

Application No: [W 18 / 2335](#)

Town/Parish Council: Burton Green
Case Officer: Lucy Hammond

Registration Date: 11/03/19
Expiry Date: 06/05/19

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Lodge Farm House, Westwood Heath Road, Coventry, CV4 8AA

Erection of 2no. dwellings. FOR Lever Arch Investments Ltd

This application is being presented to Committee due to the number of objections and an objection from the Parish Council having been received.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is granted subject to the conditions listed at the end of this report.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission is sought for the construction of two detached dwellings to the south east side of the host dwelling known as Lodge Farm House. Each dwelling is proposed with its own access, private drive with electric vehicle charging points and garden to side/rear. The proposals also incorporate the creation of a new vehicle access which would provide the two dwellings with their own access, separate from the access that serves the host dwelling. This is proposed to be taken off the existing private drive that serves Old Lodge Farm, the neighbouring property to the south west.

During the course of the application a revised site edged red location plan has been submitted to correct an inaccuracy on the original submission. The revised site edged red reduces the application site, thus not bringing it any closer to any neighbouring property than was previously the case. To that end, there is no need to re-consult on the revised plan.

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

The application site forms part of the curtilage associated with the host dwelling known as Lodge Farm House. The site is not located within the Green Belt; it actually forms part of the allocated site, H42, which is adjacent to Lodge Farm House. The Green Belt boundary cuts through the application site; the host dwelling and the majority of its curtilage, including its driveway, lies within the Green Belt, while the application site in its entirety lies outside the Green Belt, to the south east of the Green Belt boundary.

Levels within the site gradually slope down towards the south east boundary so the host dwelling sits at a slightly elevated position. The site is enclosed by hedgerows and other landscaping features while the site itself is clear of trees. Access to the site is obtained via a track off Westwood Heath Road. This track measures approximately 200m in length before turning south-east and it provides access to the host dwelling and a further four residential properties.

It is important to recognise that while no development is underway as yet, the application site is immediately adjacent to the site which is subject to a planning permission for up to 425 dwellings. This permission is approved partly in outline with a detailed phase of 129 dwellings approved in the north east corner of the allocated site, i.e. furthest away from the application site.

PLANNING HISTORY

W/17/1871 - Use of the existing C3(a) property for a C3(b) use (up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care) - Approved

RELEVANT POLICIES

- The NPPF

The Current Local Plan

- DS5 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- DS11 - Allocated Housing Sites (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- DS15 - Comprehensive Development of Strategic Sites (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- DS18 - Green Belt (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- H0 - Housing (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- H1 - Directing New Housing (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- BE1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- BE3 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- TR1 - Access and Choice (Warwick District Local Plan - 2011-2029)
- TR3 - Parking (Warwick District Local Plan - 2011-2029)
- NE2 - Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- NE4 - Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)

Guidance Documents

- Parking Standards (Supplementary Planning Document)
- Residential Design Guide (Supplementary Planning Document- May 2018)
- The 45 Degree Guideline (Supplementary Planning Guidance)

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Burton Green Parish Council: Objection for the following reasons:

- The site is in the Green Belt
- The allocated site is capped at 425 dwellings in the local plan period until further highway infrastructure improvement works are undertaken
- Other applications for housing in Burton Green have been recently refused
- There are concerns about access and highway safety; there is insufficient width for two cars to pass
- The junction with Westwood Heath Road is inadequate, with poor visibility
- The proposal would diminish the openness of the Green Belt
- If approved it would bring forward the development line
- The proposal is not in character with the village

WCC Highways: No objection

WCC Ecology: No objection subject to conditions

Environmental Health: No objection subject to condition and notes

Public response: 6 letters of objection received, raising the following points:

- the site is in the Green Belt
- there will be an increase in traffic movements
- this will lead to increased noise
- the track from Westwood Heath Road cannot cope with additional vehicle movements
- the proposal would be harmful to neighbours
- the two dwellings would be visually harmful
- these additional two dwellings, together with the approved 425 on the adjacent site will compound traffic and highway safety

Other non-material considerations raised including:

- extent of notification of the planning application
- misleading references within the applicant's submitted application/supporting statements
- queries regarding the current use of the host dwelling

Officer note regarding publicity of the application - comments regarding the lack of notification/site notice have been noted however all neighbouring properties were notified of the application on 21.12.2018 and a site notice was posted at the entrance to the access track off Westwood Heath Road.

ASSESSMENT

The main issues relevant to the consideration of this application are as follows:

- principle of development
- visual impact / impact on character of area
- impact on residential amenity
- car parking / highway safety
- ecological impact

The principle of development

Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to the direction of new housing, stating under which circumstances housing development will be permitted. Of relevance to this particular application is bullet point (b) of the policy which states that housing will be permitted within the allocated housing site at Westwood Heath (H42), as shown on the Policies Map. The application site lies within the boundary of the H42 allocation.

Site H42 in the Local Plan has an estimated figure for the number of dwellings shown as 425. The policy states within the explanatory text (at 2.49) that land has been identified for a residential-led, mixed use development which the existing highway network is capable of supporting, although it is envisaged that with improved road infrastructure / additional network capacity, further residential development could be accommodated without undue adverse impacts on local amenity, on land that has been safeguarded adjacent to the allocated site.

Since the Local Plan was adopted an application has been permitted, partly in detail but mostly in outline, for up to 425 dwellings. This proposal for an additional two would therefore take the total number above the figure of 425 in the Local Plan. Housing figures set out in the Local Plan are usually given as an estimate; each development proposal will be considered on its own merits having regard to the resulting impacts that might arise as a result of an increased number of dwellings being proposed.

In this particular instance, the explanatory text states that the number of dwellings on this allocated site is capped at 425 due to the existing highway infrastructure and regard must therefore be given to whether or not the provision of an additional two dwellings would be harmful. The specific reason for this relates to highway safety infrastructure and it is noted that in response to this planning application, the Highways Authority has raised no objection and provided further commentary on why this proposal is considered acceptable. This is set out in full in the relevant section of this report.

Notwithstanding the stipulation of 425 dwellings in the policy, it is nevertheless considered that the principle of development, having regard to the fact that the site lies within the boundary of a residential allocation, is acceptable subject to an assessment being made of the other relevant considerations, in particular, the highway safety impacts. These are considered in the following sections of this report.

For the avoidance of doubt it is also noted that the site is not within the Green Belt. A number of representations have been received from local residents stating that the site is in the Green Belt and as such the proposal constitutes inappropriate development. This is not the case as the site lies beyond the boundary of the Green Belt which extends to the west of the site. Since the site is therefore wholly outside the Green Belt, no assessment needs to be made of whether or not the proposal is appropriate or inappropriate development.

Visual impact / Character of the area

The site is accessed via a private drive off Westwood Heath Road which is approximately 200m in length. As such, public views of the site are not easily facilitated although presently, while the allocated site remains undeveloped, some distant views can be obtained from Westwood Heath Road, 175m to the north, and Bockendon Road, 325m to the east.

Within the site, the two proposed dwellings would be read in the context of the host dwelling and the few immediate neighbours. Both dwellings are proposed in a 'L-shape' plan form and are orientated such that it creates a courtyard style arrangement to the frontage where cars would turn and park. The dwellings have a slightly different design but share the same design characteristics and finishes resulting in a sense of symmetry and cohesion between the two. The ridge heights are 8.3m which are comparable with the overall scale of the host dwelling which has varying ridge heights averaging between 8 and 9 metres. It is noted that the land slopes gradually down towards the eastern boundary so the proposed dwellings would be no more prominent in the landscape than the other dwellings around them.

In terms of materials, brick and tile are proposed which is in keeping with some of the neighbouring properties. The host dwelling has a painted render finish

however it is not considered that the new dwellings would be visually harmful to the character of the area or the wider surrounding landscape.

Overall it is therefore considered that the development accords with Policy BE1 of the Local Plan which expects development to positively contribute to the character and quality of its environment.

Impact on residential amenity

During the course of the application, a revised layout plan has been submitted making only one change to the siting of the buildings within their respective plots. This was in order to achieve a greater separation distance between their rear elevations and the eastern boundary thus increasing the distance between these properties and the future development on the allocated site, albeit details of the future development and what type of units would be proposed on this boundary are presently unknown. By increasing the separation distances at the rear it has in turn improved the size of the rear gardens which, for 5-bed dwellings is more appropriate.

The new dwellings would not impact the amenity of the host dwelling by reason of overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking. While there is a breach of the 45 degree line from the nearest ground floor front facing window of the host dwelling, the breach occurs at 23m away. The Residential Design Guide accepts breaches more than 8m away as being acceptable so in this instance it is considered that the dwelling would not result in any material loss of light or overbearing to the ground floor window of the host dwelling. Other neighbouring dwellings are located too far away from the proposal to be impacted.

In terms of the future occupants, appropriate levels of amenity would be afforded to the new dwellings through private rear gardens that exceed the minimum size set out in the Residential Design Guide. The new dwellings share a side to side relationship so there are no concerns regarding the distance separation.

