Proposed Development: Outline application for the erection of 2 no. detached dwellings.
Resubmission of 2/2014/0649
Location: Land Adjacent to Belle Mount Papcastle Cockermouth
Recommendation: REFUSE

Summary/Key Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle of development</td>
<td>The principle of development is not considered acceptable at this location. The site is not infill or rounding-off of the village and will contribute to settlements joining together by ribbon development. The proposals are contrary to Local Plan policies regarding strategic housing growth within the defined hierarchy of settlements. The proposals do not qualify as an exception of any kind for housing outside the settlement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation Area and Landscape Character</td>
<td>The site is considered to extend the village as ribbon development with adverse impact upon the traditional settlement form and the Conservation Area and with harm to the wider landscape.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>There are a number of potentially achievable solutions for surface water and foul drainage at the site in accordance with the hierarchy of sustainable drainage. United Utilities has not objected and agreed in principle to a sewer connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Acceptable to the Highway Authority with appropriate conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>An archaeological evaluation has been considered by the County Archaeologist with no necessary preservation of Roman or medieval features required. A watching brief is recommended.</td>
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Proposal

Outline application for the erection of two detached dwellings considering the principle of development, drainage and the access from the public highway and landscaping. All other matters are reserved.

Site

The site comprises agricultural, greenfield land adjacent to the public highway with a hedgerow enclosed frontage.
Open countryside of agricultural land is noted opposite to the east and to the north and west. Existing residential development is noted adjacent to the south. The Papcastle bypass is noted 120 metres to the rear of the site.

The proposed site will be adjacent to an existing dwelling known as Westlakes being the last dwelling on the edge of Papcastle. Westlakes is separated from the nearest property in Belle Vue by approximately 100 metres to the north; separated by a gap of undeveloped greenfield land.

**Relevant Policies**

**National Planning Policy Framework**

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
Requiring good design
Promoting healthy communities
Policy DM17 - Trees, hedgerows and woodland

**Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) Adopted 2014.**

Policy S1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Policy S2 - Sustainable development principles (excluding highways)
Policy S27 - Heritage Assets
Policy S29 - Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage
Policy S3 - Spatial Strategy and Growth
Policy S30 - Reuse of Land
Policy S32 - Safeguarding amenity
Policy S33 - Landscape
Policy S4 - Design principles
Policy S5 - Development Principles
Policy S7 - A mixed and balanced housing market

**Relevant Planning History**

2/2014/0649 Outline application withdrawn
2/2015/0098 Outline application refused

**Representations**

**Parish Council** – Object with regard to the following

Previous reasons for refusal not overcome
An exception for essential development not demonstrated
Ribbon development contrary to the Local Plan
Tree planting will result in joining settlements

**County Archaeologist** – No objection subject to condition

**Highway Authority** - No objection subject to condition

**Environmental Health** – No objection

The application has been advertised on site and in the local press. Adjacent landowners have been notified. Two letters of objection have been received regarding inappropriate siting beyond the settlement of Papcastle resulting in the encroachment towards Belle Vue hamlet and the joining of settlements. One objector agreed with the previous reasons for refusal of application 2/2015/0098.

**Call-In**

The application has been called-in by Councillor Peter Kendall for the following reason:

“Landscaping proposed and properties separated now from previous scheme, heritage information included now, members may wish to consider this development as ribbon development to adjoining property at Papcastle. Significant distance still between Papcastle and Belle Vue”

**Assessment**

**Introduction**

This application is a resubmission to a withdrawn application 2/2014/0649 and a subsequent application 2/2015/0098 that was considered and refused by Development Panel (14/4/2015) in accordance with the Officer’s recommendation. The reasons for refusal were as follows.

*The proposed site is considered poorly related to traditional settlement form and character and not considered to constitute as infill or rounding-off as defined within the Allerdale Local Plan and contrary to Policies S1 S2 S3 S5 and S27 of the Allerdale Local Plan Adopted July 2014 ansd Para 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

*The proposed development constitutes non essential residential development in the open countryside and is not considered to qualify as an exception for housing outside of the settlement and contrary to Policy S3 of the Allerdale Local Plan Adopted July 2014.*

*The proposed site area is considered to exacerbate ribbon development having an adverse impact upon settlement form(including the Conservation Area), landscape and rural character of the open countryside and with the detrimental result of joining a settlement to a hamlet contrary to Policy S1 S2 S3 S5 S27 and S33 of the Allerdale Local Plan Adopted July 2014.*
The application has been resubmitted as the same layout but with the proposal of a landscaping scheme between the site and the hamlet of Belle Vue.

Additionally the siting of an ‘Interpretation Board’ is proposed informing of local history and the Roman Fort as a heritage asset; to bring wider public benefit from the housing scheme.

These matters are discussed within the report below.

Principle of Development

The focus of this resubmission is as the previous application and regards the basic principle of development and the Council’s strategy for housing growth.

The site is on the edge of the built form of Papcastle.

Papcastle itself is classed as an Infill and Rounding Off-Village within the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan where only very small-scale development that is well related may be appropriate to respond to local needs and to contribute to the vitality of rural communities.

No settlement boundaries are proposed for Papcastle and other villages within this tier of the settlement hierarchy. Instead, development is being directed by the criteria outlined in Policy S5 for very small, scale appropriate rounding-off and infill plots.

The site is clearly not recognisable as an infill plot, nor does it round-off the village as such. The term ‘rounding-off’ is not formally defined within the Plan although it is reasonable to consider that rounding-off development would be sited within the confines of the settlement, defining and completing the boundaries of the village.

The supporting text to Policy S5 clarifies that infill and rounding-off development sites would be within the existing built fabric of the village, confirming the criteria within the policy which states that infill and rounding-off development must respect the appearance and the character of the settlement, must be within or well-related to the form of the settlement and to existing buildings within it, and protect, maintain or enhance the local distinctiveness, character and landscape and historic setting.

In addition, development must not exacerbate the adverse effects of ribbon development, result in further sporadic development in otherwise open countryside, or result in settlements joining together.

Although adjacent to the existing village, development of the site would only serve to extend the linear group of existing dwellings at Belle Mount with a harmful impact upon historic settlement character resulting in the threat of joining settlements; linking Papcastle sequentially with the hamlet of Belle Vue. This ribbon development is considered to be harmful to settlement character.

The applicant has argued that the ribbon development is marginal and a green space is retained as a separation buffer between Papcastle and Belle Vue. It is also claimed that Papcastle cannot link ultimately with Belle Vue due to the constraint of an underground
sewer. The applicant also proposes a tree planting landscape scheme as part of this resubmission to restrict further residential development.

Planning Officers would comment that the buffer between Papcastle and Belle Vue would be reduced by half to just approximately 50 metres. The visual separation between the two settlements would be significantly diminished, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the locality and contrary to Policy S5.

Furthermore this remaining land could also come under pressure for further development as underground services need not be a constraint with negotiated diversion and/or easements with United Utilities.

The proposed landscaping scheme intended to provide an undeveloped area between settlements is considered to have little merit as in itself, it will only serve to close the gap towards Belle Vue even further and provide an artificial form of landscaping.

This 0.2 hectare site is not considered one that would be considered very small scale; it would be able to accommodate more than the two dwellings shown. Further applications may follow should the principle be established with an outline approval, irrespective of the indicative layout at this stage. Although new development needs to be of an appropriate density to integrate well with its immediate locality, the scheme as shown illustrates two large dwellings on very large plots. Whilst Officers’ consider that this is an unsuitable location for new development in principle which does not accord with Policy S5 as outlined above, the proposals also represent an inefficient use of land (Policy S2), and exhibit the aspects of development which are most unsympathetic to the settlement form.

The application does not fall within any class of settlement within the hierarchy and is essentially greenfield, agricultural land where the only exception for housing is with regard to an essential need for a rural worker as defined under Policy S3 (a). The application has been submitted with no such need.

In conclusion, the site cannot be considered as infill or rounding-off and therefore contrary to the criteria of Policy S5 where the development would ‘exacerbate the adverse effects of ribbon development’ and would result in further adverse effects of areas of sporadic development beyond the settlement’. The application does not qualify as an exception of any kind as defined within Policy S3.

Access

The applicant has committed to a new access from the public highway at this outline stage. An amount of hedgerow will be required for removal that will have minimal impact on visual amenity and biodiversity.

The Highway Authority has responded with no objection and with standard conditions.

