

19/00659/OUT: Former Army Camp, Main Road, Redmile

Construction of new two storey dwelling, associated outbuildings, means of access and enclosure, landscaping

1. Summary:



The application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the erection of one dwelling on land to the south of Main Road, Redmile. The red line of the application site shows the proposed access to the site and an indicative site plan has been provided comprising a detached dwelling and detached garage within the site.

The site lies detached, approximately over 900 metres from the edge of the village of Redmile and comprises an area of overgrown scrubland. The land was formerly part of an Army Camp and contains the ruins of the former officers' mess however this building is not currently visible as the site is heavily overgrown. The submitted design and access statement states that the site housed a number of other buildings however these have been removed in approximately 1974 and the land has been unused for approximately the last 70 years. An overhead power line crosses the site.

There are a number of other residential properties located to the north west with access to these properties served by a private road close to the proposed new access for this development. Main Road is a 60mph road with the proposed access in close proximity to a road bridge over a dismantled railway and canal.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been submitted in support of the application.

It is recommended that outline planning permission is REFUSED

2: Recommendations:

3: Reasons for Recommendation:

1. By virtue of the location of the application site, the proposed scheme would result in unsustainable and unjustified new residential development in the countryside where there are limited local amenities, facilities and jobs, and where future residents are likely to depend highly on the use of a private motor vehicle. The proposal would therefore not represent sustainable development and would be in conflict with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Melton Local Plan.
2. By reason of its isolated nature, the introduction of one residential dwelling and associated residential paraphernalia into this open, rural site would result in significant and permanent environmental harm that would neither complement nor enhance the character of the surrounding area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies SS1, SS2, D1 and EN1 of the Melton Local Plan.
3. By virtue of the proposed access which falls short of the required visibility splays, it is considered that the development would result in severe adverse impacts upon highway safety. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies D1 and IN2 of the Melton Local Plan and Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).
4. The development site has the potential to support reptiles. A further reptile survey is therefore required to assess the full impact of the proposed development on protected species. In the absence of a reptile survey, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development would not result in harm to protected species. The development is therefore contrary to Policy EN2 of the Melton Local Plan.

4: Key factors:

Reason for Committee Determination

The application has received more than 10 letters of representation in support of the application.

Relevant Policies

The Melton Local Plan (MLP) 2011-2036 was adopted on 10th October 2018 and is the Development Plan for the area.

- No inconsistency with the NPPF has been identified that would render Local Plan policies 'out of date' in reaction to this application

Please see Appendix C for a list of all applicable policies

Main Issues

The main issues for this application are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Impact upon the character of the area
- Impact upon highway safety
- Impact upon residential amenities
- Impact upon ecology
- Other issues

5: Report Detail:

5.1 Principle of Development

The spatial strategy in the Melton Local Plan directs new housing towards the most sustainable locations in the borough, being Melton Mowbray and the settlements identified as Service Centres and Rural Hubs. Redmile is not identified as a Rural Hub or a Service Centre and therefore there would need to be a special identified need for new development there.

Given the siting in the countryside, away from the centre of Redmile, it is considered that the development would not fall under the considerations of Policy SS3 of the Local Plan as this relates to development with the existing rural settlements.

There are no applicable policies within the adopted Melton Local Plan that support the development of dwellings in the open countryside unless they are required for the purposes of agriculture and forestry. This would not be the case within this application.

Melton Borough Council can demonstrate at present 7.7 years of Housing Land

Supply. This includes a mix of housing allocations across the Borough, comprised from the Sustainable Neighbourhoods to the North and South of Melton Mowbray, to allocations in the villages and extant planning permission. The allocations focus on areas that are considered to be sustainable.

The proposed introduction of a dwelling in this location which is sited a considerable distance from Redmile (over 900 metres) where there are limited services in the vicinity would result in the occupiers of the proposed dwelling relying heavily on the use of the private car and as such constitute a form of unsustainable development. Redmile itself is identified as a 'Rural Settlement' in the Local Plan owing to the low level of services, and residential development is restricted to only that where there is a proven local need under SS3.

