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Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0626/07 **Recommendation - Application Refused**

Site: **Old Salts Nursery, Old Salts Farm Road, Lancing BN15 8JQ**

Proposal: **Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two-storey 'flood resistant' house**

The Application

The application relates to a former smallholding, 1.1 hectares in size, located in the centre of the predominantly undeveloped 'strategic gap' of countryside separating Shoreham-by-Sea and Lancing.

The site itself is mainly made up of a number of different paddocks and grassed small fields, a central gravelled driveway leading to a parking area that can accommodate up to ten cars, either side of which are built structures. To the west is a series of stables buildings (some currently under construction), some of which appear in accordance with L/189/02, some of which are new and may require planning permission. To the east of the central driveway stands a part-hip, part-gable bungalow, approximately 72 square metres in floor area.

Surrounding the site to the to the east and south are open pasture and fields, to the south-west is an equestrian centre which has a number of stables and barn type buildings, all of which are low level. To the north of the equestrian centre is Denburry, a residential bungalow. To the west of the application property is Lancing Fruit Farm, located within the apex of Old Salts Farm Road. It has many structures and buildings within the grounds some temporary in nature, but they are shielded from view by a number of trees surrounding the site. To the north of the site is Bramble Farm another site with a number of barns and agricultural buildings but again all low level in size. To the east of Bramble farm are the only comparable buildings within the area, two residential houses. Fidelis, the most western, is a 1940's hipped roof house with projecting front gable, it has a small footprint size approximately 52 sqm. Oakdene to the east is a chalet style, gabled house also from the 1940's, with eaves at first floor level. The ridge is high to accommodate the first floor rooms and it has an east side dormer/side extension. To the north of Oakdene and Fidelis running parallel with this part of the main road runs the mainline railway from Shoreham to Lancing.

The siting of the existing bungalow was approved under L/130/81 with a condition attached requiring the occupation be limited to people employed in agriculture. A subsequent application (ADC/0138/07) for a Certificate of Lawfulness in breach of this condition was approved, as it had been proven

that the property had not used by anyone employed in any agricultural business for more than 10 years.

Consultations and Representations

WSCC Transport Planning Services: No objection. The vehicular access is onto Old Salts Farm Road, which is a private road. Whilst minor alterations may be proposed to the car parking and on-site turning, this does not affect access onto the public highway and, in terms of vehicular movements, the proposed dwelling is unlikely to result in any material increase or any detrimental impact.

Environment Agency: The flood risk assessment (FRA) accompanying this application states that the risk of flooding to this development can be adequately managed. No objection to this development providing that the mitigation measures indicated in the FRA are included in the final development, including that the finished floor levels are set at a minimum of 4.8 metres AOD, as shown on the submitted drawings and shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the LPA.

Environmental Health Officer: No objection

Lancing Parish Council: Objects on grounds of overdevelopment in the strategic gap.

Third Parties: There have been no third party representations on the application.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC2, CH1, CH3, ERA1, ERA4, DEV1, DEV4-5.
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AC1, AC4, AH10
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' (ODPM 2004)
PPS25 'Planning and Flood Risk' (ODPM 2006) & Circular 04/07

Planning Assessment

Structure Plan policy LOC2 states that development in the countryside should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated to require a countryside location. It also states, where this criteria is met, that priority is to be given to the re-use, adaptation and extension of existing buildings where this is possible without extensive alteration or reconstruction, before the construction of replacement or new buildings. Policy CH3 lists 'strategic gaps' of countryside separating built-up areas (including that between Lancing and Shoreham in which the site is located) in order to preserve the separate identity and character of the settlements concerned. It states that any

development which would undermine this objective or lead to the actual or perceived coalescence of settlements should not be permitted.

Policy AC4 of the Local Plan states that development within areas designated as strategic gaps will not normally be permitted. This is in order to prevent coalescence and to retain the separate identities and amenities of the settlements. It goes on to say that only in compelling circumstances will development be permitted such as in relation to the essential needs of agriculture, horticulture, forestry or the diversification of the rural economy or to take advantage of a valuable opportunity to meet the need for recreation. Policy AC1 requires that the countryside of the District be protected for its own sake from development which does not need a countryside location.

Policy AC10 provides for replacement dwellings but only if they can be accommodated satisfactorily within existing curtilages and have no adverse impact on the landscape. In relation to extensions and alterations, the policy states that they should respect the existing scale and character of the original dwelling.

The existing bungalow was originally permitted to provide accommodation for a person employed in agriculture (horticulture) and was subject to a restrictive occupancy condition. However, in 2007 a certificate of lawfulness was granted for unrestricted occupation as a dwelling (it having been shown to have been occupied for a period of at least 10 years by persons not employed or last employed in agriculture).

The existing bungalow, although having 4 bedrooms, is small in size (72 sqm) and notable for its diminutive scale, with a low ridge height and eaves level (just above the top of the ground floor window and door frames). It sits well within the landscape of the 'Strategic Gap' and does not appear overdominant in scale compared to other structures in the vicinity.

In contrast, the proposed new house would be massive in scale being 20m in length and 11m in depth. At 220sqm, it would be 3 times the floor area of the existing bungalow. In terms of volume, the increase would be even greater. It would be two full storeys high with a part-hipped gable roof with two front projecting gables, both with part-hipped roofs. The main roof would have a ridge height of 9m, with the eaves being at 5.5m to 7m. The property would have 5 designated bedrooms (two with en-suite) each being over 13 sqm in size although the room marked as a study could easily be utilised at a further bedroom. The ground floor is made up of a living room and kitchen/family room, a dining room, utility and entrance hallway. The two main living areas would be the same in size at 57sqm.

A recent replacement two-storey house was approved in the strategic gap at North Barn Kennels (ADC/0228/06), a site approximately 180m to the east. The new dwelling was proposed to have a footprint of 105 sqm. It was considered that as the dwelling was to replace a somewhat sprawling range of single storey buildings and converted sheds with a footprint of 125sqm that it was acceptable given the 8m overall ridge height and eaves level of 4.5m-5m.

In the present case, the overall scale of the proposed house is massive and vastly exceeds that of the existing dwelling. It would have a major impact on the landscape of the Strategic Gap, clearly in conflict with the objective of retaining the gap as open countryside. Whilst there is existing sporadic development within the Gap, other buildings are generally small scale. The proposed new house would appear excessive given its bulk and height, being visible over a much wider area than the existing bungalow.

There is no evidence of a compelling need for the scale of the proposal such as to over-ride the above objection and it is therefore considered contrary to the policies protecting the countryside and strategic gap.

Recommendation

REFUSE for reasons that :-

1. C1R .....proposed replacement dwelling, being excessive in size and unrelated to the needs of agriculture.....protect the countryside and ensure that new development is kept to a minimum.

2. C3AR
   The site lies within the "Strategic Gap" of open land between the built-up areas of Shoreham and Lancing and the proposal would conflict with the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH3) and the Adur District Local Plan (AC4) which seek to maintain a particularly strong presumption against development such as that proposed in strategic gaps between built-up areas in order to retain their open character, prevent the coalescence of settlements and retain their separate identities.

3. C17R
   The proposal, by reason of its excessive scale, constitutes a visual intrusion in the countryside which would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the locality, contrary to the policies of the West Sussex Structure Plan (CH1, DEV1).

Case Officer:
Date:

6/12