



Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) Neighbourhood Forum

Response to Planning Application PL/2020/00439/PPFL

65, Knowle Wood Road, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8JP

Demolition of existing dwelling, ancillary dwelling, garages and erection of 7 No. apartments and associated parking

Mr B Watkinson
Planning Services
Solihull MBC
Council House
SOLIHULL
B91 3QB

Dear Mr Watkinson

The Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum (KDBH NF) supports the objection made by the Dorridge and District Residents Association (DDRA) to the above planning application. It concurs with their opinion that this third attempt to gain planning permission is not materially different from the last application, and that the reasons for refusal of that application by Solihull Council therefore remain valid in respect of the current application.

We also ask that the following additional comments to be taken into account:

Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Policy D1

The failure of the proposed development to comply with Policy D1 of the KDBH NP is the primary concern. In addition to the specific bullet points referenced by the DDRA, we would ask the Council to also consider bullet point 2 of the policy in relation to the design of new development which states 'where on the edge of the built up area, achieve a sensitive transition between the built environment and the open countryside'. This was an issue raised in both the 'Heritage and Character Assessment' and the 'Masterplanning Design and Design Coding Study' evidence base documents referenced in Policy D1. The proposed development sits on the edge of the built development of Dorridge and this point is therefore relevant. The proposal to increase the height, density and scale of development in this location is the antithesis of the aim of this particular bullet point and is therefore unacceptable.

The KDBH NF would ask the Council to take this into account in assessing the proposal against all the criteria set out in Policy D1.

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Neighbourhood Plan Policy H1

The policy drivers and target outcomes for the Housing policies (set out on p34 of the KDBH NP) are relevant and applicable to this application. Of particular note is the 3rd bullet point that refers to the community having a significant say in the design and layout of new housing.

Policy H1 sets out the matters to be addressed in new housing proposals. The Independent Examiner amended the draft policy such that it should also apply to some smaller scale development. The KDBH NF considers that this policy should be applied in a proportionate and relevant manner to the current application. In this regard, the KDBH NF considers that the proposed development does not satisfactorily address the matters in bullet points 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. In addition to design and density objections, there are particular concerns around: the practicality of the proposed refuse storage and collection; access by emergency vehicles; the apparent shortage of outdoor garden area for residents; and the distance from public transport and services.

The KDBH NF concludes that this application does not comply with Policy H1 of the KDBH NP.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy NE1

The KDBH NF welcomes the submission of a Tree Survey with this application. It is regrettable that two significant trees have been removed since the topographical survey was undertaken. It appears that a number of good quality trees remain in and around this site.

Looking at the site from the adjoining footpaths, it is difficult to assess the impact of the proposal on the surrounding trees from the tree survey. For example, there is one mature tree situate close to the boundary to the rear of the frontage house which is either tree 3 or within G1. Its full size and canopy extent do not seem to be accurately recorded on the site survey plans. Similarly, the group G1 on the southern boundary forms an important screen, but the extent of the individual trees is not indicated on the survey plan. These are shown in the photographs at foot below.

We note that at paragraph 4.3 of the Tree Survey it states that 'consideration will be given to maintaining tree line boundary features, landscape impacts, habitat connectivity and reinforcing site boundaries' and that these will be discussed with the Council at the pre application stage. It is not clear in the application documentation that such features have been adequately considered and that they will be retained and reinforced where necessary. We consider it is essential to have such detail and clarity at the application stage.



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The KDBH NP places great importance on maintaining and protecting trees as a valued amenity and we ask the Council to ensure that a Tree Officer visits the site to assess whether there is any breach of Policy NE 1 arising from this proposal. In view of the loss of two significant trees, the NF would also ask Solihull Council to impose a Tree Preservation Order on the mature significant horse chestnut trees which are so prominent on the Knowle Wood Road frontage. We ask that this be considered irrespective of the outcome of the current application.

Design, Access and Planning Statement

This statement does not explain the evolution of, and approach to, the design of the proposed buildings. It also provides little information on access issues, including, for example, how refuse vehicles and the emergency services will service the site. We query whether this submission is adequate.

Under 'principle of development' on p2, there is an incorrect reference to S38 of the Town and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The statement omits to refer to the development plan and refers instead only to Local Plan policy. The KDBH NP is, of course, now part of the development plan and should have been taken into account as an up to date part of the development plan.

The applicant quotes paragraph 118 of the NPPF in relation to making planning decisions which support the development of underutilised land and buildings. It goes on to state that the proposed development represents infill development of garden land. We respectfully point out that this plot is not garden land as it is an occupied dwelling house and garden which is of a character and plot size in keeping with the residential area of which it forms part.

In Conclusion

The KDBH NF supports the previous decision of Solihull Council to refuse the application for 8 apartments on this site. We do not think that the current application for 7 apartments provides any substantive reason to reach a different conclusion. We consider that this application is contrary to the KDBH NP and we therefore request that planning permission for the current application be refused.

Yours sincerely

Jane Aykroyd
Chair
Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum

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