



PL/2023/01337/PPFL – Erect new build family dwelling on existing vacant land to north west of 105 Darley Green Road, Knowle

The KDBH Neighbourhood Forum (the Forum) has reviewed the documents accompanying this application and **raises an objection** for the following reasons:

1. The site and location plans are inadequate. There is no separate location plan or block plan. The plan within the Planning Statement does not show the relationship to nearby houses making it difficult to understand the site's location.
2. It is noted that the pre application advice from Planning officers was that the proposed development in an earlier iteration did not justify development in the Green Belt.
3. The Planning Statement does not address how this proposal addresses relevant planning policies. There is no demonstration of any very special circumstances that justify development in the Green Belt other than the provisions of para 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) . There is no mention of KDBH Neighbourhood Plan policies or how it complies with relevant policies. However, somewhat confusingly, we note that the Landscape and Visual Assessment does reference relevant policies and assesses the development against them, concluding that the proposal is supportable from a visual and landscape perspective.
4. The applicants have submitted the proposal on the basis that it satisfies the tests of an exceptional dwelling. Para 80 (formerly 79) of the NPPF sets out the tests for permitting isolated homes in the countryside. The design test includes that it should be of exceptional quality (truly outstanding) and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area. Policy D1 of the Neighbourhood Plan similarly expects new development to reflect layouts and design characteristics of an area. It does not intend to stifle innovative design where this would be appropriate in the local context.

The Forum's assessment is that this site is not an isolated countryside location so the application of this test to this application is questionable. Whilst it is accepted that the site is largely hidden from the road, it does not mean that the tests carry any less weight. The site is in close proximity to a group of attractive houses of similar design characteristics, including two listed buildings- Darley Mill and the Mill House. The Forum is not convinced that the design of the proposed dwelling is truly outstanding nor does it significantly enhance the defining characteristics of the area.

5. Listed buildings- the proposed development adjoins the Mill House and Darley Mill. The close proximity to the Listed Buildings and in particular the lake which forms the setting of the buildings raises concerns about the impact of such a modern design on the Listed buildings and their settings.

On the basis of the information submitted to date, the Forum concludes that this application does not demonstrate the very special circumstances necessary to outweigh harm to the Green Belt. Specifically, we do not consider it satisfies the tests of para 80 of the NPPF nor does it comply with Policy D1 of the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan.

Roger Cook
Chair, Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum