

Parish: Topcliffe
Ward: Sowerby & Topcliffe
12

Committee date: 30 March 2017
Officer dealing: Laura Chambers
Target date: 6 April 2017

17/00153/FUL

**Four detached houses and ten parking spaces for school staff
At Anchor Dykes, Station Road, Topcliffe
For Mr & Mrs N Corps**

1.0 SITE, CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application site is located to the north of the village of Topcliffe, to the east of the A167 between Topcliffe Primary School to the south and Anchor Dykes, a dwelling in the ownership of the applicant, to the north. The site is beyond Development Limits and the Topcliffe Conservation Area and is currently in use as a pony paddock.
- 1.2 The site is primarily bounded to the west and south by hedgerow, with post and rail fencing to the east and north, with a further section at the south west corner. There are a number of mature trees along the western boundary that are subject to tree preservation orders.
- 1.3 Permission is sought to form an access to the A167 to the north of the site in order to create a private drive serving four four-bedroom dwellings. Two fully expressed two-storey dwellings would front the highway, taking pedestrian access only from the front, while there would be a further two two-storey dwellings with the upper floor within the roof space to the rear (east) of the site.
- 1.4 Plots 1 and 2 would be served by semi-detached garages at the rear while plots 3 and 4 would each have attached garages. To the north of the site a covered refuse store for the properties is proposed as well as an area of hardstanding proposed to form ten parking spaces for the use of staff at the adjacent primary school.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

- 2.1 04/00953/OUT – Six dwellings; Refused 21 July 2004.
- 2.2 04/01604/OUT – Two dwellings; Refused 30 September 2004.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 The relevant policies are:

Core Strategy Policy CP1 - Sustainable development
Core Strategy Policy CP4 - Settlement hierarchy
Core Strategy Policy CP9 & 9a – Affordable Housing
Core Strategy Policy CP16 - Protecting and enhancing natural and man-made assets
Core Strategy Policy CP17 - Promoting high quality design
Development Policies DP1 - Protecting amenity
Development Policies DP3 - Site accessibility
Development Policies DP4 - Access for all
Development Policies DP8 - Development Limits
Development Policies DP9 - Development outside Development Limits
Development Policies DP10 - Form and character of settlements
Development Policies DP13 – Achieving and maintaining the right mix

Development Policies DP15 – Promoting and maintaining affordable housing
Development Policies DP30 – Landscape Character
Development Policies DP31 – Protecting natural resources: biodiversity/nature conservation
Development Policies DP32 - General design
Development Policies DP33 – Landscaping
Development Policies DP39 - Recreational links
Interim Guidance Note - adopted by Council on 7th April 2015
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Parish Council – no comments received.
- 4.2 Highway Authority – Has informally raised concerns about the operation of the proposed parking area and has sought clarification of the proposed footpath links. A formal response is awaited.
- 4.3 Environmental Health Officer – no objection.
- 4.4 Yorkshire Water – no objection subject to conditions.
- 4.5 Public comments – two objections have been received and are summarised below.
- The site is unsuitable due to school traffic problems;
 - The new access would affect highway safety; and
 - The proposed parking spaces would not overcome existing problems with school drop off and collections.

5.0 OBSERVATIONS

- 5.1 The main issues to consider are: (i) the principle of development in this location; (ii) the design of the development and its impact on local character; and (iii) highway safety and parking.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The site falls outside the Development Limits of Topcliffe. Policy CP4 states that all development should normally be within the Development Limits of settlements. Policy DP9 states that permission will only be granted for development beyond Development Limits "in exceptional circumstances". The applicant does not claim any of the exceptional circumstances identified in Policy CP4 and, as such, the proposal would be a departure from the Development Plan. However, it is also necessary to consider more recent national policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.3 To ensure appropriate consistent interpretation of the NPPF alongside Policies CP4 and DP9, on 7 April 2015 the Council adopted Interim Policy Guidance (IPG) relating to Settlement Hierarchy and Housing Development in the Rural Areas. This guidance is intended to bridge the gap between CP4/DP9 and the NPPF and relates to residential development within villages. The IPG has brought in some changes and details how Hambleton District Council will now consider development in and around smaller settlements and has included an updated Settlement Hierarchy.
- 5.4 In the Settlement Hierarchy contained within the IPG Topcliffe is defined as a Service Village and is therefore considered a sustainable location for development with services that would be supported by future occupants if residential development were approved in the area. Although beyond the Development Limits of Topcliffe as

identified in the Development Plan, the site is positioned between other buildings that, although also beyond the Limits, are closely related to the village. As such, if the site were developed it would not appear isolated from the village and would represent small-scale growth.

