

5. The erection of a bungalow (GR 357196/124653) Planning Application: 09/03706/FUL

Proposal :	The erection of a bungalow (GR 357196/124653)
Site Address:	Land At Slow Court Farm Slow Court Lane West Camel
Parish:	West Camel
CAMELOT Ward (SSDC Member)	Mr M. Lewis (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Nicholas Head Tel: (01935) 462167 Email: nick.head@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	6th November 2009
Applicant :	Miss J & A Down
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mrs Janet Montgomery Brimble Lea & Partners Wessex House High Street Gillingham Dorset SP8 4AG
Application Type :	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

Reason for Referral to Committee

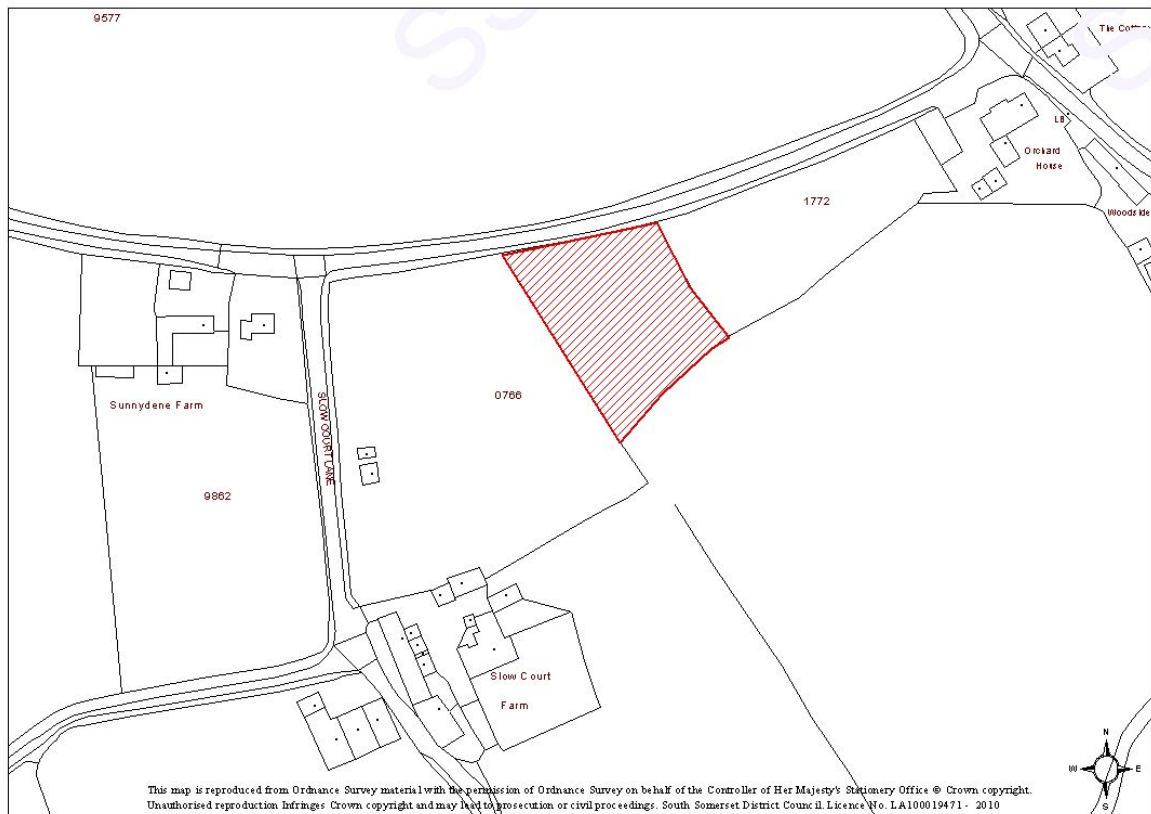
The application was considered by the Joint Area East Committee on 9 December 2009 (draft minute attached as Annex C). As the proposal represents a departure from the Development Plan (i.e. a 'two-starred' item), it was resolved to refer the matter to the Regulation Committee for decision, with a recommendation for approval on the basis that:

1. A robust case been proven which confirms and establishes a special need for a dwelling as an exception to the normal planning policy constraints against new development in the open countryside.
2. It has been properly established that this is the most appropriate way to meet the proven need and that the site selected is the most appropriate and available site.
3. The proposed development can be secured in perpetuity to meet the identified special need, and,
4. The proposed development meets the key planning principles and will deliver high quality housing that contributes to the creation and maintenance of sustainable rural communities.