Overall it is considered that the development accords with Policy BE3 of the Local Plan.

Highway safety / Parking

Access to the proposed dwellings is via the existing drive off Westwood Heath Road. At the end of the drive, a further private drive serves the host dwelling and its neighbour, Old Lodge Farm. It is off this part of the drive that a new section of drive is proposed to serve the two dwellings thus, not going through the host dwelling which would retain its own driveway.

Concern has been expressed by local residents about the existing access drive, visibility at the junction and the absence of passing places along the drive. In the opinion of some of the neighbours, a further two dwellings would compound the situation. The County Highways Authority has visited the site and provided a comprehensive response as to why there are no objections from a highway safety point of view.

The access is privately owned and maintained. The Highway Authority is concerned with vehicle movements that affect the safety of road users of the public highway and accordingly the key assessment to be made is whether or not

vehicles turning into the access are likely to meet vehicles leaving the site, which could result in an obstruction of the main carriageway.

While the access drive is only single track in part, the area immediately abutting Westwood Heath Road is sufficiently wide enough to allow two vehicles to pass one another, therefore anyone turning in and meeting an existing vehicle would have a waiting space off the main carriageway.

Similarly, although the lane is long, there is inter-visibility between both ends which would allow vehicles entering or leaving to wait for any other vehicles to complete their manoeuvre before proceeding.

Given that the Highway Authority is concerned with the risk of conflict, in this case, the risk of vehicles meeting is low due to the relatively small number of properties in this location.

In view of the fact that there is no objection to the development from the Highways Authority, it is considered that the provision of an additional two dwellings would not exacerbate the existing infrastructure. As such, while the proposal would result in two more dwellings over and above the cap of 425 in the Local Plan, the reason for the cap was intrinsically linked to the highway network and existing capacity. The Highway Authority is satisfied that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety and that two additional dwellings would not exacerbate the existing capacity and it is therefore officers' opinion that the development is acceptable in this regard and accords with Policy TR1 as well as DS11 of the Local Plan.

Ecological impact

The application was submitted with a preliminary ecological appraisal and Biodiversity Impact Assessment. The County Ecologist has considered the proposal together with the supporting information and concluded that the development should result in a biodiversity gain. No objection is raised subject to the inclusion of appropriate conditions and precautionary notes.

Officers are satisfied that the development accords with Policy NE2 of the Local Plan.

Other matters

The Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection to the proposal but has recommended the applicant's attention is drawn to general guidance to ensure the proposed electric vehicle charging points shown on the plans meet the minimum required specification. An advisory note to this effect can be attached on the decision should permission be forthcoming. Similarly, in the event that any contamination is found on site, which can sometimes be the case on former farm holdings, a suitable condition is recommended to deal with this eventuality. Overall officers are satisfied that the development accords with Policies BE3 and NE5 of the Local Plan.

SUMMARY / CONCLUSIONS

The principle of development is considered acceptable in accordance with Policies H1 and DS11 of the Local Plan. The proposed dwellings have been designed and

laid out within the site in such a way as to not cause harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties or the character of the surrounding area and wider landscape. The development is not considered to be detrimental to highway safety and suitable conditions and notes are recommended to deal with ecological and relevant environmental health matters. For these reasons it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission. **REASON:** To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the site location plan and approved drawings 1085.04D and 1085.05C, and specification contained therein, submitted on 21 December 2018, revised drawings 1085.02B and 1085.06C submitted on 11 March 2019. **REASON:** For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies BE1 and BE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 3 No works to commence on site, including site clearance, until a combined ecological and landscaping scheme has been submitted and agreed between the applicant and the local planning authority (with advice from WCC Ecological Services). The scheme must include all aspects of landscaping including details of native tree planting and installation of bat and bird boxes. The agreed scheme to be fully implemented before/during development of the site as appropriate. **REASON:** To ensure that protected species are not harmed by the development in accordance with Policy NE2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 4 No development shall be carried out above slab level unless and until a schedule of the external facing materials to be used has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details. **REASON:** To ensure that the proposed development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy BE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 5 The development hereby permitted shall be timetabled and carried out to wholly accord with the detailed mitigation measures for the safeguarding of protected and notable species and trees to be retained within the site as set out in the document 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' prepared by Ridgeway Ecology, received by the District Planning Authority on 22nd February 2019. **REASON:** To ensure that protected species in accordance with Policy NE2 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 6 If, during the works, contamination is encountered which has not previously been identified then the additional contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme agreed with

the Local Planning Authority. **REASON:** To safeguard health, safety and the environment in accordance with Policies BE3 and NE5 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