The applicant, and a significant number of public responses to the application, indicates that the introduction of a new dwelling on this previously developed land would result in environmental benefits to the surrounding area. When considering previously developed land, it is worth noting the definition within the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) –

Previously developed land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Within the definition, it states that it excludes land where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape. The former structure on the site is not visible to view and as stated with the submitted design and access statement comprises only ruins. As such, the development would not comprise previously developed land.

The agent also makes reference to the following points:

- a two storey detached dwelling with a footprint around 250-300m², and associated outbuildings
- highly sustainable construction, incorporating high thermal efficiency, passive gain, on-site energy
- generation, grey-water recycling and rainwater harvesting, use of sustainable materials
- electric vehicle charging point
- a contemporary design of high architectural quality
- home office or workshop

- vehicle access using a new access
- landscaping including extensive tree and shrub planting and renovation of existing hedgerows
- retention and enhancement of area of scrub as wildlife habitat

Although it is indicated that the dwelling would be 'highly sustainable', as the application is outline with all matters reserved, it is not considered that the development has demonstrated it would be of exceptional quality under the provisions of paragraph 79 of the NPPF which seeks to avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside. The application would also not meet any of the other criteria of paragraph 79 of the NPPF.

Whilst introduction of tree planting, landscaping and enhancement of wildlife would result in benefits to the area, this is not considered to outweigh the significant and permanent environmental harm associated with the introduction of one dwelling.

As regards the issue of housing mix and the terms of Policy C2, the proposed dwelling, if recommended for approval, could meet the local housing mix need for the area via condition.

Due to the isolated nature of the application site within a countryside location, it is considered that the proposal would result in unsustainable and unjustified new residential development in the countryside where future residents are likely to depend highly on the use of a private motor vehicle. The proposal would therefore not represent sustainable development and would be in conflict with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Melton Local Plan, and as such the principle of development is not acceptable.

5.2 Impact upon the character of the area

The site currently forms an overgrown parcel of land that is bound by mature trees on the northern and eastern boundaries. Despite the overgrown nature of the site, the application site has an open, rural and undeveloped character and relates well to the rural nature of the wider area.

As the application is for outline permission with all matters reserved, no details of scale, layout or landscaping have been submitted. An indicative layout plan has been submitted which identifies a possible location of the proposed dwelling and a detached garage.

The introduction of one dwelling, and any associated built form into this isolated and detached site would be considered to have an urbanising effect and a significant adverse impact on the current rural character and appearance of the site. The application site indicates the dwelling sited in the middle of the field and would therefore not relate to the existing buildings or properties located to the west of the site.

The proposed dwelling and associated boundary treatments and residential paraphernalia would introduce a domestic intrusion into a countryside area, neither complementing nor enhancing the surrounding area.

It is considered that the proposal would not comply with Policies SS1, D1 and EN1 of the Melton Local Plan which requires new development to be of high quality design where siting and layout must be sympathetic to the character of the area and sensitive to its landscape setting and, where possible, to enhance the distinctive qualities of the landscape character areas.

5.3 Impact upon highway safety

The application, whilst outline with all matters reserved, proposes a new access onto Main Road. The red line of the application site only meets the adopted highway at this point and therefore this would be the proposed access to the site.

Main Road is subject to a speed limit of 60 mph and therefore visibility splays of 215 metres by 2.4 metres are therefore required from the proposed access. The submitted plans have not indicated that the required visibility could be achievable from the proposed site access. Visibility splays have not been provided as part of the application.

Notwithstanding this, it appears that visibility splays of 215 metres could be achieved in a south easterly direction. However, in a north westerly direction, it is considered that visibility splays of 215 metres would be unachievable given the existing road bridge. The proposed site access would be sited approximately 170 meters from the road bridge and therefore it is considered that the development would result in vehicles using a substandard access which does not afford adequate visibility.

Although speeds of vehicles approaching from the north west are likely to be reduced as a result of the bridge, no evidence has been provided to this effect and the visibility that could be achieved is significantly below the required splay of 215 metres.