Reasons For Initial Referral To Committee

The application was referred to the Committee at the request of the Ward Member/Chairman on the grounds that this is an application for a dwelling specifically design for people with disabilities and could be conditioned to remain so in perpetuity.

Site Description And Proposal



The site is located in open country, outside of any development area. It is situated to the west of the village of West Camel, 120m to the north of the farm buildings of Slow Court Farm. The site is open, undeveloped land, bordering the lane on the north side, with open fields on all other sides.

It is proposed to erect a single storey dwelling with a residential curtilage of approx 2500 sq m.

History

04/ 00976/OUT - Erection of single storey dwelling - refused

Also relevant (same applicants, similar development outside of development limits, similar justification for proposal):

05/00646/OUT - The erection of a live/work bungalow - refused. This application was taken to appeal, and the appeal was dismissed.

Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decisions must be made in accordance with relevant development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Regional Spatial Strategy: Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (2001) adopted 2004.

Vis 1 - Expressing the Vision

Vis 2 - Principles for Future Development

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan

STR1 - Sustainable Development

STR5 - Development in Rural Centres and Villages

STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages

Policy 5 - Landscape Character

Policy 11 - Areas of High Archaeological Potential

Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006):

ST3 - Development Areas

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

EC3 - Landscape Character

HG9 - Rural Housing Needs

Policy-related Material Considerations

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (Proposed Changes June 2008):

SD1 to SD4, Development Policies A,B,C,E,H

ENV 1, 2, 3

RTS 1 and RTS 2

PPS's/PPG's

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3: Housing

PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPG13: Transport

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

Goal 1: Safe, Socially just communities with strong networks and confident people showing respect for each other.

Goal 3: Develop a health-enhancing environment

Goal 5: A competitive High Performing Economy that is Diverse and Adaptable.

Goal 7: Distinctiveness

Goal 9: A balanced housing market

Goal 10: A carbon neutral economy

Goal 11: Protection of the natural environment

The Disability and Discrimination Act, 1995

Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide (Appendix B)

Diversity and Equality in Planning: A Good Practice Guide, 2005

Consultations

West Camel Parish Council: *We believe that the Parish should be able to take account of key diversity issues and reflect the need for socially inclusive communities. Like many rural villages in this part of Somerset we have an ageing population with increasing levels of disability and the provision of accessible housing stock in the Parish is to be fully welcomed and supported.*

We have visited the proposed site for the erection of the bungalow and are comfortable that the application would not increase flood risk to the village or present any danger in terms of vehicle access/egress.

We have read the design considerations, building material specification and spoken to the applicants and have no objection to the design, materials or layout of the proposed bungalow.

We would therefore support Planning Application 09/03706/FUL and would ask South Somerset District Council to take a positive view of this planning request.

We would also like to add that the Down sisters have lived in the village all of their lives and made a very active and significant contribution to the social and business life of this Parish. We would like them to be able to remain within their community.

Local Highway Authority: *The proposed development site is outside of the development limit of West Camel, where it is remote from adequate services and facilities, such as, education, employment, health, retail and leisure. As a consequence, occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependant on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice given in PPG13 and RPG10, and to the provisions of policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (Adopted: April 2000).*

For information, the nearest bus stop in relation to the application site is located approximately 700m from the site, outside of the Post Office. There are two services that serve West Camel, the no. 5 which operates on Wednesdays only, with one service in the morning and one in the afternoon; and the no. 8 which operates on Fridays only, again with one service in the morning and one in the afternoon. Therefore the public transport that is available within the vicinity is very limited.

It would appear (from the description and Design and Access Statement) that the reasoning behind making this application is tied to the personal circumstances of the Applicants. As you are aware, the Highway Authority have to assess this application simply in terms of its highway and transportation impacts whatever the personal circumstances may be. Therefore it must be a matter for the Local Planning Authority to decide whether there is sufficient need or justification for such a development in this location, which outweighs the transport policies that seek to reduce reliance on the private car.

