

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 May 2015

**by Anthony J Wharton BArch RIBA RIAS MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 19 May 2015**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/A/14/2225546**

**Land at Cricket Field, Alburgh Road, Shelton, Norwich NR15 2SF**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs J Groen against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
  - The application Ref 2014/0288/F, dated 14 February 2014, was refused by notice dated 25 July 2014.
  - The development proposed is a Family House at the Cricket Field.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### The Appeal site and the proposal

2. The 2.5 ha (or thereabouts) appeal site is a field which forms part of the open agricultural land surrounding the Grade II listed Shelton Hall. It lies a short distance to the north of the Hall and has been formerly used as a cricket field. It was laid to grass at the time of my visit and had recently been lightly mown. The north-eastern boundary of the field is formed by a landscaped strip of trees, shrubs and hedgerows to the west of Alburgh Road. Its north-western boundary also comprises a heavily treed and landscaped strip of land with open fields beyond and there are more open fields to the south west.

3. There are two public footpaths which cross the site. One runs from Alburgh Road towards the south west and is parallel to the boundary. The other runs from the same Alburgh Road corner to a point about midway along the north-western boundary. There is an existing agricultural access to the site from Alburgh Road in the northern corner and in the opposite corner there is a pond and a picnic area.

4. The south eastern boundary of the site shares a hedgerow with a paddock or field and this area backs on to the access road to the Hall. A large barn, to the north west of the Hall, which was once linked to the Hall, is in the process of being converted into residential accommodation. A house, formerly known as Hall Cottage and the buildings of Lodge Farm are positioned on the east side of Alburgh Road, which is a continuation of Shelton Green further to the east.

5. The proposed house is described as a 5 bedroomed house (to code level 6) with a swimming pool, gym and car port. The 40m plus (in length), linear-shaped house would be oriented west-south-west, to east-north-east, with its westerly elevation approximately 20m or so from the south-western boundary. It has been located and designed with a view to it according with the special circumstances set out in the last bullet point of paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This indicates that where, subject to certain criteria being met, isolated houses in the countryside can be found to be acceptable.

6. The last bullet point refers to the need for the proposal to be of '*exceptional quality or innovative*' in terms of design and specifically that such a design should:

- *be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;*
- *reflect the highest standards in Architecture;*
- *significantly enhance its immediate setting; and*
- *be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.*

7. The proposed new house is intended to accommodate the Appellants plus other family members, one of whom is disabled. The house has been designed to be sustainable, self-sufficient and capable of providing flexibility, comfort and ease of mobility for the family. It is considered that adaptation of the Hall and/or the conversion of the barn would not be able to meet the family requirements and particularly the mobility needs of the disabled family member. In terms of the concept for the design it is stated that the '*form of a cricket pavilion*' has been adopted to both honour the location's heritage and to create a light and elegant structure. I refer in more detail to the architectural design below.

### **Relevant Policy**

8. The development plan includes the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (JCS) which was adopted in 2011 and 2014 and the 'saved' policies from the South Norfolk Local Plan (SNLP) adopted in 2003. The most relevant policies of the JCS are Policy 1 (Addressing Climate change and protecting environmental assets) and Policy 2 (Promoting good design). In the SNLP the most relevant policies are ENV8 (Development in the open countryside); ENV14 and 15 (Habitat and Species protection); IMP 2 (Landscaping); IMP 15 (setting of Listed Buildings); IMP8 (Safe and free flow of traffic) and TRA 19 (Parking).

9. Policies within the emerging SNLP, Development Management Policies (DMP) are also material considerations but, because this document has not yet been adopted, its policies can only be afforded limited weight. The Council has referred to DM1.3 (sustainable location of development); DM1.4 (environmental quality and local distinctiveness); DM3.1 (Housing Quality); DM3.9 (Design Principles); DM3.12 (Road safety and the free flow of traffic); DM3.13 (Provision of vehicle parking); DM3.14 (Amenity, noise and quality of life); DM4.2 (Renewable Energy); DM4.3 (Sustainable drainage and water management) and DM3.15 (Pollution, health and safety). The Council also refers to its Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), the South Norfolk Place Making Guide 2012 (SNPMG) and I have had regard to the relevant sections, particularly 'Landscape Character'.

10. In terms of national policy the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and I have considered the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental in relation to this proposal. The most relevant NPPF policies are set out in section 6 (Delivering a wide choice of quality homes); section 7 (Requiring good design); section 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) and section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment). Because Shelton Hall is listed Grade II, I have also paid special attention to section 66(1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCAA) and taken into account relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

### **The 5 year housing land supply situation**

11. The current position relating to the 5 year housing land supply in the District is relevant and there are differences between the Council's position and that of the Appellants. Having requested clarification, it is now clear to me that under the

joint JCS, South Norfolk is effectively split into two housing market areas and that the 5 year supply is then measured in relation to the JCS. Figures in December 2014 showed that there was a 5.10 year supply in the Norwich Policy Area (NPA) which covers Norwich City, parts of Broadland and South Norfolk and a 9.11 year supply (at April 2014) in the South Norfolk Rural Areas (which covers the remainder of the District and includes the appeal site). The August 2014 situation of 4.66 years, referred to in the decision quoted on behalf of the Appellant (APP/L2630/A/13/2196884) has been superseded.

12. The Council has also produced a figure for the South Norfolk element of the NPA which is 6.73 years). Consequently the figures show both the South Norfolk element of the NPA and the South Norfolk Rural Area, (which together cover the whole district), as having in excess of a 5 year supply. The same method of assessment of the 5 year housing supply, across all areas covered by the JCS, has been followed in other cases and I see no reason to question this approach.

13. On the basis of these figures and in the absence of any other evidence to the contrary, I consider that in accordance with the NPPF, South Norfolk District Council has provided for an objectively assessed housing need for its housing market area and that, overall, there is in excess of a 5 year housing land supply in the District as a whole. It follows that paragraphs 49 and 14 of the NPPF are not engaged as contended on behalf of the Appellants. The relevant development plan policies can be considered up-to-date with the NPPF and, having regard to paragraph 14, the appeal must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Main issues**

14. The main issues in this case are as follows:

1. The effect that the proposal will have on the character and appearance of this part of the countryside having regard to the principle of development and whether or not the proposal accords with the paragraph 55 criteria;
2. The effect of the proposal on the setting of the listed Shelton Hall, and
3. The effect in terms of highway safety and whether or not the location for the proposed dwelling is sustainable.

#### *The principle of development*

15. The site is an agricultural field (used in the past as a cricket field) and is clearly outside any of the development limits as defined in the SNLP. The nearest buildings are the house and farm on Alburgh Road, together with Shelton Hall and the nearby large barn. There cannot be any dispute, therefore, that the proposal is for a dwelling in the open countryside. In principle, both local and national policies aim to prevent such development unless specific criteria are met. None of the normal exception criteria (such as dwellings for agricultural or forestry use) are applicable and on that basis alone the development is contrary to the development plan. However, in this case, it has always been stated that the design was conceived to meet the stringent criteria of the last bullet point of paragraph 55 of the NPPF and, therefore, that the material considerations indicate that a decision should not be made in accordance with the development plan.

16. It is contended that the Council has not provided a robust argument to support its refusal and that any initial concerns have been addressed within the design itself, or with the rigorous evidence and supporting documents from relevant experts. It is stressed that the designers have a wealth of experience in designing for rural areas and have previously secured planning permission for four 'paragraph 55' houses' and two 'PPS7 houses'. Be that as it may, each proposal

has to be assessed on its merits and I now turn to the criteria which must be met. The NPPF is clear that such a design should be assessed against all of the criteria set out in paragraph 55.

*Whether the design is truly outstanding or innovative and whether or not it raises standards of design in this rural area*

17. Turning first to the appearance and the specific architectural merits of the scheme, it is clear that this is a bespoke design which, in terms of physical appearance, makes some visual references to Shelton Hall; other surrounding buildings and the surrounding landscape. Having studied the drawings; the Design and Access Statement (DAS); the structural proposals and the proposed use of energy technologies, I agree with the Appellants that this is a balanced, elegant and practical design. The collaborative working of the specialists (Architect, Structural Engineer and other experts) has, in my view, produced a house design which, in itself, is out of the ordinary and one which certainly stands out in terms of its overall visual and architectural impact.

18. I also agree with the Appellants' contention that 'innovation' is not necessarily 'invention' and that, in the spirit of the NPPF, 'innovation' can refer to the use of better solutions that meet new and up-to-date requirements in order to produce sustainable development. The 'better solutions' in this case, include the proposed energy circuit created by the roof, the glass atrium and heat sink; the solar roof tiles; the rammed earth heat sink; the natural and mechanical shading; the green living wall; the trombe wall; the glazing; the low carbon materials and the heat pump technology.

19. Although each of these, in themselves, cannot be claimed to be truly ground-breaking or new; when used together, I consider that this combination of 'better solutions' in this design, can be said to be an innovative approach to the development of a single dwelling house. When coupled with the other engineering innovations, such as the roof; the rest of the structure and the aim to achieve level code 6 of sustainability, I consider that on balance the design meets the first criterion set out above.

*Whether or not the design reflects the highest standards in Architecture*

20. I consider that this proposal does reflect the highest standards of architecture. The design of the house itself was the result of extensive research through site visits, site history, and local input and consultant reports. The design was the carried out in a collaborative team effort which has resulted in what I consider to be a commendable and innovative project in terms of a house design.

21. In itself, the design utilises the latest techniques and technologies to provide a modern and energy efficient dwelling. It does so in an understated, simplistic, practical and elegant manner, which is far superior in terms of design than most of today's normal, mundane, mass housing or single dwelling schemes. Taking all of the technological and design features together I find, therefore, that the design of the house meets this criterion. The house itself, therefore, accords with both local and national policies which require good design and with the NPPF policy by delivering a quality home.

*Whether or not the proposal enhances its immediate setting*

22. Having walked around the site, across the site (including along the two public footpaths), over surrounding land and along Alburgh Road, Shelton Green and other minor roads in the locality, I do not agree with the Appellants that the proposal would enhance its immediate setting. Despite the fact that I find the

proposal commendable and acceptable in design terms, I find that the siting of a structure of this size and bulk would detract markedly from, rather than enhance, its immediate setting. In my view, the result would be significant visual harm being caused to this particular part of the South Norfolk countryside.

23. Whilst accepting that the design could well enhance many other sites in the District and even one closer to other built form in the vicinity; in this particular location it is my view that no matter how well designed, the house would look markedly out of place on this open agricultural land. Despite the fact that the site was formerly a cricket field and that it still forms part of the Estate, it is now perceived as a spacious field in the open countryside. The existing setting forms part of the open surrounding farmland to Shelton Hall and any new dwelling, on such an exposed site would, in my view, detract markedly from the immediate setting, character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

24. The former cricket field does not appear to have ever been historic parkland, related to the listed building. Instead, it seems to have just been one of the nearest fields to the house which was large enough to provide the owners of the Hall and the farming community with a cricket pitch. Despite the wider than normal tree and hedgerow boundaries, it is still distinctly and visually related to the open agricultural land to the north and south west. Despite these extensive landscaped boundaries which clearly improved shelter to the cricket field, it is still perceived today as open countryside. The fact that two public footpaths cross the field reinforces my view that a dwelling house on this open field would be seen as being completely out of place in this rural location.

25. Whilst acknowledging that the size of the proposal is in keeping with the size and form of some of the local larger farm buildings, I do not accept the contention that that it would reconnect these buildings to Shelton Hall and its Estate. I do not consider that the scheme can be said to re-establish the links to the historic past of Hall. The only historic links are agricultural or to its use as a cricket ground.

26. Even if there had been a large cricket pavilion or other structures on the land, these would have been positioned around the boundaries of the land, thereby relating more to the current pattern of buildings, lanes and tracks. They would certainly not have been positioned just off centre of the open part of the cricket pitch. I have no reason to question that the '*rejuvenation of the settlement*' began when the Appellants restored Shelton Hall and that this process has been furthered by the creation of a new home within the former Tithe Barn. However, I do not accept that the design for the cricket field will '*complete the hamlet's progression into the future without undermining the historic legacy of the locality*'.

27. The historic legacy in the immediate locality results mainly from the Shelton Estate and the surrounding farms providing a truly rural setting for agriculture and its associated housing. I accept that this has changed over recent years with purely residential properties helping to create this rural hamlet. However, in this case, although it is contended that the new dwelling would be perceived as being part of the hamlet and would be seen as a '*house growing out of the landscape*', I consider the opposite to be the case.

28. In my view such a large structure in this particular location would be perceived as an obtrusive, disparate and discordant addition to the landscape, seemingly appearing from nowhere and resulting in a stark and surprising three-dimensional intervention within the open field. Thus, despite the qualities of its design, its innovative nature, and the proposed landscaping, it follows that I do not consider that the proposal would enhance its immediate setting.