There is an existing access further to the west of the site, closer to the bridge and therefore the applicant states that the proposed access would be betterment. Whilst this is the case, where a new access is proposed (as in through this application), it is paramount that a safe and suitable access is provided.

LCC Highways have raised concerns with the proposal as the application fails to demonstrate the required visibility splays.

As such it is considered that the proposal would result in severe adverse impacts upon highway safety, contrary to Policies IN2 and D1 of the Melton Local Plan and paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2019).

5.4 Impact upon residential amenities

Given the isolated nature of the site, set significantly away from any other residential properties, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any adverse impacts upon residential amenity.

It is considered the proposal would comply with Policy D1 of the Melton Local Plan in respect of impact upon the amenity of neighbours and neighbouring properties.

5.5 Impact upon ecology

Policy EN2 of the Melton Local Plan seeks to achieve net gains for nature and proactively seek habitat creation as part of new development proposals. Whilst impact to majority of the wildlife is considered to be low, the submitted appraisal recommends a further reptile survey to be carried out.

In lieu of a submission of a further reptile survey, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development would not result in harm to protected species, contrary to Policy EN2 of the Melton Local Plan.

Leicestershire County Council Ecology have not provided comments on the application as of yet. Their comments will be reported to the committee as a late item.

5.6 Other issues

An overhead power line crosses the application site. Western Power Distribution raises no objection to the proposal. If the application was recommended for approval, then the applicant would be advised to contact Western Power Distribution for safety advice prior to commencement of development.

Consultation & Feedback

A site notice was posted and the Barkestone, Plungar and Redmile Parish Council were consulted. 11 letters of support, 1 letter of objection and 1 letter of representation received from the applicant.

Financial Implications:

None identified

Background Papers:

None identified

Appendices:

A; Consultation responses
B: Representations received
C: Applicable Development Plan Policies

Report Timeline:

Assistant Director Approval

18th August 2019

Report Author: Mr Andrew Cunningham, Planning Officer, Development Management

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Appendix A : Consultation replies

The Barkestone, Plungar and Redmile Parish Council:

Barkestone, Plungar & Redmile Parish Council wish to register a strong objection to this planning application. We object on the following:

- Redmile is not a sustainable village
- The site is not sustainable
- There is no need for housing on this site
- Access to the site would be problematic

LCC Highways:

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the application as submitted fully assesses the highway impact of the proposed development and further information is required as set out in this response. Without this information the Local Highway Authority is unable to provide final highway advice on this application.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

Background

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) is in receipt of an outline (with access) planning

application for the construction of a new two storey dwelling, associated out buildings, means of access and enclosure landscaping at a former army camp upon Main Road, Redmile. Main Road is a classified c road subject to a speed limit of 60mph. It is also noted that Main Road is unlit and has soft verges either side of the carriageway with no pedestrian infrastructure in place.

Site Access

For access to a road subject to a speed limit of 60 mph visibility splays of 215m by 2.4m are required from the proposed access. The Applicant has not detailed achievable visibility splays from the proposed site access, these must be demonstrated in both directions on a scaled plan. Without demonstration that these visibility splays can be achieved and maintained in perpetuity the LHA would seek to resist this application.

For a single dwelling the LHDG outlines that access arrangements should have a minimum effective width of 2.75m (plus 0.5m if bound on one side and plus 1m if bound on both); a gradient that does not exceed 1:20m and never exceeds 1:12mm; a dropped crossing of 6.4m and should be surfaced with a bound material for at least the first 5m from the highway boundary.

The Applicant has demonstrated an access that measures 3.9m in width with a dropped crossing well in excess of the 6.4m requirement. An access arrangement in full accordance with the LHDG is advised at this site.

The proposal includes that erection of a single dwelling with access to Main Road. While the development is not considered likely to generate a significant number of vehicle trips; given the nature of Main Road, it is paramount that a safe and suitable access is provided.

Highway Safety

The LHA has reviewed personal injury collision data for the most recent 5 year period. There is not evidence of any slight, serious or fatal collisions within 500m of the site access during this period.

