

Berkswell Parish Council

Clerk to Berkswell Parish Council – Mr Richard Wilson
PO Box 6379, Coventry CV6 9LP

Martin Saunders
Planning Department
Solihull MBC

21 April 2017

Dear Martin

Planning Applications 2017/00739 & 2017/00740 – Village Farm

With respect to the above planning applications my Council wish to object in part and submits the following Comments.

“This council feels very strongly about retaining the historic significance of the existing farm and the fields but does not object in principle to the renovation of the farm house and attached buildings providing that renovations are in keeping with the style of the original farm and that Historic England are in support of the proposed works. Furthermore, this Council does not object in principle to additional housing being built on the footprint of the original farm yard providing that such buildings are in keeping with the style of other buildings in Berkswell Village.

However, this Council is very concerned about flooding in the area and require that any development will address the issue of run-off to avoid the flooding problem being exacerbated.

This Council objects very strongly to proposals for new buildings on the early field system adjacent to the Farm which are part of the conservation area because of their historic significance. Council recognise that new house building has been included in this application as a way of funding the farm house renovations (although it is understood that the viability statement has not yet been completed and will not available for public scrutiny). This Council has a policy of protecting the Green Belt and are concerned about the lack of exceptional circumstances to justify building in the Green Belt. In this case, it is believed that there are other more suitable sites which would be more appropriate as opposed to building on Green Belt land within the Conservation Area and that other options have not been fully investigated.

In conclusion, this Council believes that the current proposal should be withdrawn and a new proposal developed in line with the above comments”.

Also, we note that the applicant includes community consultation results. My Council conducted a consultation on the bank holiday Saturday 15th April using the full documents from the planning application. I attach the results of that consultation for your information.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'R'.

Richard Wilson (Clerk to Berkswell Parish Council)

Village Farm Planning Application – Community feedback

Shown below are the responses made by those completing a questionnaire at the drop in session held on Saturday 15th April 2017 held to review the planning application for Village Farm. The drop-in session was conducted by Berkswell Parish Councillors. Drawings from the Planning Application were displayed for residents and the key supporting documents from the Application were available for residents to read.

1. Responses to questions requiring a Yes/No answer

The question posed	Total responses		Berkswell village only responses	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are there local families/people who would like to live in Berkswell village for whom homes should be provided?	21	19	14	15
Would Berkswell village have a better future and be a better community if it had a few more homes?	19	26	11	22
Do you support limited residential development (circa 10 homes) in Berkswell village built to match local style? - Any size home	10	33	4	27
Do you support limited residential development (circa 10 homes) in Berkswell village built to match local style? - 2 or 3 bedroom cheaper homes for sale/rent	20	24	14	20
Do you support the restoration and conversion of the existing farmhouse and brick outbuildings to provide homes as shown in the plans?	29	20	19	18
Do you support the building of additional homes where there are currently farm buildings (on the brown field site but excluding the additional field as shown on the plans)?	28	20	19	18
Do you support the development of the additional field to the west of the current farm buildings as shown on the plans?	12	36	5	31

Area	Number of completed forms
Berkswell village	37
The rest of Berkswell Parish	5

From outside of the Parish (includes on with no response given to question)	7
---	---

2. Responses to the question – Do you have any other views on additional housing in Berkswell village?

- 2.1. If additional homes are to be built other sites should be considered not this historic site in the Heart of the village in the conservation area. A proper assessment should be conducted.
- 2.2. New homes should match surroundings & should compliment village life (there was more than one person with this type of view)
- 2.3. There should be covenants (on new housing) to prevent future extensions of inappropriate size/design

3. Responses to the question - Are there any changes to the proposal for homes on the brown field area of the site that would make it more acceptable?

- 3.1. If the additional field is not developed it would be possible to build one more dwelling where dwelling 12's garage is
- 3.2. Disappointed at the style of the houses proposed, very ordinary for the situation. There is a modern row of houses & bungalows on Lavender Hall Lane so why not on this new development
- 3.3. Houses should be built to blend and be more attractive
- 3.4. Plant lots of new trees/greenery. (More than one person said this)
- 3.5. Only smaller more affordable/starter homes should be built on the brown field area (none on green field area). (More than one person said this)
- 3.6. Mews style affordable accommodation
- 3.7. Responses to the question - Are there any changes to the development proposals for the additional field that would make it more acceptable?
- 3.8. More imaginative looking houses in keeping with conservation area. This is a brown field site and we should not be NIMBU about a small discreet development that will not detract from the rest of the "hotch potch" Berkswell.
- 3.9. Plant lots of new trees/greenery. (More than one person said this)

4. Other comments made (excluding reasons given for rejection of the planning application(s))

- 4.1. The farm should be put on the open market for sale if Berkswell Estate cannot afford to restore it correctly. (More than one person said this)
- 4.2. Village farm building should not be converted into several dwellings (More than one person wrote this).

- 4.3. Tidy up an eyesore that has existed for many years
- 4.4. 1st time buyers should be prioritised. (More than one person said this)
- 4.5. Build new houses in Berkswell away from the conservation area.
- 4.6. Restoration of the listed buildings should retain original features (This was said in various forms by several people)
- 4.7. Convert to a farm shop & community rooms
- 4.8. Berkswell Trustees need to legally state the exact number of houses on the site and hedgerows and trees. (More than one person said this)

5. Reasons given for not wanting the development/rejection of the planning applications(s)

- 5.1. The site is within the Conservation Area
- 5.2. The lower field is part of an ancient field system, recently added to the Conservation Area for that reason
- 5.3. Several people expressed views that the proposed restoration of the listed buildings did not retain the character of the buildings (this was particularly the case where the person did not support the restoration proposed)
- 5.4. The proposed changes to the listed farmhouse would lead to the loss of unique and historical features.
- 5.5. A working farm in the centre of the village is one of the factors that makes Berkswell a rural community
- 5.6. All of the land is within the greenbelt
- 5.7. The ability of the market to finance the restoration of the listed buildings has not been tested by putting the buildings on the market to establish whether someone is willing to restore the buildings without a subsidy from building additional homes.
- 5.8. Berkswell Estates have allowed the buildings to fall into disrepair and should pay for the restoration not require cross subsidy from new house development
- 5.9. Doubt expressed about the need for so many or any new homes to fund restoration of the listed buildings. (More than one said this)
- 5.10. Concerns over flooding
- 5.11. Concern about access onto Spencer's Lane close to a junction which has accidents (More than one person said this)

Andrew Burrow
15th April 2017