*Whether or not the design is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area*

29. The defining characteristics of the area result from a combination of the open agricultural land; the narrow lanes; the farm buildings and the houses interspersed, at varying distances, along the lanes. Most of the buildings are closely related to the narrow lanes, or have small access roads from the lanes to dwellings and farm buildings. Shelton Hall itself is such an example, with a track giving access to the Hall and the adjacent former farm buildings.

30. In terms of the proposed house, I have already referred to its design references to the buildings in close proximity to Shelton Hall. In design terms alone, I consider that it would be sensitive to the character and appearance of other built forms this part of the District. However, it would be far from sensitive in terms of its siting on the former open cricket field. I have already referred above to the visual effect that this dwelling would have in such an exposed position and the effect would cause demonstrable harm to the defining key characteristics of the landscape, set out in the SNPMG.

31. Because of the size and positioning of the house, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the characteristics of the immediate area. As indicated above most of the other built form in the vicinity is well-related to the network of narrow lanes and access tracks. The appeal scheme, despite the proposed landscaping, would be perceived as a stark, disparate and discordant element. The qualities of its design cannot hide its overall bulk and massing. These factors would result in it being significantly and demonstrably out of keeping and not at all in harmony with the open nature of the agricultural land and the former open cricket field.

32. In conclusion, again due to size and positioning, I find that the proposal would be most insensitive to the defining characteristics of the area. It fails, therefore, to meet the stringent requirements of this criterion in paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

*The effect of the proposal on the setting of the Grade II listed Shelton Hall and other nearby heritage assets.*

33. Having seen the listed Hall in its overall context and having viewed its surroundings, I consider that, as a matter of fact and degree, it has a very wide-ranging overall setting. This includes the immediate gardens to the house itself; the surrounding moat and nearby ponds; the Tithe Barn and other nearby former agricultural buildings.

34. Because of the historic relationship of the house to the immediate surrounding agricultural land, and in particular the former cricket field appeal site, I also consider that these areas add positively to, and form part of, the setting to the hall itself and the curtilage buildings which are deemed listed by virtue of Section 5 (1) (b) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCAA).

35. On 25 March 2015 the PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn and replaced by 3 English Heritage Good Practice Advice Notes, 1, 2 and 3 (EHGPA Notes). In essence these documents follow the previous guidance relating to the protection of the settings of Heritage Assets. EHGPA Note 3 is relevant in this case and deals with the Setting of Heritage Assets. The NPPF makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset (in this case Shelton Hall and the deemed listed structures) is the surroundings in which the asset is experienced. The extent of a setting is not fixed and may change. It is indicated that elements of a setting may make a negative or positive contribution to its significance; may affect the ability to appreciate the significance or may be neutral.

36. The contribution of its setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views. Views which contribute more to the understanding of the significance of the asset include those where there are clear relationships between the asset and natural features; those with historical associations and those between heritage assets and natural or topographical features. The importance of the setting lies in what that setting contributes to the significance of the historical asset.

37. In applying these criteria to the particular setting of Shelton Hall, I have taken into account the Heritage Statement submitted on behalf of the Appellants. From the outline history of the Hall and its lands; from its historical development and from the analysis of the impact of the proposal on the designated Assets (including Shelton Hall; Shelton Hall Brick Barn; Shelton Hall Great Barn; St Mary's Parish Church and the Old Rectory I do not consider that any of the assets will be substantially harmed. Clearly none of the assets are at risk of being lost but the question to be asked is whether there would be a positive, negative or neutral impact on the setting of any of these heritage assets.

38. I consider that, as well as the immediate links to the other historic buildings, the significance of the setting of the Hall lies in its historical and visual links and connections to the surrounding open estate farmland. The setting is typical of many others in this part of the District, where farm houses and associated buildings are set within an open agricultural landscape, interspersed along the narrow lanes with sporadic or scattered housing.

39. I have taken into account the topography of the land, views to and from the listed hall and other heritage assets; the openness of the former cricket field; the dense boundary treatment; the views across the site and its intervisibility with other built and natural elements within this part of the South Norfolk Landscape.