Western Power Distribution:

Whilst in principle the Company have no objections to the proposals Western Power Distribution do have 11000v overhead network crossing the site and therefore it is advisable for the applicant to contact us for relevant safety advice for working in the vicinity of overhead lines.

Appendix B : Summary of representations received

1 letter of objection received raising the following points:

- Setting of a precedent
- Unsuitable location in the countryside significantly away from Redmile
- Highway access unsuitable

11 letters of support received raising the following points:

Housing is required

Housing is required. Supporting small, sensitive, eco friendly development is common sense. We need this type of considered development in rural communities if we are to survive.

Sustainable nature of the dwelling

The design of the proposed property would not be obtrusive and is of a very high standard using sustainable materials and incorporating high thermal efficiency, passive gain, on-site energy generation, grey water and rainwater recycling.

A contemporary design would be a much needed breath of fresh air for the Vale of Belvoir.

The applicants plan to construct a modern 'Eco' house utilising the latest insulation and heat recovery systems with the aim to be ultra low energy with zero carbon emissions.

A construction of this type represents the future in residential development as global warming progresses.

A single dwelling built to a high level of sustainability and architectural design with surrounding land as a wildlife habitat would be a very appropriate use for this site with no other feasible options.

Excellent project for this derelict and discarded plot of land. This applicants other projects have proved to be enhancing and very eco-friendly thus benefitting both community and wildlife.

Existing site derelict/brownfield land, proposal would enhance the site

The proposed development would enhance the site. It is in a group of existing property's and would not be a development on a greenfield site as there's existing buildings, Mr Baggley's proposed plans for the landscaping would improve the look of the site which is currently very overgrown.

This is a site that needs to be cleaned up and this is the best way to do it. It is a sensible development fitting of the site and we should be thankful they are not using greenfield land.

Support this carbon neutral application to develop a currently rather ugly piece of land which is not in agricultural use at the moment and not in keeping with the

surrounding very beautiful countryside.

The site, a former Army Base contains the foundations of seventeen buildings, anti-craft gun mounts and air-raid shelters. To return this site to agricultural would be unrealistic.

At present this is a brown field derelict site which is unused. It is difficult to envisage an alternative proposal which provides a more positive use of the site.

The site is derelict. It cannot be used for agricultural purpose. The area can only benefit from this development.

The site is classified as Brownfield. It is not part of a larger site. This is an application for a single, sustainable dwelling on its own plot. It is an ideal use of the site.

Would tidy up the intended plot.

The construction of an environmentally friendly, sustainable dwelling on this abandoned military camp is an ideal use of a site that cannot realistically be used for agriculture.

The derelict piece of land is in major need of a revamp, and by adding one single dwelling with a conservation area suits the Village perfectly.

No adverse impact upon neighbouring amenity

The plot is screened from the road, it is not overlooked. The construction of one dwelling will not adversely affect anyone.

Would not have any ill effect on anyone.

Highways access is safe and suitable

Access is good & safe. It was granted in 1997

Applicant long standing member of the community

The applicant's family have farmed this area for generations. This is a considered, forward looking application to enhance the community, not to develop the village in an insensitive way.

Investment in the rural community is crucial if we are to see the next generation choose to live here. Environmentally friendly, forward looking development like this should be supported. We will not see young people stay / move into the villages unless we are prepared to approach development in a way which is kind to the environment, affordable & looking to the future.

Knowledgeable members of the local farming fraternity with the foresight and the means to invest in our rural community. Mindful and sensitive growth and development should be encouraged especially by people who have lived and worked in the area for generations.

Ecological gain

The remaining area (3.4 acres) to be established as a wildlife habitat.

This is a proposal for a high quality dwelling which is both sustainable and positively contributes to the local environment through the establishment and maintenance of wildlife habitat.

Appendix C: Applicable Development Plan Policies

Melton Local Plan:

Policy SS1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Policy SS2: Development Strategy

Policy SS3: Sustainable Communities (unallocated sites)

Policy C2: Housing Mix

Policy D1: Raising the Standard of Design

Policy IN2: Transport, Accessibility and Parking

Policy EN1: Landscape

Policy EN2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity