

MR & MRS J McCANN

WOODCOTE

WOODSIDE

ASPLEY GUISE

MK17 8EB

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Cllr K C Matthews
142b High Street
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3 November 2015

Dear Cllr Matthews

Re: Application Ref CB/15/03048: Woodcote, Woodside Aspley Guise

I write with reference to the above application which is to be considered by Members at their meeting of the 11th November.

Officers have recommended that the application should be refused; however, I am concerned that insufficient weight has been given to the information and material considerations relevant to the consideration of this application. In advance of the meeting I would therefore like to draw to your attention to the merits of the proposal and the planning considerations which I believe are relevant.

The application seeks permission to erect two detached dwellings with detached garages on land within the curtilage of my property, Woodcote.

This land is entirely enclosed on all sides by a mix of existing residential properties and the road frontages of Woodside and Aspley Hill. In addition, running along the boundaries of the site with Woodside and Aspley Hill is a mix of trees and vegetation that further obscures views of the site.

In terms of relevant planning policy; the site falls on land washed over by the Green Belt, as does much of Aspley Guise. Central Bedfordshire's Core Strategy and Development Management Plan policy (DM6), allows limited infilling to occur in the Green Belt within set infill boundaries as defined upon the Plan's accompanying Proposals Map. Policy DM6 however was framed to respond to Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 – Green Belts (PPG2), which provided specific advice on how limited infilling should be considered in a local plan. PP2 has now been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the advice on Green Belt infilling was not carried forward into the counterpart paragraph (#.89) of the Framework. There has, as a result, been a change in planning circumstances as the Framework no longer requires infilling the Green Belt to be tied to local plan policy. Rather, it is a standalone exception that requires decision makers to consider whether, as a matter of fact on the ground, a site falls within the built form of the village and can constitute an infill site.

This interpretation is corroborated by, and leads from the Appeal Court decision *Wood v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2014] EWHC 683 (Admin). Paragraph 11 of that decision assessed Paragraph 89 of the Framework and in summary found that limited infilling in villages in green belt was acceptable.


I consider this to be a significant legal decision, particularly given that the application site sits within the built confines of Aspley Guise and not on open Green Belt land.

As a demonstration of the site's characteristics, I have enclosed an aerial image that shows the application site and the development context that surrounds it. The properties that have been highlighted in blue are large properties that were both constructed in the last 18 months. Practically, I would consider this plan alone shows how logical the site is as an infill site in Aspley Guise.

Taking into account the changed policy context, and the ruling of the Court of Appeal on the interpretation of Green Belt infilling, it is clearly apparent that the site can be viewed as nothing other than an infill site that falls within the village settlement of Aspley Guise. This was the conclusion reached by the Parish Council at its meeting on the 5th October. Moreover it is also notable that there have been no objections from local residents and in fact two letters of support.

The Framework reiterates that the purposes of land being in the Green Belt are to prevent urban sprawl, to stop towns merging and to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. Taking into account the location and context of the site and the scale and nature of the proposed development it is clear that these 'purposes' are not harmed, and, given the lack of local objection and the support expressed by local residents, I would urge Members to support this application.

Yours sincerely



James McCann

