

25/01790/FP Erection of one self-build dwelling including hard and soft landscaping, parking and creation of vehicular crossover off Snailswell Lane.

This is an application for a 3-bedroom self-build dwelling on green belt land outside the settlement boundary in Ickleford.

The importance of supplying new housing on a 'windfall site' is acknowledged. However, I **OBJECT** to this application for the reasons given below:

1. Impact on neighbour amenity and negative visual impact on the street scene.
2. Lack of safe and sustainable access.
3. Impact on ecology.
4. Flooding and foul drainage.

1. Impact on neighbour amenity and negative visual impact on the street scene.

1.1 The dwelling is proposed to be 1.5 storeys in height. As shown in the proposed street scene from the applicant's planning statement, this 1.5 storey dwelling is considerably higher than neighbouring The Mildens. The street scene does not show that the property to the left of The Mildens, Ramblings, is the same height as The Mildens. The proposed dwelling would cause harm to the amenity of The Mildens and is not in keeping with the street scene.

1.2 Design codes were prepared for the made Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan by AECOM. Snailswell Lane is used an example of property types D 'Green Belt'. This extract shows the design code BF.03 - height. The property shown is The Mildens.

Design codes

Built form

BF.03 Height

The following section identifies the height ranges for buildings in the neighbourhood plan area.

These typical heights can be used as reference for new developments, to assess the appropriateness of suggested types in relation to the existing types in the neighbourhood plan area.

This code is applicable to the following area types:
(Those areas where it is applicable are highlighted in colour)

A

B

C

D

E

 2 storeys	 2 storeys	 3 storeys
A Historic core Max residential storeys: 2	B Settlement Max residential storeys: 2	B Settlement Some rare examples of 3 storey dwellings.
 n/a	 1 storey	Most residential buildings tend to be 2 storeys across the built area, buildings in the Green Belt tend to be of a lower profile. The bulk of development should not grow over two storeys. In some cases 3 storey buildings could be justifiable. They need to be carefully designed as they have the potential to significantly impact the built character of Ickleford.
C Rural countryside Max residential storeys: n/a	D Green Belt Max residential storeys: 1 + pitch	E New development

For new developments, the design code notes that buildings in the Green Belt should 'have a 'lower profile', again suggesting that the height of the proposed dwelling is too great for this location.

1.3 Infill outside the settlement boundary is not supported by INP policy **SD1**.

Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary

New development, including housing, small scale employment uses and community facilities will be supported on infill or redevelopment sites inside the settlement boundary where there is no unacceptable impact on existing residential, employment and community uses.

The application site is outside of the settlement boundary. Policy **SD1** of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan (INP) supports limited infill **inside** the settlement boundary. The applicant's agent argues that as no reference is made to infill *outside* the settlement boundary then this is 'not not supported', however the clear intention of the INP, written before the latest iteration of the NPPF, **does not** lend support to infill *outside* the settlement boundary. At the time of writing the INP any such site would have been the subject of considerable protection by nature of its Green Belt status alone.

2. Lack of safe and sustainable access

2.1 Snailswell Lane is a By-way Open to all Traffic (BOAT) beyond Glendale. There is no footway and the road surface is very uneven. In wet weather, it is difficult to proceed even by cycle (see picture below looking towards Ickleford taken near Glendale). Accessing the proposed dwelling using a mobility scooter or wheelchair would be very difficult and possibly dangerous. Lack of access via wheeling and cycling makes this an unsustainable location.



2.2 Development therefore does not meet NPPF paragraph **155 c**.

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

a) For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.

b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed⁵⁶;

c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework⁵⁷; and

d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

It is suggested in the application that the land is grey-belt. Whether the land is grey or green belt, section c) is not met as section b) of paragraph **115** is not met:

NPPF paragraph 115: *In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:*

a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;

c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code⁴⁸; and

d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

Section b) is not met as the road surface is not safe and suitable for cycling and wheeling.

3. Impact on ecology

3.1 The planning statement supplied by the applicant describes that the site has

"....historically been used for ancillary activities associated with The Milders [sic] (such as dog agility) and as paddock land."

The NHC site notice refers to the site as 'Land known as the orchard'.

The applicant's application form notes that there are no trees on the site. Neighbours note that a mature fruit tree was felled prior to submission of the application.

3.2 As would be expected in this rural Green Belt location, neighbours report sightings of foxes and deer on the site. This site is also used as a hunting ground by barn owls who roost in a mature tree to the north of the site.

3.3. As a 'self-build' dwelling, this application is not subject to 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. However, no preliminary ecological appraisal has been provided and the application therefore does not comply with Local Plan policy NE4 including, but not limited to:

Applicants should, having regard to the status of any affected site(s) or feature(s):

a) Submit an ecological survey that is commensurate to the scale and location of the development and the likely impact on biodiversity....

The site should be surveyed by NHC's ecologist prior to determination.

4. Flooding and foul drainage

4.1 The site is shown to be in flood zone 1. A drainage ditch runs alongside Snailswell Lane, however, as the image of the BOAT above shows, there is often standing water on the road surface during heavy rainfall.

4.2 Ickleford Parish Council have recently written to North Herts Council to express concern regarding development in the village as the sewerage system in Ickleford is unable to cope with existing dwellings. 'Unable to cope' takes the form of raw sewage coming up from drains requiring the attendance of a sanitising team from Anglian Water. Such incidents have occurred at a property close to the proposed dwelling. If the application is granted, a Grampian condition should be included on Anglian Water to confirm that the existing sewerage system can support additional capacity from Snailswell Lane **without exacerbating problems for existing residents.**

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