

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

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Planning Services
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Town Hall, Edward Street
Stockport
SK1 3XE

9th November 2022

To: Planning Officer

Reference: DC/084618

Proposal: Erection of two detached dwellings with associated access and landscaping (amended plans)

Location: Bridle Road, Woodford, Stockport

1. General Comments

- We objected to the previous proposal for development at this site because it did not comply with NPPF 2021, or the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan.
- While we welcome the small changes presented in the amended proposals, we believe that the proposal is still contrary to the NPPF and WNP and represents very little change in negative impact.
- We believe that WNP DEV1 was misinterpreted when permission was granted to DC/073788 at appeal (APP/C4235/W/19/3239419). Woodford Garden Village was excluded from the Woodford Neighbourhood Area by Stockport Council at the request of Harrow Estates and has been developed as a separate entity with a boundary fence and a very different character and style to the Neighbourhood Area. The site in the appeal case lies in the Woodford Neighbourhood Area and is separated from Woodford Garden Village by Bridle Road. The Inspector permitted the proposals as infill (erroneously in our opinion). We believe that a gap between clearly separate parcels of development and crossing a road does not represent “a relatively small gap between existing dwellings” or “the completion of an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene” and therefore does not meet the criteria set out the policy.
- However, the resulting houses, numbered 67 and 69 Bridle Road are now part of the development landscape and a factor when assessing other proposals nearby.
- Taking that into account, we maintain that the proposal in application DC/084618 misinterprets WNP DEV1 because it requires that a road at right angles to the current development is interpreted as part of the same housing line as that which includes 67 and 69 Bridle Road. It requires that infill can include a gap on a road at right angles to the housing line on Bridle Road. We believe that this does not meet the criteria set out in WNP DEV1.
- In addition, and importantly, very sparse development with long gaps in housing along the stretch of road in question cannot be regarded as “the completion of an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene” and therefore fails to meet the criteria set out in WNP DEV1.
- A grant of permission to DC/084618 would amount to yet another instance of misinterpretation of WNP DEV1.

2. Policies relevant to the application

We believe that planning policies relevant to this application include:

- NPPF 2021
- Stockport Development Plan:
 - o Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019
 - o Saved UDP 2011
 - o Core Strategy 2011

3. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

We believe the following WNP policies are relevant:

DEV1: Limited infilling

Limited infilling in the Neighbourhood Area, comprising the development of a relatively small gap between existing dwellings for one or two dwellings, will not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to such development respecting local character. Limited infilling should comprise the completion of an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene where the scale of development is compatible in character to that of adjoining properties. Limited infilling should be built along similar building lines as adjoining properties.

Assessment

The proposal does not comply with this policy because it does not comprise the completion of an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene. The site is located after a right angle bend in Bridle Road. This section of the road is largely open and undeveloped with only two properties located on same side as the proposal, namely Holm Lea and Westgate (the caravan site). The gap from the end of the garden of numbers 67 and 69 Bridle Road to Holm Lea is 65 metres, but there is then a very large gap from Holm Lea to the next dwelling (Westgate, the bungalow at the caravan site) of over a quarter of a kilometre (263 metres). This is not a largely uninterrupted built frontage of several dwellings. See Appendix figures 1 to 9.

As explained in General Comments, the section of the road containing the site is at right angles to the section of road containing 67 and 69 Bridle Road. Therefore, the perceived “gap” in housing under consideration stretches from the back gardens of those dwellings to Westgate at the end of the road. This is another aspect of the proposal that fails to meet the requirement to complete “an otherwise continuous and largely uninterrupted **built frontage** of several dwellings visible within the street scene”.

DEV4: Design of new development

All new development in Woodford Neighbourhood Area should achieve a high standard of design. New residential development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and respond to the Neighbourhood Area’s rural character, to its ecology and to its landscape. Where appropriate and viable, the development of sustainable drainage systems, the retention and enhancement of landscape, wildlife and ecological networks and the achievement of high environmental and energy standards will be supported.

Assessment

The proposal appears to be well designed. The amendments will slightly reduce the overall mass and setting plot 2 further back from the road will slightly reduce the inevitable impact

of the development on the street scene. As we noted in our response to the previous application for this site, much harm has already been caused to the character, ecology and landscape by the recent removal of trees and a hedgerow See Appendix figures 3 to 6. [Greater Manchester Combined Authority has declared a Biodiversity Emergency](#).

Should permission be granted, significant mitigation will be needed in order to respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and ensure that the proposals meet DEV4 by responding to the rural character of the area enhancing the landscape, wildlife and ecological networks in this sensitive part of Woodford.

ENV3: Protecting Woodford's natural features

“The protection and/or enhancement of Woodford's natural features, including those identified in the Table below, will be supported.”

