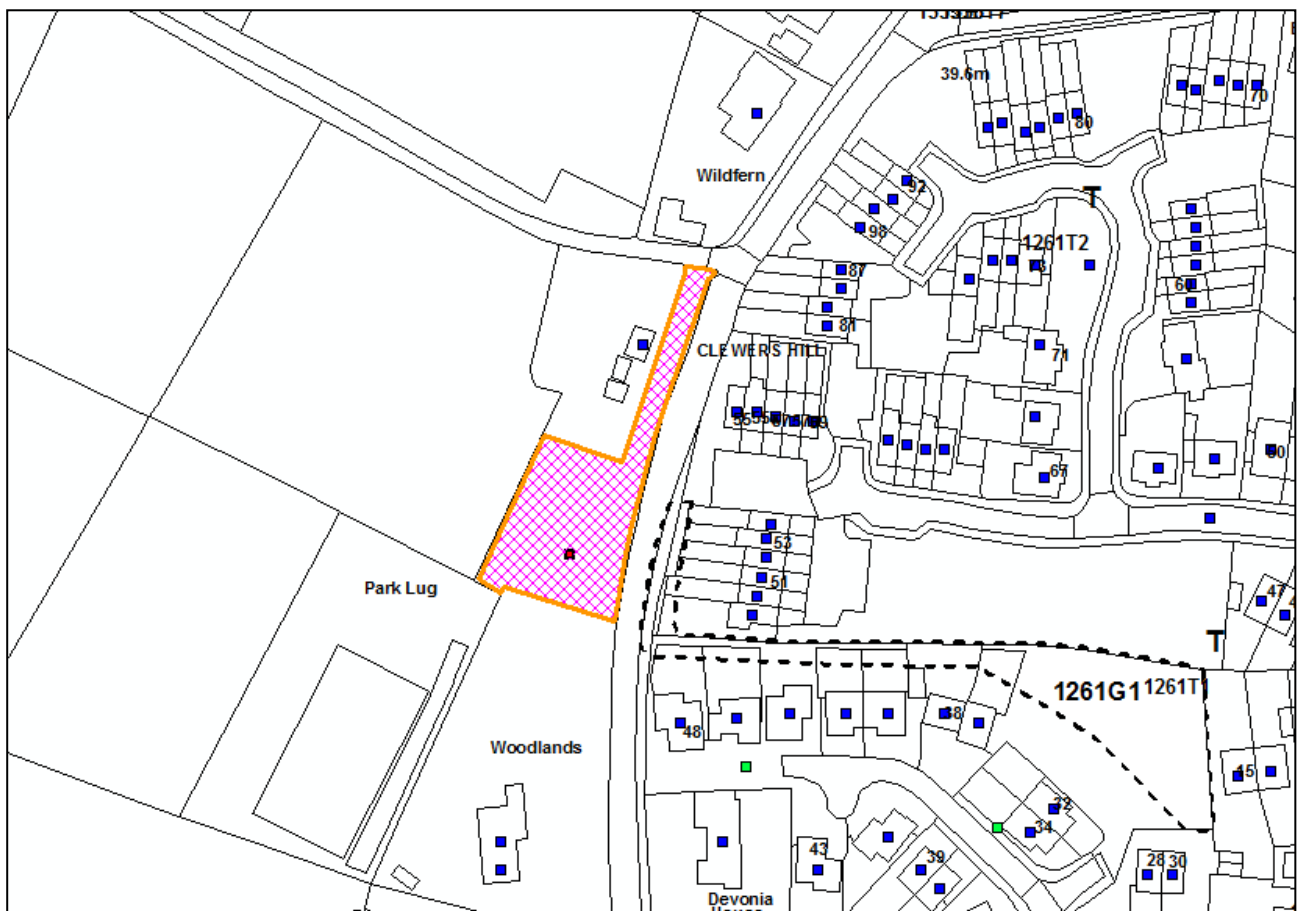


WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Case No: 20/02668/FUL
Proposal Description: Erection of a self-build dwelling
Address: Land Adjacent To Woodlands Clewers Hill Waltham Chase
Hampshire
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Shedfield
Applicants Name: Ms Corinne Staples
Case Officer: Marge Ballinger
Date Valid: 8 January 2021
Recommendation: Refuse

Link to Planning Documents : <https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QKO6G0BPG4D00>

Pre Application Advice: No



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General Comments

The application is reported to Committee due to the number of letters received contrary to the officer recommendation.