40. From all of my observations it is my view that the siting of a new dwelling house of this size on this particular site would neither preserve nor enhance the open rural setting of the heritage assets. I acknowledge that views to and from the site towards the historic buildings are limited due to the wide and dense boundary landscaping around the appeal site. However, I consider that the siting of the proposed house would result in harm being caused to the open rural setting of Shelton Hall and the other nearby listed buildings. Instead of being seen as closely related to the group of historic buildings, the proposal would stand out as being visually obtrusive and thus the overall pattern of the development within this part of the South Norfolk landscape would be significantly and detrimentally altered.

41. Whilst accepting that the harm to the heritage assets would be less than substantial, there are no public benefits which would outweigh the harm. The appeal fails, therefore, on this issue.

#### *The effect on highway safety*

42. Norfolk County Council's (NCC) Highways statement, dated 2014, sets out the highways case on behalf of the Council. It refers to the location of the site; its relationship to the highway network of the area; the basis of the highways objection and an assessment of the effect of the proposals. In terms of the access to the site the statement refers to the NPPF aims to ensure '*safe and suitable access...for all people*'.

43. The estimated traffic movements to and from the site are around 8 to 10 vehicular trips per day and I have no reason to question this figure for a proposal

of this size and having regard to the family requirements. I agree with the NCC that, other than access on to the farmland for agricultural purposes, there is no notable existing vehicle generating use of the site. Thus, the proposal would lead to an increase of traffic on the existing road system.

44. Having considered the above figures and inspected the highways immediately adjacent to, and surrounding the site, I do not share the Highway Authority's concerns regarding highway safety. In my view, a safe access to the site for one dwelling could be achieved subject to the proposed conditions relating to the nature of the access; the visibility splays; a turning area within the site and relevant proposals for the surface water drainage being provided. In any case there are no objections from the Council relating to drainage.

45. The addition of the traffic generated by one dwelling will not, in my view, add significantly to traffic movements on this part of the network and on this part of the highways network. Despite the narrow lanes, frequent junctions and the general condition of the secondary roads I consider that a proposal for one dwelling in this locality would, subject to appropriate conditions, be acceptable on highway safety grounds. I, therefore, find in favour of the proposal on this part of the highways issue.

*Whether or not the location is sustainable*

46. With regard to the site being in a sustainable location, the NCC Highways document quotes from the local transport plan '*Connecting Norfolk – Norfolk's Transport Plan for 2026*' (CNNT) and specifically to Policy 5 which aims to ensure that any new development is well located and connected to existing facilities, so as to minimise the need to travel and reduce reliance on the private car or the need for new infrastructure. It is considered that the proposal conflicts with the NPPF and with Policy 5 of the CNNT.

47. On the basis of the evidence submitted by NCC there can be no doubt that this is not a sustainable location for new housing in general. There are no bus services within a reasonable distance from the site; the nearest shops are over 3km away and there are no safe cycling tracks in the vicinity of the site. It is clear, therefore that, irrespective of who lived in the proposed new dwelling, they would be heavily dependent on the use of the private car to access the necessary services.

48. However, I do not accept the contention that Shelton is not suitable for '*growth of this nature*'. Putting aside any other issues, the proposal is for just one dwelling house and any such single dwelling in the general surroundings of the site would be as sustainable as the existing dwellings in terms of location. Whilst accepting that the aims of any sustainability policies of the development plan and the NPPF might not be fully met by any new housing in such locations, this is not a proposal for a small housing estate.

49. Instead, it is one which relies on the paragraph 55 criteria and where, in terms sustainability alone, the considerable benefits of the proposal would, (if acceptable in all other respects) far outweigh the fact that the new dwelling would be in an isolated part of the District. I therefore find in favour of the Appellants on this second part of the highways issue.

*The Ecological and Arboricultural Matters*

50. The Council's fourth reason for refusal was on the basis that the Ecological Report was not sufficient to fully assess the impact of the development and it was considered that it would cause detriment to protected species and in particular reptiles and greater crested newts. However, following the full ecological report by



Finnemore Associates (submitted in May 2014), it is indicated that the Council has withdrawn its objections with regard to Ecological matters. Having read the report I agree that, subject to appropriate conditions, there are no ecological reasons which would dictate against the proposed development.

51. I have also studied the arboricultural report in conjunction with the landscaping scheme and I am satisfied that the existing trees within and surrounding the site have been appropriately assessed. None of the trees on or around the site would be lost and the relevant specimens close to any proposed development would be adequately protected during and after the construction period. I agree that, again subject to appropriate conditions, there can be no objection to the proposal on arboricultural grounds.

