

Wellington Heath Parish Council

18 July 2017

To HCC Planning Mrs G Webster
Copy AONB Paul Esrich
Copy Liz Harvey

Planning application 172149 Behind The Croft, Ledbury Road, Wellington Heath

Dear Madam,

Wellington Heath Parish Councillors are concerned about the details of this planning application although we support development in principle. This site is an allocated site in our draft NDP (Reg 14 stage) with up to 3 bungalows, with 3 bedrooms. The site is in the Malvern Hills AONB and we are concerned that the AONB Guidance on Building Design does not appear to have been considered.

We are not qualified to comment on the vehicular access to the site but we would wish to be assured that it is safe, indeed this was a question we posed when we submitted our Reg14 draft NDP to Herefordshire Council. This section of the Ledbury Road is on a significant slope with obscured bends each side of the proposed access. Records from the Speed Indicator Device which was located nearby suggest that traffic travels faster uphill (northwards) than down, hence visibility to the left when exiting the site is the aspect we most wish to be assured is safe.

We very much welcome the retention of green space above (East) of the proposed development and the general layout, landscaping, hedgerows and shared wooded area.

We would wish to see evidence that the roofs of the development are well below the adjacent ridge line to the east and that roofs do not protrude above the ridge line when viewed upwards from the nearby viewpoints, particularly on the Ledbury Road at the grass triangle on the junction with Jack's Lane. The proposal may be satisfactory in this respect but clear evidence is required, a simple cross section diagram (East - West) of the terrain and the proposed development may suffice.

The proposal is for 3 identical properties of a rather ordinary design. The Core Strategy policies SS6 and LD1 emphasise the importance of local distinctiveness, especially in the AONB. The AONB guidance on building design pages 79 & 79 gives clear guidance including "Individual and unique buildings are preferable. Avoid uniform developments of identical buildings or larger buildings. Focus on creating character and identity between the different buildings to reflect the historic building character."

The proposal is for 4 bedroom properties rather than the 3 bedrooms envisaged in the NDP. The NDP seeks to achieve a balance between property sizes and types in the village and recognises that Wellington Heath has too few smaller houses; we concur with the Herefordshire Core Strategy which emphasises the need for smaller houses. Small bungalows are appropriate for this location owing to its elevated position, close proximity to the prominent ridge-line to the east and sensitive landscape location (see <http://wellingtonheathpc.org/planning/landscape-assessment/> noting that this site is part of parcel 19a). Our NDP also encourages designs suitable for changing needs such as older people with mobility needs and people working from home, we would wish to see best practise guidance followed in these respects and internal space should be used to achieve these objectives instead of the fourth bedroom.

We would welcome the opportunity to assist in refining the proposal so that it would gain our full support.

C F Rozelaar
Chair of Wellington Heath parish council planning committee