It there is not sufficient need or justification, refusal of the proposal on sustainability grounds is recommended.

Detailed comments are made in respect of the locality of the site and the various needs for setting back the access, visibility splays, etc. It is noted that these requirements would result in substantial loss of existing hedging.

SSDC Policy: *Saved Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Policy STR6 and Saved South Somerset Local Plan Policy ST3 are clear that development outside the defined development areas of villages should be strictly controlled and restricted to development that benefits economic activity, enhances the environment and does not foster the need to travel. It is not considered that the submitted Design and Access Statement at paragraph 3.5 suitably justifies the proposed application on either of these grounds. A Planning Policy objection is therefore raised.*

SSDC Conservation Manager/Architect: The following comments were made on the proposed scale and design of the building:

1. Size

English Partnerships Quality Standards guidance

<http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/qualityandinnovationpublications.htm#qualitystandards>

recommends floor areas for dwellings as a minimum standard. For 3 bed / 5 person dwelling floor area recommended is 93 sq m - which casts light on the size here proposed which is clearly large, even allowing for some special features. EP housing is however required to be Lifetime Homes standard, so their floor area will accommodate this factor. (English Partnerships is the national regeneration agency, supporting high quality sustainable growth in England - a non-departmental public body sponsored by Dept of Communities and Local Government and part of the HCA)

2. Design

Some attempt has been made to invest the building with an agricultural character perhaps to reflect local vernacular but the width (roof span) is in excess of the 5.5-6 m common with traditional buildings that elevates the overall roof height. A 40 degree pitch is common rather than the 45 proposed. The pompous porch, arch head windows and prominent unintegrated conservatory are at odds with traditional South Somerset vernacular buildings which, in addition, rarely have half-hipped roofs, this being a character of the south east or associated with thatch. The south elevation has no distinction.

The landform results in a cut and fill situation. Cutting in on the north side reduces the impact of the building but conversely it is elevated on the south, prominent side so sits, unnaturally elevated and poorly integrated into the site.

SSDC Technical services: Surface water disposal via soakaways.

SSDC Landscape Architect: 1) *The principle of development outside development areas (PPS7 and LP policy ST3). PPS7 has amongst its objectives that the countryside should be safeguarded for its own sake and that development - where permitted - should maintain or enhance the environment - similarly so ST3, and;*

2) *The impact of development upon landscape character (PPS 7 and LP policies ST5 para 4 & EC3) which seek to protect the character and quality of the landscape, and requires development proposals to respect and respond to the character of the local environment, and to avoid an uncharacteristic visual profile.*

The proposal site lays to the west of, and is slightly elevated relative to, the village of West Camel. The plot is within an area of pasture land which lays beyond the village edge and within open farmland that separates the village from its outlying farms. The farmsteads to the west, which include Slow Court Farm, are small-scale and close-concentrated. Any proposal to build that is removed from either the village curtilage, or not associated with existing building groups, will erode the open countryside. Development of this plot would not only diminish the separation of the village from its surrounding farms, it would also create a loose aggregation of built form, thus appearing to extend the village edge, both in terms of settlement pattern, and visually. This I view as an adverse landscape impact. Additionally, there is no intrinsic enhancement of the environment, as required by ST3, in establishing a domestic plot with both hardstanding areas and an above-average domestic footprint. Consequently I would advise there are clear landscape policy grounds for an objection to this proposal.

I am aware that a case is made for special accommodation to allow for disabled use. Should these concerns be over-riding, then I would suggest that either a site to the

immediate north of Slow Court Farm, better still, a conversion of the traditional buildings of that farm, would present an option that would be acceptable in landscape terms, than the proposal before us.

An addendum to my earlier comments in the light of Highways' response.

60 metre sight-lines are required for the site access, drawn from 2.4 metres back from the road's edge. Whilst the existing hedge is set back from the roadside to a degree, and thus can be faced-up for part of its length within the sight-line, these requirements will still result in circa 25 - 30 metre loss of roadside hedgerow, which is a substantial impact on both the sense of enclosure within the lane (and thus at variance with landscape character) and the integrity of the feature as part of the local habitat network, which policy EC7 seeks to protect.