#### *The proposed landscaping scheme*

52. The thorough landscape report clearly sets out a description of the site; outlines the proposal; gives an overview and policy context and analyses the landscape character surrounding the site. It goes on to assess the effects of the proposal; to summarise the objectives of the scheme; to set out the features proposed and explains in some detail the concept of the scheme. The report also refers to the proposed planting (shown on drawing 1348/01- some trees named after cricket fielding positions) and covers the planting process; ground preparation and treatment; grassing and tree and shrub planting.

53. In relation to the overall concept of the landscaping scheme, the report states that the visual impact of the development is intended to be less than that which currently exists. It is also contended that the house would be enhanced by the setting and form of the proposed soft landscaping. On this latter point I agree that the landscape proposal could work well in terms of its conceptual design, with the design of the house itself. It is also clear that the intensification of planting around the boundaries could assist in general screening of the proposed new house from distant viewpoints.

54. However, with regard to the visual impact of the development being less than that which currently exists, I completely disagree with the contention that is put forward. What exists is an open field or cricket pitch, without any landscaping other than around the boundaries and I have already referred above to the physical impact of a dwelling of this size and bulk on the field. In my view, no amount of horse chestnut trees or other 'fielders' (whether in the 'slips' or the 'outer field') would be sufficient to allay the perception that the 'cricket pavilion' was inappropriately located on the 'wicket' near to the middle of the pitch.

55. Even if the trees in the 'outer field' (from 'deep mid-wicket' around to 'deep cover' and 'long-off') were fully grown specimens, the house would still be distinctly noticeable and, in my view, obtrusive within its newly formed landscape. Furthermore the 'fielders' at 'long slip', 'third man' and 'deep point' would lie to the north of the public footpath and would not assist in any screening of the building. The design concept overall might well achieve ecological and habitat enhancements on parts of the site but, overall, I do not consider that the landscaping scheme overcomes my concerns about the impact of the proposal on its immediate setting or the sensitivities of the appearance and characteristics of this part of South Norfolk.

#### **The Planning Balance and my overall conclusions**

56. I have found in favour of the proposal in relation to two of the criteria set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF. I have concluded that the design is innovative and

that it reflects the highest of standards in Architecture. I have also found no conflict with regard to policies on highway safety; the location and sustainability of a single dwelling in this locality; the effects on ecology and habitats and the effect on existing trees.

57. However, against these advantages, I have found that the proposal would not accord with the remaining criteria set out in paragraph 55, in that the proposed house would be significantly harmful to its immediate setting and would also be demonstrably harmful to the defining characteristics of this part of South Norfolk. It follows that I find the proposal to be contrary to Policy ENV8 of the SNLP and to paragraph 55 of the NPPF when considered in full.

58. I have also found against the proposal in terms of the impact on the setting of Shelton Hall and the deemed listed buildings in the immediate vicinity. The proposal is also contrary, therefore, to policy IMP15 of the SNLP and to the NPPF policies in Section 12 relating to the conservation and enhancement of the heritage assets. With regard to the DMP policies, I have only afforded them limited weight but, nevertheless, having taken into account the aims of Policy DM1.4, and those of the SNPMG, my concerns about the impact of this proposal on the environmental quality and local distinctiveness of the area are reinforced.

59. My overall conclusion is that the commendable design advantages of the scheme are significantly outweighed by the disadvantages and the harm which would be caused to this part of the open countryside. Even if paragraphs 49 and 14 of the NPPF had applied, with regard to the housing land supply, it would still be my view that planning permission should not be granted due to the adverse impacts of the proposal. These adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits identified, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

60. Finally, I find that, in terms of its design alone, this is the 'right house' and it would provide a quality home. However, it is the 'right house' in the 'wrong location' and, for the above reasons set out above, I do not consider that planning permission should be granted. The appeal, therefore, fails.

### **Other Matters**

61. In reaching my final decision I have taken into account all other matters raised by and on behalf of the Appellants. These include the initial grounds of appeal; the full details of the application; the Design and Access Statement and its summary; the full details of the Heritage Statement; the responses to the Council's decision and appeal submissions; the matters set out in the Ecology and Arboricultural Assessments; the matters covered by the Landscape Statement and the final comments submitted on 12 November 2014.

62. However, none of these factors alter my conclusions on the main points at issue and nor is any other matter of such significance so as to change my decision that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Anthony J Wharton*

Inspector

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