Site Description

The site is an area of 0.12 ha approximately, set along the west side of Clewers Hill. The site comprises as part of the residential curtilage of Woodlands dwelling (south). There are no significant features within the site, which is currently laid to grass, but there are mature hedges and trees along the road frontage (east), with further hedgerows along the south and west boundaries. The site is open along the north that faces an equestrian barn and mobile home, and includes access to the site from an informal track.

The site is located outside the settlement boundary of Waltham Chase, as Clewers Hill road forms the boundary. North of the proposal site is a designated settlement gap, but the gap defined by CP18 stops at the proposal's site. Within the immediate area, west of Clewers Hill and north of Curdridge Lane, are just two dwellings: Woodlands (approximately 135m away from the nearest dwelling north), and Crossways (104m south of Woodlands), and both sit within sizeable plots adjacent open grazing land. The area has a rural character and appearance which distinguishes it from the built up area east of the proposal's site.

Proposal

The proposed development comprises the erection of 1 no. 1 ½ storey dwelling with one bedroom annexe suite to ground floor and a further 3 bedrooms within the first floor (15.6m width x 13m depth x 6.8m in height approximately). The ground floor was designed to accommodate the applicant's daughter who has a progressive mobility disorder, and designed with links to the remaining ground floor living space. The building will be orientated within the southern end of the proposal site with its front elevation facing north toward the existing access/drive. The building's design is unique with a modern take on a 'cruck framed' structure that utilises straw for insulation with walls finished in breathable lime plaster and vertical timber cladding.

Improvements and enhancements to the existing hedgerow, with some tree planting are proposed, with hedgerows planted to frame the potential front garden and parking area, and also to provide some screening along the rear of the dwelling from Woodlands. The hedgerow to the eastern boundary is to be retained along the roadside while some of the western boundary may be impacted near the stable block.

Relevant Planning History

The site within the location plan's red-edge is adjacent and included within Woodlands planning history:

- Stable block (north of proposal site): 13/01381/FUL (PER 05.09.2013)
Replacement of existing stables
- Woodlands dwelling (south of proposal site):

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- 02/00171/FUL (REF 04.03.2002)- Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 1 no. 5 bedroom detached dwelling with detached double garage
- 02/01249/FUL (PER 24.06.2002) – Replacement four bedroom dwelling
- 05/00848/FUL (PER 23.05.2005) - Conservatory to side and erection of detached double garage
- 08/01451/FUL (PER 23.07.2008) Re-siting of approved garage (05/00848/FUL) and amended design

Consultations

Service Lead for Environmental Services - Drainage: No objection

No objection subject to condition requiring detailed proposals of the drainage, including infiltration testing results. Details to be approved prior to works commencing.

HCC Highways: No objection

Initial comments noted some inconsistencies within the original details regarding the access. Further drawings were received that demonstrated visibility displays and a subsequent site visit was held as the carriageway sits below ground levels of the proposed access. No objection subject to conditions to amend the site and landscaping to increase visibility; gates (if proposed) set back at a minimum 6m from edge of carriageway; use of non-migratory of at least 6m from edge of carriageway, including interception drainage; parking/turning provided prior to occupation and maintained at all times. Details to be approved in writing by the LPA prior to works commencing.

Service Lead for Environment – Landscape: No objection

No objection, subject to condition. A landscape plan had been provided that outlined some enhancement to existing hedgerows, but the details are insufficient to identify the more significant site features or trees to be retained, especially along the eastern boundary. A condition will be required for an amended landscape plan and section for LPA to approve prior to works commencing.

Service Lead for Environment – Trees: No objection

No objection, subject to condition to secure an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Works Method Statement for approval prior to works commencing.

Natural England – No objection

Provided that the Council is satisfied that the adopted strategy for addressing nutrient impacts for the development will ensure that the proposal is nutrient neutral and the measures can be fully secured, there are no concerns on this issue.

Recreational disturbance on Special Protection Areas within the Solent: This application is within 5.6km of Solent and Southampton Water SPA and will lead to a net increase in residential accommodation. Natural England is aware that your authority has adopted planning policy to mitigate against adverse effects from recreational disturbance on the Solent SPA sites, as agreed by the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP).

Portsmouth Water – No objection

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The site is located outside a groundwater Source Protection Zone for the public water supply sources, no further objection or conditions raised.

Representations:

Shedfield Parish Council: objection as the proposal does not comply with various policies:

- Local needs have been achieved and exceeds the prior housing development site allocation (including affordable housing) (DS1);
- Building outside settlement boundaries are not included within any community-based initiatives (MTRA2);
- There is no operational need that complies with policy within the proposal for a countryside development (MTRA4).

Thirteen letters received (3 nearby neighbours, 10 from the local and district communities) in support of the application for the following material planning reasons:

- Dwelling is well designed, eco-friendly and sustainable
- Design and materials will blend in and are in-keeping with the countryside setting
- Accessible dwelling will suit the owner's family needs (as well as future owners)
- Self-build proposed; water/sewer already supplied to nearby stable building

Reasons aside not material to planning and therefore not addressed in this report

- Personal circumstances (for example, build closer to other family members and horses)
- Family move would release affordable housing for Bishops Waltham

Relevant Planning Policy:

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1)
CP16, MTRA3, MTRA4

Winchester Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations (LPP2)
DM1, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM23

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:
National Planning Policy Framework

Supplementary Planning Guidance
Shedfield Village Design Statement 2016 (includes Waltham Chase)

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations

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indicate otherwise.

The site does not fall within an area covered by Policy MTRA3 of LPP1, where the infilling of small plots may be acceptable, as it is located outside the settlement boundary of Waltham Chase. Where there is a settlement boundary, which has been confirmed by the adoption of the Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management and Site Allocations (LPP2), the intention is to ensure that new development is located within the boundary and to avoid the further encroachment of the built-up area into the countryside. The proposed dwelling would therefore be contrary to Policy MTRA4 of LPP1 and DM1 of the LPP2.

Design/layout

The proposal site is north of Woodlands dwelling, with an eastern boundary of hedgerow that is noted as a 'locally important hedgerow' within the Shedfield Village Design Statement (map on page 14). The site is adjacent and open to an existing caravan and stable building north, near the proposed access track. To the west of the site is open grazing land. Directly across the road further east is a group of protected trees.

The proposed dwelling is designed with a unique cruck frame with the curvature more visible from west and east views. The ground floor has a self-contained annexe along its south (rear) elevation with links into other living spaces at ground floor. The upper floors have a further 3 bedrooms, one with a west-facing balcony that overlooks the open grazing land. The wooden beams will serve as both rafters and studding and straw is proposed to be used for insulation. Vertical timber cladding is proposed along the external walls, and timber shingles proposed for the roof. The Huff Puff House is a company out of Dorset that have created self build kits, and markets their dwellings as eco-friendly and energy-efficient.

The dwelling will result in approximately 23% of built form within its immediate residential amenity space for use (excluding the drive). The proposal has allocated most of its external amenity space toward the front of the dwelling (north) that will also include its parking/turning area. There is a large oak tree toward the front of the site that is to be retained and further hedgerow planting to frame the site for further privacy from the caravan and stable use north, and from the drive and residential amenity space to Woodlands dwelling south.

Impact on character of area and neighbouring property

The design is considered within scale of the site overall, and utilises sustainable materials that would be appear to contribute to a rural character (DM16 vi and vii). Due to distance from Woodlands dwelling, the proposal is not expected to impact neighbouring amenities in terms of overlooking or overbearing (DM17 vii).

However, as the site is outside the settlement boundary, MTRA4 of the LLP1 restricts development for the following: development must have an operational need for the countryside location; reuse existing rural buildings for employment/tourist/community or affordable housing and capable without use without major reconstruction; expansion of existing buildings to expand established businesses; or for small scale/low key tourist accommodation. The proposal is within land defined as such, and does not comply with

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any of the development reasons noted above.

