

## OLD STATION ROAD

Land West of Old Station Road, Hampton in Arden.

PL/2025/01572/ PPOL Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for erection of up to 130 dwellings and associated infrastructure and landscaping.

Below are several suggested reasons why we believe this application should be refused. The main ones are those that don't conform with the relevant policy in the Solihull Local Plan 2013 or in conformance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Dec 2024 (**these are highlighted in red**) but there are other concerns too, which together render the site, in our view unsustainable **and should be refused**.

**RESPONDING:** Please use your own words when responding it will add more credence to your responses.

You can either use the relevant area on the planning portal for this application or send an email response to the Case Officer who is [laura.taylor@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:laura.taylor@solihull.gov.uk).

Responses ideally should be sent by the 13 October or very soon afterwards.

Note from the case officer "just to confirm also that we only count one objection per dwelling, so it is worth highlighting that there is no benefit to families/couples writing in separately several times from the same address".

Thank you for responding.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

### Context within the Call for Sites exercise

The site has not been assessed or consulted on under the current 'Call for Sites' exercise and should not be considered for approval until other possible sites have also been considered. Its use for housing was not considered either in the current Solihull Local Plan, nor in the draft Local Plan which was withdrawn, nor the current Neighbourhood Plan, and piecemeal proposals to build on the Green Belt outside the Plan shouldn't be approved until the wider context of how the mandatory 2024 housing targets are to be allocated has been reviewed.

### Harm to village character

Hampton-in-Arden is a historic conservation village dating back to the Domesday Book, surrounded by countryside that forms part of the Meriden Gap Green Belt. This proposal would fundamentally damage the village's rural setting and character particularly in this location. A 130-home estate is disproportionate to the village's size. It would represent a ~20% increase in housing stock and is out of step with the 'limited and proportionate' growth supported by the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.

SLP2013 Policy P15:Securing Design Quality states "All development proposals will be expected to achieve good quality, inclusive and sustainable design, which meets the following key principles: i Conserves and enhances local character, distinctiveness, and streetscape quality and ensures that he

*scale, massing, density, layout, materials and landscape of the development respect the surrounding natural, built and historic environment .*

### **Green Belt Considerations**

Although the NPPF as updated in December 2024 introduces the concept of 'Grey Belt' or underperforming 'Green Belt' land, we feel this site does not meet the necessary criteria.

The 2024 NPPF says that housing development may be appropriate on Green Belt where the site would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt, and in para.155c where the development would be in a sustainable location. The development must also meet the 'Golden Rules' which means including 50% affordable housing, necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure, and improvements to green spaces accessible to the public.

We believe the northern end of Old Station Road makes a significant contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, being an intermittent linear development characterised by large plots set in a mature landscape of woodland, fields, trees and hedges. Building on this plot takes the urban settlement of the village dangerously close to the Arden Cross Development, and risks eliminating the gap between the village and the new developments on and around the A45, particularly when viewed from the railway.

The site is in Green Belt and plays a significant part in maintaining openness and plays a role in helping to safeguard the countryside from encroachment

**We do not consider the site to be a sustainable location** for development and therefore is not in compliance with the NPPF.

**Unsustainable Location** - The walk to the railway station and bus stop is around 1.2km, the village centre, GP surgery, recreational facilities, and primary school are even further. For much of the route between the site and the Meriden Road there is no footpath and little room to create one. **Local Plan Policy P7** requires -

- *development to be within 800m walk of a primary school, doctors, shops (this development - 2.1/2.3km from centre of development)*
  - *within 400m walk of a bus stop with high frequency services. Hampton's bus service is not high frequency and has no service on Sundays. (this development 1.6km from centre)*
  - *within 800m walk of a rail station with high frequency services. (this development 1.6km from centre)*
- The actual distances far exceed those detailed in the policy- the development is in not in conformity with Policy P7.**

Para 155c of the NPPF also states a development is not inappropriate if its in a sustainable location. We suggest based on the distance of the site from main facilities, this site is not in a sustainable location and conflicts with the NPPF and fails to meet the criteria in Policy P7 in the SLP 2013 and should be refused.

The proposal offers to provide a footpath with a continuous connection to the Meriden Road, but we believe this to be virtually impossible with the land required to undertake this as it has several landowners, who we believe will not be interested in parting with land for this purpose expensive and disruptive acquisition of private frontages. The road is also poorly lit as is common in rural areas. This therefore creates a potential safety and security issue.

**Residents will mostly be car reliant to access local facilities, employment, schools and other village services. The site would create a car dependent development. In this regard alone we feel the development is in conflict with Policy P8 Managing Demand for Travel and Reducing Congestion** which states in Para a i *All development proposals should have regard to transport efficiency and highway safety: i. Development will not be permitted which results in a significant increase in delay to vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists or a reduction in safety for any users of the highway or other transport network*

*and in para b) The use of sustainable modes of transport, i.e. walking, cycling and public transport, shall be promoted and encouraged in all developments by: i. Ensuring the design and management of the development enables and encourages the use of sustainable modes of transport; ii. Ensuring transport planning measures are implemented to help and encourage people accessing the development to use sustainable transport modes.*

**Due to the location of the site and its distance from local facilities it fails to comply with Policy P8 of the SLP 2013 (see next section for details).**

### **Overloaded Infrastructure and Transport**

The local primary school and GP surgery are already near full capacity. Developer's contributions are likely to be applied outside the immediate area, such as secondary level schools and borough wide health facilities, which in turn are not well serviced by local public transport operating hourly from Monday to Saturday with no service on a Sunday. There are no local secondary school and no direct public transport service to the nearest school/s - a typical journey to and from school by public transport could take upwards of an hour. There are no continuous cycle routes thereby eliminating that as a sustainable travel option. The only option left would be to use the car reinforcing that this is a car dependent development.

We challenge the validity of the results of the transport assessment detailed in para 8.4/5. It states "As detailed above, it is estimated that the scheme will generate approximately 70 vehicle movements two-way in the AM and approximately 68 vehicle movements two-way in the PM peak hours. This might be the case in the early stages of the development but do not believe that these will be the result when the development is completed. It is highly likely, that due to the location of the site and the current make up of the village that most of the occupiers of the new homes will have at least 2 vehicles. We feel the conclusions reached in the Transport Statement is a significant under estimation although we except that we only have current experience to base this on. Car dependency contributes to the unsustainability of this site and conflicts with POLICY **P8 Managing Demand for Travel and Reducing Congestion** - see above for applicable clauses.

### **Style of Development, Access and Layout**

A large estate of up to 130 dwellings off a single access will introduce a completely different style of development. The outline design suggests terraced semi and small detached properties with minimal plot depths and frontages. This is not characteristic of most houses in Old Station Road, particularly its northern end. The development would not reflect the historic pattern of development but introduce modern estate type development.

The site would be a large, unconnected outlier, creating an isolated enclave or estate, wedged between the rail line, M42 and existing back gardens. The proposed single access is not capable of producing a coherent local street network, leading to a disconnect between the site and its surrounding street network and resulting in a 500m long, blind cul-de-sac. Recommended street block lengths are about 60-100 m long with each street having several connections to neighbouring streets. This site is unsuited to creating a 'seamless connection' between existing and new development. We note the SMBC Urban Design objection to the development with this as a main issue and we support their objection.

### **Traffic Impacts in Old Station Road and on the wider village**

What is currently a little used field access will be transformed into an estate access road with associated constant traffic noise and movement, increasing at peak times. Some 130 dwellings have the potential to result in at least 260 additional cars. This creates increased traffic noise and impacts on the relative 'tranquillity' of this part of Old Station Road. There will be a significant impact on the junction of Old Station Road and Meriden Road, which may well require traffic management of some sort, be it a

roundabout or traffic lights, which will create an element of urbanization to this area of the village. In terms of the impact on the village. Roads in and out of the village are narrow and increasingly congested, particularly at the pinch points at Patrick Bridge and the corner of the High Street. Parking is already a major problem around the local village shops as SMBC Highways are aware. A development of this size would significantly worsen the situation.

### **Ecology, Landscaping, and Biodiversity**

**All** the trees around and along the access road will be removed, completely altering the feel, character and appearance of Old Station Road. Loss of this mature vegetation also increases the loss of amenity. We feel there is also more work to be done to mitigate the threats to the high-quality habitat for foraging and commuting bats and roosting birds. The application is not specific about what hedgerows are to be retained. As landscaping mitigation is a fundamental requirement in this application we feel, this to be a significant omission. As we all know, replacement planting, dependent upon what is planned, can take up to 15 years before, in landscaping terms, the replacement planting can be treated as mature.

b) The use of sustainable modes of transport, i.e. walking, cycling and public transport, shall be promoted and encouraged in all developments by:

- i. Ensuring the design and management of the development enables and encourages the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- ii. Ensuring transport planning measures are implemented to help and encourage people accessing the development to use sustainable transport modes;
- iii. Ensuring the routes to the site from nearby services and local public transport stops are good quality, direct and attractive to use for all users.