Drainage

Foul drainage is planned to the main sewer. Surface water drainage is planned to a soakaway.
Limited information has been provided with a drainage strategy detailing discharge rates. A supporting letter from United Utilities accepts foul and surface water to the main sewer in principle subject to connection points and discharge rates. The applicant owns and controls a large amount of adjacent land. In that regard the applicant has realistic options for sustainable drainage solutions that can be conditioned accordingly, should the application be supported.

Archaeology

The applicant has provided an archaeological evaluation. It concludes the remains of a historic track and agricultural workings. The County Archaeologist has responded and does not rule out these remain as Roman in origin or possibly medieval. However, he comments that they are not of such significance to warrant preservation at the site. The County Archaeologist concludes that any development should be accompanied with a watching brief by condition.

Hedgerow Assessment

A hedgerow assessment has been provided that concludes that the hedge on the frontage of the site is classed an Important Hedgerow’ by virtue of its mix of species and historic context as field boundary. The amount of hedgerow removal is judged to be of around 10 metres. This is considered insignificant in terms of impact although consent under the Hedgerow Regulations will be required.

Mitigation is recommended to minimise hedgerow removal, improve existing hedgerow with appropriate species and restrict groundworks with a 3 metre buffer.

Ecology

A scoping report has been provided that concludes that the development will have no significant impact upon any protected species. A mitigation strategy to safeguard wildlife is recommended with regards to good working practice and the timing of hedgerow and vegetation removal. The site has no unique habitat characteristics or statutory designations and there are no roosting bats at the site.

Residential Amenity

With design and appearance a reserved matter there are no concerns over residential and amenity at this stage.

Landscape Impact and Conservation Area

Allerdale Conservation Officer has objected to the proposals. The development is considered to have a detrimental impact upon the traditional character and form of the village as a Conservation Area; elongating the more recent linear form of the village with the potential of joining settlements together. Views into and out of the village will be affected eroding the landscape surrounding Papcastle that helps to define its strategic location and setting of the Roman Fort.
The applicant has offered the siting of an 'Interpretation Board' informing the public of local history. This is intended to address the matter of development bringing wider public benefit where heritage assets are under threat. It is Officers' opinion that the idea offers little to the application as a way of meeting policy guidelines and does not outweigh the harm of the development upon settlement character, landscape and heritage assets.

Local Financial Considerations

Having regard to S70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act the following local finance considerations are relevant to the consideration of the application.

There will be benefits arising from the scheme through the New Homes Bonus scheme which is a material planning consideration.

Conclusion

The development is clearly contrary to Policies S3 and S5 of the Local Plan regarding the settlement hierarchy and strategy for housing growth.

The site if developed will only serve to worsen and extend the ribbon development that has already impacted upon the traditional settlement form and landscape character, with the additional harm of joining Papcastle closer together with the hamlet of Belle Vue eroding undeveloped greenspace. The mitigation proposed by the application to protect the remainder of the greenspace between the two settlements is considered to have no merit and the former reasons for refusal prevail.

The proposed housing does not qualify for any exceptions at this location beyond the settlement. There is no demonstrated local or agricultural need and with no benefit to the local community. There are no benefits from the development that would outweigh such harm.
Annex 1

Reasons

The proposed site is considered poorly related to traditional settlement form and character and not considered to constitute as infill or rounding-off as defined within the Allerdale Local Plan and contrary to Policies S1 S2 S3 S5 and S27 of the Allerdale Local Plan Adopted July 2014 and Para 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposed development constitutes non essential residential development in the open countryside and is not considered to qualify as an exception for housing outside of the settlement and contrary to Policy S3 of the Allerdale Local Plan Adopted July 2014.

The proposed site area is considered to exacerbate ribbon development having an adverse impact upon settlement form (including the Conservation Area), landscape and rural character of the open countryside and with the detrimental result of joining a settlement to a hamlet contrary to Policy S1, S2, S3, S5, S27 and S33 of the Allerdale Local Plan Adopted July 2014.

Proactive Statement

Application Refused Following Discussion – Where there is no Way Forward

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying planning policies, constraints, stakeholder representations and matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the Applicant. However, the issues are so fundamental to the proposal that it has not been possible to negotiate a satisfactory way forward and due to the harm which has been clearly identified within the reason(s) for the refusal, approval has not been possible.