DM15 of the LLP2 requires development proposals to acknowledge and protect special features noted with Village Design Statements. The proposal site, adjacent a 'locally important hedgerow', provides a visual gap between an existing stable building and Woodlands dwelling. The road sits below the surrounding land on either side, and without pavements or paths. Although the existing housing development east of the road is visible, the fencing and buildings are set back from the road, and the majority of the hedgerow has been maintained, and includes a group of protected trees – therefore, the road is dominated by trees and planting when travelling adjacent the proposal site. Disruption of the visual surroundings with a new dwelling would impact the existing rural character. The creation of residential use within this site is considered to impact the existing rural tranquillity of the site as well, and therefore fails to comply with DM23 of the LPP2.

Landscape/Trees

Although a landscape plan has been provided, it is considered to lack a thorough assessment of the existing hedgerows and what is to be retained and enhanced, so conditions will ensure this information is approved prior to commencement. The tree officer has requested further details of a tree survey and works method statement to ensure the existing trees are protected and retained. An initial tree survey had been submitted as part of this application, but the survey was undertaken without the details of the new dwelling and the works required.

Highways/Parking

The access has been confirmed as acceptable by the Highways authority with its recommended conditions. The verge increase and ground level changes will need to balance with the recommendations of the eventual landscape plan to be approved.

Ecology

The land around the site is rich with boundary hedge planting. Although an updated landscape plan will be conditioned to understand the full extent of the enhancements and planting with the retained hedgerow, some of the existing western boundary planting will be disturbed with the removal of the stable block to clear the site for the proposed dwelling. The result would be a loss of natural habitats to birds and other wildlife. (However, as this site is outside priority habitat maps, the WCC Ecologist has been consulted – feedback to come as an amendment to the report.)

Nitrates

The site is located in an area where Natural England has raised concern regarding the continued discharge of nitrates and phosphorus (nutrients) due to its proximity to and impact, resulting from eutrophication, on the Solent water environment, recognised as being internationally important for its wildlife and safeguarded by Special Protection Area designations. In relation to this proposal a Nitrate budget has been submitted, which demonstrates that the development would result in additional nitrogen being released into the sewerage system and appropriate mitigation will be required in order to achieve the neutrality that is required.

The applicants have agreed to the Grampian condition, set out in the Council's Position

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Statement on nitrate neutral development. An Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and policy CP16 of the Local Plan Part 1 and subject to the provision of these mitigation measures the development will not result in an adverse impact on the ecology of the area and is therefore acceptable in this respect.

Other Matters: Self Build

The NPPF requires councils to undertake an assessment of need for different forms of housing for different groups in the community including those wishing to commission or build their own homes. (This exercise is being undertaken as part of the evidence for the new Local Plan 2038 with an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment which will address the need for custom / self build.) The NPPF whilst identifying that the needs of those wishing to commission or build their own homes need to be assessed and met, does not envisage them being built as exceptions sites outside settlement boundaries. Therefore limited weight can be given to this aspect of the proposed development.

Equality

Due regard should be given to the Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty. Public bodies need to consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. The weight given to the Equality Duty, compared to the other factors, will depend on how much that function affects discrimination, equality of opportunity and good relations and the extent of any disadvantage that needs to be addressed. The Local Planning Authority has given due regard to this duty and the considerations do not outweigh any matters in the exercise of our duty as statutory planning authority for the council.

Conclusion

The proposal would be contrary to policies for the protection of the countryside in that it would result in the provision of a new residential dwelling, for which there is no overriding justification. The development would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reasons:

1. The proposal would represent an undesirable residential dwelling in the countryside for which there is no overriding justification contrary to Policy MTRA4 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy.
2. The proposal would result in development within the countryside which would be harmful to the overall character and appearance of the local area, detrimentally impacting on the semi-rural nature of the landscape contrary to Policy DM23 of the Winchester District Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations. Furthermore, it would set a precedent which would make it difficult to resist further intensification of development in this area, cumulatively causing more harm.

Informatives:

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1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, Winchester City Council (WCC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, working with applicants and agents to achieve the best solution. To this end WCC:
 - offer a pre-application advice service and,
 - update applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application, where possible suggesting alternative solutions.In this instance, a site visit has been carried out, and there has been notification to address some of the concerns raised.

2. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-
 - Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy: MTRA3, MTRA4, CP16
 - Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations: DM1, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM23
 - Shedfield Village Design Statement 2016