A further point upon which I did not comment initially: I note that groundworks are required to both cut-in a yard to serve the house, and raise a track to the fields, such is the fall in the ground relative to road level. The extent of remodelling of the natural topography is yet another indicator of the unsuitability of this particular site for development.

These issues compound the landscape basis for refusal.

SSDC Environmental Protection Unit: No objection (the site falls within Noise Exposure Category B)

Representations

Two letters have been received supporting the application for the following reasons:

- the applicants have special needs determined by their medical condition(s) (letter from the applicant's GP)
- their existing dwellinghouse is increasingly unsuitable for occupation by the applicants, given the internal floor layout, steps, etc.
- they have close ties with the village of West Camel, and there is a need to stay in the area

[Subsequent to the report appearing on the Area East Committee agenda, a further 16 letters of support and a petition signed by 36 individuals have been received. These letters and the petition support the proposal on the basis of the special needs of the applicants; their long connection to the village and the locality; and the benefit that the bungalow would represent in perpetuity as housing for disabled persons]

Considerations

This is the third application within the space of five years from the applicants, seeking permission for a single-storey dwelling outside of the development area, on the basis of their special needs. The first of the previous applications (04/ 00976/OUT) was on the exact same site as the current application, and the determination at that time was that a dwelling (in outline) was not acceptable. The other previous application was on a site to the south of the village.

In its deliberations on the previous application (04/ 00976/OUT), the Regulation Committee noted that:

"a precedent would be set across the district if the Committee were mindful to approve the application. It was felt that there were alternative properties in West Camel that would be more appropriate and Members felt that it would be more appropriate to convert a farm building rather than erect a new building on the site."

The Committee also expressed its regret that it could not help the applicants "but emphasised that it was important that the District Council remain consistent in their approach in the determination of all planning applications" (Minutes: Regulation Committee, 14 December 2004)

The previous decision, which was taken less than five years ago on essentially similar development on the identical site a primary and important consideration, therefore, in assessing the application. The decision was not appealed, and the decision is a clear bench-mark against which any subsequent application for a dwellinghouse must be assessed. The applicant's agent makes no reference to this in the submitted Design and Access Statement, and bases the reason for the application solely on the special needs of the proposed occupants of the development, and the desire to create a housing unit for disabled people in perpetuity.

THE PREVIOUS DECISION: Reasons for Refusal and Changes to Policy Since Then

As the previous refusal (in December 2004) was not appealed, and was reasonably recent, the reasons for refusal constitute a primary consideration in assessing a subsequent application. Taking the reasons for refusal individually:

1. The site is located outside any development area for which no justification has been proven. The Policy is therefore contrary to Policy ST3 of the South Somerset Local Plan Deposit Draft 1998.

In the five years since this decision, the Local Plan has been adopted. Policy ST3 remains the same as in the draft deposit, and has been saved during the process of formulation of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The policy is therefore currently of the same force and effect as at the time of the previous refusal.

As set out in the documentation relating to the previous application on the site (appended as Annex A to this report), and as reiterated by the Council's Policy Planning Unit above, there is a fundamental objection to the development as being outside of the development area.

Whilst reference is made to the farm owned by the applicants, and farming activity, no information has been submitted substantiating the nature of the business. No formal link is made between the farming business (if there is one) and the need for residential accommodation. There is clearly no justification of the dwelling from the point of view of economic activity, a primary requirement of new dwellings associated with farming activity in the countryside as set out in PPS7.

Whilst referring to the applicants' increasing disability, the agent nevertheless asserts that, in being allowed to build this dwelling, the applicants will be able to continue to farm, thereby benefitting economic activity, and promoting sustainability. This is to mix two mutually exclusive options: either an agricultural workers' dwelling (for which no case has been made); or a bungalow designed around the needs of wheelchair-bound disabled persons, who might or might not be employed in agriculture. It is not accepted that a case has been made that the proposal as submitted will benefit economic activity, and it is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy ST3 of the Local Plan.