Assessment

As we noted in our response to the previous application for this site, we were disappointed that the trees and hedgerow on the border between the site and Bridle Road were cut down just prior to submission of the application. See Appendix figures 3 to 6. This hedge was recorded as 1H1, a species rich hedgerow with trees, in the [Woodford Landscape and Environment Report](#) (see pages 19 to 20), so it is a significant loss to the environment and the landscape character of the area.

ENV4: Supporting biodiversity

“The conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity, including that found in open spaces, trees and hedgerows, in order to promote and support wildlife and other forms of biodiversity will be supported. Development should, where viable and deliverable, achieve net gains in biodiversity.”

Assessment

There has already been a loss in green vegetation at this site due to the recent removal of a species rich hedge and mature trees. This will have a negative impact on carbon dioxide absorption and biodiversity. See Appendix figures 3 to 6. [Greater Manchester Combined Authority has declared a Biodiversity Emergency](#).

Should permission be granted, significant mitigation, will be needed in order to respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and ensure that the proposals meets ENV4 by achieving net gains in biodiversity. We suggest that a wide variety of native tree and hedge species and species which attract pollinating insects should be included in the landscaping proposals.

4. Stockport Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Core Strategy

As with our previous response, we leave it to the Stockport Planning Officers to assess this application against the relevant policies in the UDP and Core Strategy, but believe the following may be relevant.

Stockport Saved UDP policies

We believe that the proposal does not comply with the following policies:

GBA1.1, which includes Woodford in the extent of the Green Belt.

GBA1.2, GBA1.5, GBA1.6 and GBA1.7, which list criteria for the control of development within Green Belt.

Policy GBA1.2: Control of Development in the Green Belt, sets out the presumption against construction of new buildings unless the development is for a number of purposes, none of which includes the construction of two new large residential properties in the Green Belt. The supporting explanation to policy GBA1.2 is confirmed at 6.16, which clearly states that “new residential infill will not be permitted in the Green Belt.”

Furthermore, policy GBA 1.5: Residential development in the Green Belt confirms that any new development is restricted to only three named categories, all of which are named and none of which are for any residential use.

LCR1.1, which does not permit development in the countryside unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural area.

5. NPPF (2021)

The site is in Green Belt, therefore paragraphs relating to development in Green Belt are relevant, including:

Paragraph 138, which seeks to assist in prevention of encroachment into the countryside.

Assessment

The site is currently an agricultural field and part of a network of fields in the countryside around Woodford. The proposal represents substantial encroachment into the countryside.

Paragraph 147, which seeks to prevent harm to the Green Belt.

Assessment

The proposal would harm the openness of the Green Belt.

Paragraph 148, which advises Planning Authorities to give substantial weight to any harm caused to the Green Belt and notes that special circumstances only exist where any harm is outweighed by other circumstances.

Assessment

Significant weight should be given to the harm caused to the Green Belt which we believe is not outweighed by any special circumstances in this case.

Paragraph 149, which lists the criteria for exceptions to inappropriate development in Green Belt.

Assessment

The proposal does not meet any of the criteria listed for exceptions to inappropriate development in Green Belt.

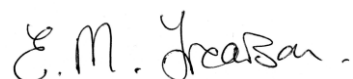
6. Summary

- We believe that planning permission should be refused because the proposal fails to comply with the NPPF and is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It is contrary to policies in the Stockport Development Plan, including and especially the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan. A grant of permission to DC/084618 would amount to yet another instance of misinterpretation of WNP DEV1.

The proposal will cause harm to the Green Belt which outweighs any special circumstances. It would harm the character of a tranquil, rural lane and Public Right of Way that are treasured assets to residents in Woodford and visitors from the wider area.

Should planning permission be granted, we suggest significant mitigation measures are included in conditions to offset the negative impacts on climate, biodiversity and local landscape.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. M. Frearson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Evelyn Frearson On behalf of Woodford Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee

Appendix

Fig 1: Satellite image of the site showing openness of Bridle Road on the north east side



Fig 2: Satellite image of the site showing openness of Bridle Road on the north east side



Fig 3: Looking down Bridle Road by the site, with hedge 1H1 and trees on the left before they were cut down



Fig 4: The same location with hedge 1H1 and trees cut down. Photo taken 2 April 2022



Fig 5: Looking up Bridle Road by the site, with hedge 1H1 and trees on the right before they were cut down. Stile in bottom right is the start of footpath 101HGB



Fig 6: Same location with hedge 1H1 and trees cut down. Photo taken 2 April 2022



Fig 7: Site of proposal DC/084618 looking towards Holm Lea and the caravan site beyond, showing openness of the site and sparse dwellings, 2 April 2022



Fig 8: Character of Bridle Road beyond Holm Lea, October 2022



Fig 9: Character of Bridle Road beyond Holm Lea in summer



Fig 10: Open countryside around footpath 101HGB, which leads across fields from Bridle Road near the proposed site

