

Response to Planning Application PL/2018/03552/PPFL

162 Browns Lane, Bentley Heath

During development of the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Forum regularly engaged with residents and one of the recurring themes was a desire to downsize into smaller houses, and in particular into bungalows (obviously more suitable for older and less mobile residents). The shortage of bungalows in the KDBH Area is a regular complaint and it is noticeable that none of the more recent large developments in the Area has included any bungalows.

The KDBH Housing Needs Assessment, part of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base, recorded the view of local estate agents who also commented on the demand for, and shortage of, bungalows in our Area. At the same time, there were many adverse comments on the proliferation of demolitions of existing dwellings and their replacement with substantial 5, or more, bedroom family houses.

The proposal concerning 162 Browns Lane, which would mean the loss of a bungalow, is therefore of concern to the Forum. It would, in our view, set an unwelcome precedent that could lead to loss of the few bungalows we currently have in the Area. This would adversely affect the housing mix that the Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to achieve.

With regard to the design of the proposed development, the Forum views this as contrary to NP policy D1 Character and Appearance in that:-

- it does not reflect the layout characteristic of the surrounding area;
- the scale and massing are not in keeping with the scale, siting and appearance of either the adjoining bungalows to one side or the adjoining two storey houses on the other;
and
- it will not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the street scene or the area within which it is located.

The Neighbourhood Forum would be grateful if you would take these comments into account in determining this application.