Design and Character

- 5.5 When entering the village from the north a number of properties are passed indicating the beginning of the settlement prior to reaching the application site, as such the proposal can be viewed as an infill that would not be detrimental to the open character of the surrounding countryside.
- 5.6 The character of the village is principally defined by the use of facing brickwork and pantiles, although a small number of properties utilise materials such as render and slate roofing. There are a range of house types and styles but these are unified by the use of materials. The majority of properties front the public highway with a small number of cul-de-sacs formed beyond.
- 5.7 The proposed layout fronting the highway with additional dwellings beyond is appropriate within the context of the village, which has a significant amount of development in depth behind road frontages and although there is not a single architectural style within the village, the proposed use of bay windows and chimneys reflect some existing properties in Topcliffe. The appearance of the proposed properties would as a result be sympathetic to the character of the wider area.
- 5.8 The submitted application forms indicate the use of facing brickwork but a range of roofing materials, while noting there are examples of different materials in the area and those proposed may individually be acceptable there is not clarity as to which materials are proposed to which property. Should the principle of development be found to be acceptable, ensuring the use of suitable materials could be effectively managed via a condition requiring samples and a schedule to be submitted for approval.
- 5.9 It is proposed to retain the existing trees and hedge on the boundary of the site; this would assist in softening the appearance of the development while retaining the attractive setting the existing landscaping provides. It is noted, however, that a proposed footpath link along the western boundary of the site (within the adopted highway beyond the application site) is indicated to abut one of the trees to the southwest of the site, this would require separate approval in terms of its construction from the Highway Authority however it has the potential to damage that tree and would make it essential to secure suitable protection measures by condition should approval be granted.
- 5.10 The application intends to provide an area for parking to be used by staff from Topcliffe Primary School, this will be addressed in more detail below, however it is of note with regards to design that the area of hardstanding would be immediately visible from the proposed site entrance in addition to the proposed covered refuse store. In combination this would create a poor first impression of the site with features that would ordinarily be expected to be discretely located within a development being the most prominent. This would be detrimental to the appearance of the overall development from the main road and consequently harmful to the appearance of the village.

Highway Safety & Parking

- 5.11 At the time of writing a formal response from the Highway Authority has not been possible; however a number of questions have been raised with the applicant about the use of the proposed parking area and details of the proposed footpath but no

additional information has been provided to clarify those issues. Should a formal response be made prior to the scheduled meeting an update to Members will be provided.

- 5.12 In principle, each dwelling is to be provided with a garage and parking spaces within their curtilage and this would meet with the Highway Authority's normal requirement for a minimum of three spaces each to be provided for four-bedroom dwellings in rural areas.
- 5.13 Limited details have been provided in relation to the pre-application consultation exercise undertaken with the neighbouring school in relation to the proposed parking area, or in relation to the how this would operate in practice. The school has not formally commented on the application, so it is not clear whether it supports the provision of the parking spaces or intends to take up the offer of their use.
- 5.14 In common with most schools, it is evident the school generates an overflow of parking, particularly during the morning drop-off and afternoon collection period. Staff parking generally takes place close to the school itself, prior to the arrival of parents; it is apparent when visiting the site that in many cases parents briefly block staff in while dropping off or collecting, although others park on the main road.
- 5.15 If staff cars were parked elsewhere in order to free up space for parents to park closer to the school as indicated in the application, it is unlikely that greater numbers of parents would be able to park in that area at any given time, as it would be impractical to block other parents in without causing an obstruction. There is currently certainty for parents that they are able to block in teachers, who will not need to enter or leave the site during the drop off and collection periods, but if staff parking were relocated that certainty would no longer be the case and overspill parking on the main road may worsen as a result. There is therefore no evidence that the proposal would improve the current arrangements and the gain on offer through the development is of questionable value.
- 5.16 It is also questionable whether staff would want to use the proposed parking area given it would mean carrying resources substantially further to reach the building than currently. In addition, the applicant has indicated there is no intention for the car park to be lit, which gives rise to concerns about security and the potential for anti-social behaviour.
- 5.17 Concerns regarding the use of the parking area in practice and its appearance within the street scene have not been suitably addressed or mitigated and therefore undermine this element of the proposed development.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That subject to any outstanding consultations permission is **REFUSED** for the following reasons:
 - 1. The proposed parking area and refuse store, by reason of their design and location would be detrimental to the appearance of the area, and as the area would not be lit or appropriately managed to ensure it is secure may give rise to anti-social behaviour that would further detract from appearance of the site. The requirements of policies CP17 and DP32 have not therefore been met.
 - 2. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed parking area would alleviate current parking problems at the site and neighbouring school and would not therefore offer a social gain in favour of development, in conflict with policies CP2, DP3, DP4, CP17 and DP32.