

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Case Officer: Tom French

Parish: Bickleigh **Ward:** Bickleigh and Cornwood

Application No: 1743/17/FUL

Agent/Applicant:

Mr Jeremy Maddock
Elford Maddock Arch'l Practice
23 Fore Street
Bere Alston
Yelverton
PL20 7AA

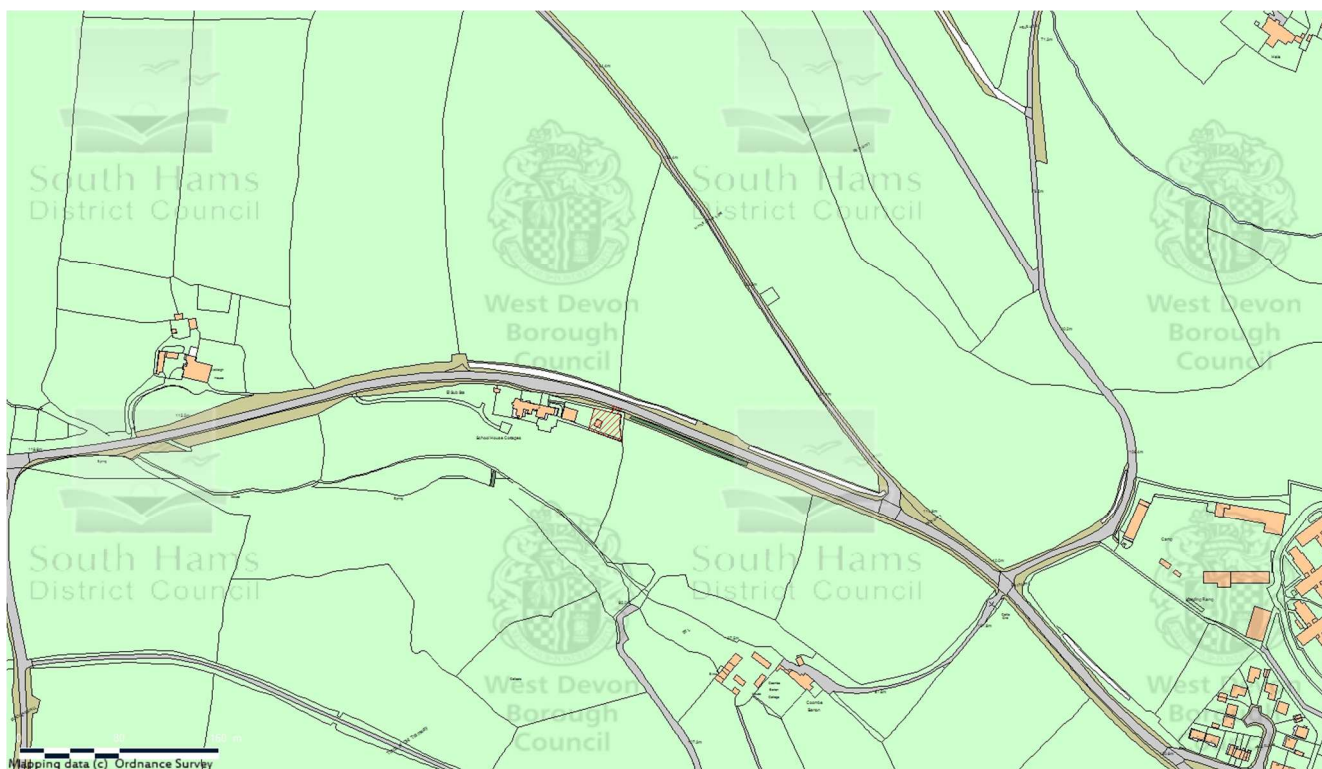
Applicant:

Mr & Mrs F Turner
1 Old School House Cottage
New Road
Bickleigh
PL6 7AG

Site Address: 1 Old School House Cottage, Bickleigh, PL6 7AG

Development: New dwelling

Reason item is being put before Committee: Referred by DM CoP Lead following discussions with applicants in regard to planning history on the site.



Recommendation: Refusal

Reasons for refusal

1. The proposal would result in unessential, unsustainable development in the countryside, isolated from any recognised settlement or local services, without demonstrable justification contrary to policies CS1, DP7 and DP15 of the South Hams Local Development Framework and the National Planning Policy Framework
2. The proposal would result in an inappropriate and discordant development within a rural area, which would fail to protect the intrinsic rural character of the landscape or protect the landscape's sense of tranquillity and unspoiled character contrary to policies DP1, DP2, CS1, CS7 and CS9 of the South Hams Local Development Framework and the National Planning Policy Framework

Key issues for consideration:

Principle, design, amenity, highways

Site Description:

Bickleigh is a rural community and parish located to the north east of the City of Plymouth. The parish is an important green buffer separating the urban fringe of Plymouth from Dartmoor National Park to the north. The character of the parish is ostensibly rural, with isolated dwellings punctuating the agricultural fields that surround them.

Bickleigh village is the only notable settlement in the parish and does not have a recognised Development Boundary and, owing to its lack of services and facilities, is not highlighted within policy CS1 of the Local Development Framework as a settlement able to accommodate limited residential infill or expansion. The countryside surrounding the settlement, including the application site, is also isolated from any development boundary.

The area offers a number of well used green lanes and cycle ways, notably the multi user 'Drake's Trail' which offers tourists and locals the opportunity to enjoy the natural, largely undeveloped area, in contrast to the urban settlement of Plymouth nearby. The intrinsic rural character of the parish offers economic, social and environmental vitality worthy of strict protection.

The actual site for this proposed development is an area of land currently occupied by a small number of single storey, utilitarian buildings and accessed from the highway by an existing vehicular access. The site is immediately adjacent a number of residential dwellings within what was once the parish C of E primary school. Although new residential development in the countryside represents a departure from the Local Plan an exception was made, following a previous refusal, for the conversion of the school into residential use in 1987 in order to secure the preservation of a former community building of social and historic importance.

The grade II listed Bickleigh House is nearby, although, its visual contribution to the area is limited by the landscaped trees which bound its gardens.

The Proposal:

Erection of a new detached single-storey two bedroom dwelling and with an attached garage. 18m wide by 11m deep and 7.8m high to ridge of main house and 5.6m to ridge of garage. It would have a total floorspace of 122sq.m (not including the garage)

Materials: Natural slate roof, rendered elevations, windows aluminium.

Consultations:

- County Highways Authority – No objection
- Environmental Health Section – unsuspected contamination condition
- Bickleigh Parish Council – It was AGREED to RECOMMEND APPROVAL subject to no neighbour objection.

Representations:

Support comments received

- Proposed dwelling well located and well designed, in keeping with its surroundings
- Support for the applicants and their desire to stay within the locality

Relevant Planning History

- 2407/16/FUL – New dwelling - Refused
- 04/1158/87/3 – Conversion of school and cottage to two dwellings with car parking – Conditional approval
- 04/0822/92/3 – Erection of field shelter in paddock – Conditional approval
- 04/1397/92/3 – Erection of private garage – Conditional approval
- 04/0973/10/PREMIN – Pre-application enquiry for single dwelling – Officer support not forthcoming
- 04/1150/11/O – Outline application with all matters reserved for detached dwelling - Refused and appeal subsequently dismissed
- 04/3005/13/F – New detached dwelling - refused

ANALYSIS

The application for the dwelling is identical to application 2407/16/FUL. This application includes information which supports the applicant's arguments against that refusal, primarily on grounds of sustainability, access to services and policy compliance. Having reviewed the information submitted, officers are satisfied that the proposal does not constitute sustainable development and the assessment below remains pertinent to the consideration of this application.

Principle of Development/Sustainability:

This planning application proposes the construction of a new, isolated and unessential residential development in the countryside with no demonstrable local need in clear conflict with the provisions of the Development Plan, specifically policies CS1 and DP15.

The National Planning Policy Framework is explicit in seeking Local Planning Authorities to avoid '*new isolated homes in the countryside*' and the inspector when dismissing a previous appeal at the site was also unambiguous in describing the principle of new unessential residential development be unacceptable, also stating that the site is characterised by '*a clear and significant separation from the nearest urban centres*'.

While the applicant states the layby adjacent to the site is served by the no.59 bus service that provides 8 visits per day, the nearest bus stop is approximately 1.2km away from the site, with Bickleigh village approximately 0.8km away. It is likely that walking to and from the

bus stop within part of a commute would take around 30 minutes, and this would not include the subsequent onward bus journey and any walking necessary at the destination. In evaluating access to services the quality of any walk must also be considered, with this walk down a long, busy road dominated by motor vehicle travel with a lack of pedestrians with an associated exposure to noise, fumes, inclement weather and a general feeling of exposure and lack of safety.

Having considered the characteristics of the site officers conclude that it is highly unlikely that walking or cycling will predominate as a form of transportation, with the vast majority of trips to essential services such taken by way of motor car. This view is in agreement with that previously established by both the Local Planning Authority and Planning Inspectorate at the previous appeal. Although the previous refusal predates the adoption of the NPPF, that document also seeks to promote sustainable development. As this development is clearly unsustainable the publication of the NPPF does not erode but actually reinforces the clear policy objection to this proposal.

This application is therefore considered to conflict with the principles of policies CS1, DP7 and DP15 of the South Hams Local Development Framework and paragraphs 14, 17 and 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design/Landscape:

The site currently has a number of small scale, single storey utilitarian buildings within its boundary. Although it can be argued that such buildings are visually incongruous, the existing structures maintain a low profile and are not prominent when passing the site on the public highway.

In contrast, the proposed development would introduce a much larger, higher status dwellinghouse with a pitched roof into the local context which would present an overtly domestic and developed aesthetic within what is an area of intrinsically undeveloped, rural character. Although it is acknowledged that the applicant has proposed a palette of materials and design generally consistent with the adjacent old school, the principle and scale of residential development at this site is considered at odds with the existing rural character of the local area.

This application is therefore considered to conflict with the provisions of policies CS1, CS7, CS9, DP1 and DP2.

Neighbour Amenity:

No amenity issues are considered to be significant.

Highways/Access:

It is noted that when accepting the proposed access to be unsafe within the previous submission the planning inspector suggested that the details of the access could be secured by way of condition.

In addition, it is also accepted that the access is well established having been used for a variety of vehicles, including heavy machinery, in the past for a number of years. It is unlikely that the use associated with residential would be materially greater than the current situation. Having due regard to the existing situation and the comments of the Inspector it is not considered, on balance, justifiable to refuse the application by reason of the existing access.

Conclusion

Approval of the original conversion of the historic school building was made on the basis of preservation of an undesignated heritage asset and should not be utilised to justify new, unessential residential development in a rural location devoid from essential public services with an associated dependence on travel by private motor vehicle.

In addition, the application represents the development and domestication of an ostensibly rural location and the insignificant impact on housing supply associated with the construction of a solitary dwellinghouse is not considered an appropriate or sustainable long term solution to housing demand, which is being addressed by the Council at strategically located, sustainable sites elsewhere within the local area.

For the reasons outlined above this application is considered unacceptable and in conflict with the relevant development plan policies. This application is therefore recommended for refusal.

This application has been considered in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and with Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Policy

All standard policies listed (delete where not relevant, add others as relevant, including NPPF):

South Hams LDF Core Strategy

CS1 Location of Development

CS7 Design

CS9 Landscape and Historic Environment

CS10 Nature Conservation

CS11 Climate Change

Development Policies DPD

DP1 High Quality Design

DP2 Landscape Character

DP3 Residential Amenity

DP4 Sustainable Construction

DP5 Conservation and Wildlife

DP6 Historic Environment

DP7 Transport, Access & Parking

DP15 Development in the Countryside

South Hams Local Plan (please delete as necessary)

SHDC 1 Development Boundaries

Emerging Joint Local Plan

The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (the JLP) will replace the above as the statutory development plan once it is formally adopted.

Annex 1 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) provides guidance on determining the weight in relation to existing and emerging development plan policies.

- For current development plan documents, due weight should be given to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
- For the JLP, which is an emerging development plan, the weight is to be determined by the stage of its preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections, and its degree of consistency with the Framework.

The JLP is at a relatively advanced stage of preparation. The precise weight to be given to policies within the JLP will need to be determined on a case by case basis, having regard to all of the material considerations as set out on the analysis above.

**PLYMOUTH AND SOUTH WEST DEVON JOINT LOCAL PLAN -: PUBLICATION
(as considered by the Full Councils end Feb/Early March 2017)**

SPT1 Delivering sustainable development

SPT2 Sustainable linked neighbourhoods and sustainable rural communities

SPT3 Provision for new homes

TTV31 Development in the Countryside

DEV8 Meeting local housing need in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area

DEV10 Delivering high quality housing

DEV20 Place shaping and the quality of the built environment

DEV21 Conserving the historic environment

DEV22 Development affecting the historic environment

Considerations under Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.