2. The application site is located in an area which is remote from services, facilities, education, employment opportunities and public transport etc, and will therefore increase the need for journeys to be made by private vehicles which is non-sustainable and contrary to advice given in PPG 13 and Policy STR6 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011.

Both PPG13 and Policy STR6 of the Structure Plan remain applicable, and have not been amended in any way in the past 5 years.

The Highways Authority has drawn attention to the continued poor sustainability of the site (see consultation response above) and recommended refusal of the application accordingly. It is not considered that there has been any positive change in this situation since the refusal of the previous application, and the site remains in an unsustainable locality. Any development would be dependent for its day to day needs on private motor vehicle trips, contrary to the specified policies.

The applicants have offered no evidence to suggest that this reason for refusal of the previous application has been overcome.

3. The proposed development would harm the character and quality of its landscape setting. It is therefore contrary to Policy EC2 of the South Somerset Local Plan Deposit Draft 1998.

Policy EC2 of the Deposit Draft read:

"A development proposal which would harm the character and quality of its landscape setting will not be permitted except where:

1. it is directly connected with, or necessary to the management or improvement of the landscape, or
2. there is an over-riding need which outweighs the impact on the landscape and there is a lack of alternative sites"

This policy was replaced with Policy EC3 in the adopted Local Plan. Policy EC3 equally seeks to protect the landscape character, but is worded more comprehensively. If anything, the change in the policy makes a refusal of development on this site even clearer.

The applicants have not dealt with this reason for refusal. Indeed, their submission is now in detailed form, and the harm to the landscape is even clearer than in the previous outline application, as set out comprehensively above by the Council's Landscape Architect.

The applicants have failed to overcome any of the reasons for refusal of the previous application, and there has been no significant change in any of the policy quoted in the reasons for refusal. It is therefore clear that the previous refusal must stand as a major planning consideration, and indicate a confirmation of that refusal.

Special Needs Of The Applicants

The only justification for the development is based on the special needs of the applicants. It is stated in the submitted design and access statement that it is the intention that the

bungalow, once approved, should remain in perpetuity as accommodation for disabled persons.

As can be seen from the report covering the previous application (see Annex A), a similar case was set out. In the time that has elapsed, it would appear that the only changes in this regard are that the applicants' mother has died, and that the applicants' disabilities have, if anything, become more onerous.

The following paragraph from the original officer report for application summarises the assessment of the applicants' need at the time of the previous application:

The application was not originally supported with any form of agricultural appraisal or any other justification statement. Indeed, the applicant's do not require a farm worker's dwelling but are seeking an exception to countryside policies and thus consent for a dwelling based on medical grounds. The contents of the letter received from the applicant's doctor have been carefully considered. Furthermore, the local authority are sympathetic both to the applicant's needs and desire to continue living within the village which has had family connections for many years. However, local and national planning policies seek to strictly control development in the countryside unless an exceptional planning need has been proven. Whilst the needs of the applicant's have been carefully assessed, it is not considered that a planning justification has been proven for a dwelling to be specifically located on this site.

There is no change in this position in the current application. The applicants' agent has, however, made detailed reference to various policies referring to the requirement to accommodate disabled persons in development:

- The Disability and Discrimination Act, 1995
- Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide (Appendix B), 2003.
- PPS1, para 14
- Diversity and Equality in Planning: A Good Practice Guide, 2005
- PPS3, para 20
- PPS7, para 8
- South Somerset Local Plan: para 10.31

Of these policy documents, the first two pre-date the original refusal of this application, and there has been no policy change.

PPS1, para 14 refers to the overarching need to the overarching need to develop strong communities: "The Government is committed to developing strong, vibrant and sustainable communities and to promoting community cohesion in both urban and rural areas. This means meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunity for all citizens." It is not considered that this has any direct bearing on a specific case of an isolated dwelling in open countryside.

PPS3, para 20, refers to the overarching need to provide a mix of housing types - at a strategic level. It is not considered that this can be extrapolated to individual sites in the open countryside, where there are so many contrary policies to overcome.

PPS7 para 8 deals with the aim of providing everyone with a 'decent home' in rural areas. The agent again fails to quote the bulk of the text, and the paragraph actually states that the focus for additional housing should be existing towns and identified service centres, although 'other villages' are also a possibility. Sites in the open countryside, as stated, are subject to many other fundamental constraints - such as the preservation of the

countryside for its own sake (also PPS7), and it is not considered that this paragraph of the Policy Statement in any way justifies a new dwelling on this site.

Of the remainder of the policies quoted, the only one making specific reference to housing for disabled people (specifically those in wheelchairs) is the paragraph referred to in the Local Plan - and this is not a specific policy in any event. The paragraph makes general reference to the issue of wheelchair housing, and the agent omits to refer to the entire paragraph, which places the emphasis on locating such housing 'only in larger housing schemes'. It is not considered that this paragraph of the Local Plan can have significant weight in determining the application.

In summary, it is not considered that there has been any significant change in policy relating to disabled access - particularly as relates to the special needs of the applicants - since the refusal of the previous application. Substantively, it is not considered that a case has been made through reference to any of these policies that would overcome the other strong policy objections to the proposal. There is no policy basis which would suggest that housing for disabled persons should be provided - in perpetuity - outside of existing settlements and in unsustainable locations.

Other Recent Application By The Applicants

In September 2005, Council refused permission of an application for a live/work bungalow on a site owned by the applicants south of Slow Court Farm and on the edges of the village of West Camel (application 05/00646/OUT). The decision was appealed, and the matter considered by an inspector of the Planning Inspectorate in an informal hearing. At the hearing, all matters relating to the proposal, particularly the special needs of the applicants, were dealt with in detail. In his decision on the appeal (attached in full as Annex B to this report), the Inspector noted:

"I consider the main issue for this appeal is whether the proposed bungalow accords with the provisions of the development plan in relation to new development outside settlements and, if not, whether the special circumstances and justification of the appellants constitute an overriding consideration".

In dealing with the personal circumstances of the applicants, he noted:

"While I have given the appellants' personal circumstances careful consideration, I am mindful of the advice contained in 'The Planning System: General Principles' in that personal circumstances will seldom outweigh more general planning considerations particularly where it is probably that the proposed bungalow would remain long after the current personal circumstances cease to be material. I therefore consider that these factors are not sufficient to outweigh the clear policy position established by the development plan and the advice within Planning Policy Statement 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (PPS1) and PPS7."

Dismissing the appeal the Inspector concluded:

"The Structure Plan and the recently adopted Local Plan reflect Government advice, particularly as contained in PPS1 and PPS7, in strictly controlling housing development in the countryside. The proposed bungalow would be outside the development boundary for West Camel and be contrary to Policies STR1 and STR6 of the Structure Plan and ST3 of the Local Plan. The proposal would not be justified on the basis of agricultural or work-related need and while the appellants' personal circumstances are understandable, I do not consider that they represent overriding special justification for a new dwelling in this location. Accordingly, I consider that neither planning conditions nor the submitted

unilateral undertaking would mitigate the harm to the objectives of the development plan that I have identified".

This appeal decision is directly relevant, given that the identical circumstances were presented and the application justified on the basis of the special needs of the applicants as identified in all three of these applications. The only difference was the site being put forward - in this appeal case a site which could possibly have been more easily considered given its more direct proximity to other development in the village.

Other Considerations

Residential Curtilage

The justification of a dwelling has been dealt with comprehensively above - and indeed was a primary reason for refusal of the previous (outline) application.

The proposed residential curtilage of the property measures approximately 2400 sq. m. (more than half an acre). The site is not located in proximity to any other development or domestic land. No justification has been offered for the domestication of such a large area. Such change of use of a large piece of land is directly contrary to advice offered in PPS7 and the Local Plan, where policy starts from the presumption that the countryside should be protected for its own sake, and domestication kept to a minimum.

Design of the Proposed Dwellinghouse

a. Scale

The floor area of the proposed dwelling measures approx 246 sq m, which, compared with the standard applied to agricultural dwellings (generally in a range of 150 sqm to 170 sq m) is large. The layout is essentially linear, with the main east-west section measuring 25m in length. It is considered that the floor area is excessive, even given the need to accommodate wheelchair access. It is also not considered necessary or desirable to spread the development in a linear fashion along the northern part of the site, drawing attention to its bulk when viewed from the south or from the lane.

Although essentially a bungalow, the ridge height of the building is 5.5m, resulting in a large expanse of roof, accentuating the size and sprawl of the layout. For purposes of permitted development, the General Permitted Development Order, as amended in 2008, regards acceptable single storey development as being no more than 4m in height.

The Council's Architect has commented in detail above on what is considered to be an acceptable size in terms of the guidance offered by English Partnerships (now Housing and Communities Agency) (93 sq m). The proposal is considerably in excess of this. The proposed dwelling is considered to be of an overall size that has not been justified, which exacerbates its impact on this countryside setting.

It is not considered that the proposed height of the building has in any way been justified, and it is will have an undesirable impact on the local setting.

b. Design

The Council's Architect has commented in detail above on the design. It is not considered that the proposal respects the local character, and would result in an intrusive presence on account of its imposing design. In these respects, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy ST6 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

Two previous applications, focussed on the special needs of the applicants, have been refused, for very clear reasons of being contrary to government advice contained in PPS1, PPS7 and the Structure and Local Plans. In both cases, the needs of the applicants were not considered to outweigh the objectives of the development plan to protect the countryside, and impose very strict control on development outside of the development area.

This application relates to a site on which a previous application for a dwelling was refused. The decision was not challenged at appeal, and the degree to which policy has changed in the intervening 5-year period is marginal. The decision, therefore, represents the starting point and the major consideration in the assessment of the current application.

It is considered that the applicants have failed to deal with or overcome the reasons for refusal of the previous application.

The only new matter raised in the application relates to the idea of the creation of a disable persons' dwelling in perpetuity - and extension of the original notion of meeting the special needs of the applicants. The issue of the personal needs of the applicants has been extensively dealt with in previous applications - including in an appeal decision - and found not to outweigh other planning objectives. None of the policy referred to by the applicants advises that the clear advice relating to countryside development should be suspended in cases such as this, which are focussed inevitably on the current special needs of the applicants rather than on a general case of the provision of disabled housing in the longer term.

As regards the provision of housing for disabled persons in the general case, there is no policy or government advice which would directly support the creation of such accommodation in the open countryside and in completely unsustainable locations.

The detailed design of the proposed development runs contrary to clear advice set out in the Local Plan. The proposal fails to relate to the local distinctiveness of the area and the site, its unique landscape character, and the need to minimise the impact of residential development on the countryside. The excessively large curtilage is unjustified and would introduce an unnecessarily large area of domestication to this countryside setting. In addition, the proposed access would seriously impact the integrity of existing mature hedgerows, with consequent harm to the setting and wildlife habitats.

The proposal is considered to be contrary to policy, as clearly set out in government advice and the development plan, and is therefore recommended for refusal.

Section 106 Agreement

Not relevant.

Recommendation

Refuse.

Subject to the following:

01. The proposal represents an unjustified development outside of the development area, which would provide no identifiable economic benefit, and would not maintain

or enhance the environment, contrary to Policy ST3 of the South Somerset Local Plan, 2006.

02. The application site is located in an area which is remote from services, facilities, education, employment opportunities and public transport etc, and will therefore increase the need for journeys to be made by private vehicles which is non-sustainable and contrary to PPS1, PPS7, PPG 13, Policy STR6 of The Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review, and Policy ST3 of the South Somerset Local Plan, 2006.
 03. The proposal, by reason of its design, siting, layout and scale would cause unacceptable harm to the distinctive character and quality of the local landscape, and would be contrary to Policy EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan, 2006.
 04. The proposal, by reason of its scale, design and the size of its residential curtilage, fails to respect the form, character and setting of the local environment. It neither preserves nor complements the key characteristics of the location and fails to maintain its local distinctiveness, and is contrary to the aims and objectives of Policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan, 2006.
 05. The proposal, by reason of its design and layout, would adversely affect the integrity and continuity of natural habitats by the removal of important sections of hedgerow, contrary to Policy EC7 of the South Somerset Local Plan, 2006.
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