development in the Green Belt is inappropriate development unless it represents the redevelopment of previously developed land or infill development in a village. The key issues are therefore whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would it be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and whether the proposal would affect the setting of the adjacent listed building.

The applicant considers the proposal represents infill development i.e. the site is situated between the adjacent housing site and the listed Farmhouse. The Framework in Paragraph 89 defines a number of exceptions against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, one of which is limited infilling in villages. The applicant acknowledges the site is lying outside of the defined settlement limits of Doddinghurst, however he considers the subject site is clearly part of the village by stating it is surrounded on three sides by residential properties, with the dwellings to the northwest and northeast, falling within the defined settlement boundary. The draft Local Plan proposes no change to the settlement boundaries or the Green belt boundaries in the vicinity of the site.

However, for settlements where a Green Belt boundary has been defined, the boundary usually marks the edge of the settlement where there is a break in development or a change in character to more loose-knit development. The former surgery was within the development boundary of Hook End and it was therefore appropriate for redevelopment. This site has been redeveloped for housing.

To the west of that site is the application site which comprises an open area devoid of structures or buildings. Although there are residential properties opposite the site, the character on the southern side of Outings Lane has clearly changed from an urban context to a rural character. Therefore, the proposal would compromise the purposes of the Green Belt which seeks to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The proposal would therefore represent inappropriate development and be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policies GB1 and GB2 of the BRLP.

In addition, officers consider that if the proposal were to be approved then a precedent for similar proposals may be achievable. The character of this area is villages or built up areas defined by settlement boundaries and beyond these boundaries in the Green Belt there is more loose knit development, comprising single dwellings or small clusters of dwellings with gaps between the settlement boundary and these dwellings. Planning approval of this scheme may lead to more speculative development that further diminishes the functions of the Green Belt.

Impact on adjacent listed building

Turning to the issue of the impact the proposal would have on the adjacent listed building Barfield Farmhouse, it is considered the proposal would have less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. Paragraph 134 of the Framework states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

The development site is located upon the thoroughfare of Outings Lane, immediately adjacent to the historic curtilage of the Grade II listed building of BARFIELD FARMHOUSE, List entry Number: 1197276. Barfield Farmhouse dates from the C17th, a Hunting lodge at inception, evolving to farmstead with farmhouse within a L shaped complex, to the present detached residential dwelling in the C20th.

'Hunting lodge, now house. Early C17, C18, C19 and C20. Timber-frame exposed and part brick rendered. Roofs peg-tiled. Plan rectangular containing central timber-framed block with single room on each floor and stair and symmetrical extensions to N (timber-framed, C18) and to S (brick, C20) both colour washed with hip roofs, also C19 timber outshut on N and W sides. C20 outshut along rear.....Similar hunting standings occur at Chingford, Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, and at Lodge Farm, Galleywood, on the other side of the forest of Shenfield. (RCHM: Central and SW Essex: Monument 9: 57)'

This latter part of the above list extract is evidenced further by cartographic data of the Doddinghurst Parish, here how the building has historically been experienced and characterised is illustrated, that is, it stood in open countryside with long views.

'Barfields' as it was known, presented itself as a farmstead nucleus in open countryside, it is comparable to other hunting lodges in East Anglia, this contributes to its historical significance. The building is also cited in Pevsner (Buildings of England, Essex, Bettley, 2007) under the Doddinghurst Parish further supporting its significance as a building of merit within the County.

This submission follows a recently withdrawn Outline application ref: 16/00727/OUT, which concerned proposals for 2 x four bedroom detached dwellings. The principle of development was unsupported by Conservation.

The current scheme proposes 3 x four bedroom detached dwellings immediately adjacent to the Grade II listed building of Barfield Farmhouse, a summary of its significance is set out within the opening section of this comment.

Having assessed this current application, the Historic Building Officer (HBO) strongly opposes the principle of development at this location, the land is an important buffer to the West of the historic curtilage, it contributes positively to the setting of the listed building and how such is experienced.

The heritage statement submitted as part of this application includes a comprehensive narrative with assumptions towards the evolution of the listed building. However, the HBO does not agree there is any relevant parallel with the Grade I listed building Ashdown House (cited p.3 Heritage Statement). This listed building is in Berkshire; its typology is not comparable to the Essex form of Barfield.

In addition, the HBO does not find the transformation of Barfield from a Hunting Lodge to Farmhouse in the C17th, as being significantly harmful resulting in a diminution of its character and special architectural interest, moreover this evolution remains of significance, particularly given the scattering of hunting lodges within East Anglia and their associations to The Crown, many of which were adapted in use and architectural styles.

Whilst the HBO agrees with the Heritage Statement in respect of the reduction in the open countryside setting of Barfield, the assessment does not provide commentary nor is it conclusive in respect of the impact of the proposed development upon the setting of the listed building.

The HBO advises the existing Green Belt boundary forms a clear and important function in respect of setting. The diminution of the countryside setting over recent years around the listed building, further substantiates the importance of maintaining the undeveloped buffer zone as an important contributor to the setting of the heritage asset.

In respect of the proposed design; the spread of the proposed development encroaches in both footprint and massing, and is not supported. The proposed three dwellings are set within the rectangular site. Plot 1 being at the principle frontage is some 9m in height and spreads in depth to 13m, this is accompanied by a detached garage building. It is worth noting the host listed building of Barfield is some 8m in depth and as a result of this application would become subservient in massing to the proposed dwelling; whilst the ridge height of Plot 1 is proposed to be marginally lower than the listed building, the overall massing and footprint is greater, this is not ideal.

Plots 2 and 3 are located at the rear of the proposed development plot, the siting of these forms encroach upon the south west views of the listed building, their square plan forms when elevated, evidence a marginal articulation of massing, however the scale

has been led by the adjacent development as opposed to being an architectural response to the neighbouring listed building and its setting.

The heritage statement refers to the design language proposed and discusses the materiality and narrative of the proposed forms, it does not however examine and conclude how this proposed scale, massing and spread of development impacts upon a Heritage Asset.

Overall the HBO raises an objection to this application; the site is designated Green Belt which contributes to the historical significance of Barfield Farmhouse and contributes positively to its setting. Whilst the harm caused by way of these proposals would be less than substantial, the HBO advises they would be at the high end of the scale.

Other Matters

The lack of a five-year supply is not in itself considered to be a very special circumstance that clearly outweighs the harm through inappropriateness in the Green Belt and the other harm identified.

Regarding the adjacent site, the approved development included eight dwellings of which an off- site commuted sum was paid on the basis of two affordable houses. Policy H9 of the BRLP requires affordable housing on sites of 5 units or more, where the site is located outside the Brentwood Urban Area. The BRLP further states this policy will apply to sites where the proposed residential development site is contiguous with one or more other potential residential development sites. Given the current application site abuts the Landings site and there is a link road proposed from the adjacent site to serve plots 2 & 3, it is considered that the proposal is contiguous with the adjacent development site and therefore Policy H9 applies.

Since the adoption of Policy H9 the Government's written statement in 2014 announced that for developments of 10 homes or fewer, local councils would not be able to impose affordable housing contributions. Notwithstanding this the proposal is for three dwellings which added to the previously approved eight dwellings on the adjacent site, total eleven dwellings and therefore the Council can seek an affordable housing contribution.

The Council within Policy H9 seeks 35% affordable, which from 11 dwellings would provide a requirement of 3 (rounded down). Given the applicant has already provided a contribution towards 2 dwellings off site, they would either need to provide an affordable dwelling within the scheme or a financial contribution for a further dwelling. Given there is no indication of either then it is considered the proposal is contrary to Policy H9.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The proposal would represent inappropriate development, in that it does not constitute infill development and it would be harmful to the setting of the adjacent listed building. The benefits derived from the scheme would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm to

the Green Belt and the setting of the listed building. Furthermore, the proposal does not provide any provision for affordable housing as required by the Local Plan.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

The Application be REFUSED for the following reasons:-

1. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt that would materially detract from openness and would represent an encroachment of development into the countryside. It would therefore conflict with Brentwood Replacement Local Plan Policies GB1 and GB2 and the objectives of the Framework as regards development in the Green Belt.
2. Other matters that may weigh in favour of the proposal have been considered but collectively they do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt or the other harms identified. Therefore, very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt do not exist.
3. The proposed development, by reason its massing, design and close proximity to the listed building and its curtilage structures, would be harmful to the setting of the adjacent Grade ii listed building 'Barfield Farmhouse'. The proposed harm to the setting of the Listed Building outweighs the public benefit that would be derived from the scheme. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy C16 of the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan and the provisions of the Framework.
4. The proposal does not provide any provision for affordable housing as part of the proposed scheme. The lack of affordable housing does not contribute to the significant need for affordable housing in the Borough and is therefore contrary to Policy H9 of the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan and the provisions of the Framework.

Informative(s)

1. The following development plan policies contained in the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan 2005 are relevant to this decision: GB1, GB2, C16 and T2 ; the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and NPPG 2014
2. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and clearly identifying within the grounds of refusal either the defective principle of development or the significant and demonstrable harm it would cause. The issues identified are so fundamental to the proposal that based on the information submitted with the application, the Local Planning Authority do not consider a negotiable position is possible at this time.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:
www.brentwood.gov.uk/planning