

The Birlingham Parish Council opposes this application.

1. It is noted that although the present garage lies within the defined development boundary of Birlingham the curtilage of the new dwelling would require an extension into agricultural land.

In our opinion this extension of the present development line should not be allowed as it would set an unfortunate precedent for future applications and bring the purpose of an agreed development line into dispute and neglect.

For the application to be viable some 320 sq metres of additional land needs to be acquired: 25% of this land would be devoted to car parking which would be detrimental to the setting of the Conservation Area

2. There have been several recent applications for development on land immediately to the north of the Old Coach House. The latest was application 09/01021 This was actively opposed by the present applicant and the Parish Council and was refused by Wychavon Council chiefly on the grounds that the “introduction of a dwelling would unacceptably reduce the sense of openness of the site and substantially interrupt the visual links with the open countryside to the detriment of the street scene and the setting of the Conservation Area”. On appeal this judgement was upheld by the Inspector

We believe that the arguments used to oppose the above application also apply to the site only a few metres further to the south, and it would be inconsistent and unfair to ignore them.

3. In the Design and Access Statement for the previous application concerning this site (13/01096) and referred to again in the present application, the applicant’s agent claimed that “the village centre contains 21 properties (68%) which have no garaging facilities”

These observations are misleading and tendentious. A survey this month of the 39 properties in the northern conservation showed that 27 (69%) have garage facilities. ie the overwhelming majority of the houses have garaging whereas none is proposed for the dwelling in this application

4. Again it was stated in the same document that “this application does not provide a cramped form of development”.

Considering that the building line of the new dwelling will be within 3 metres of the new boundary to the existing house and only 5 metres from the house itself it is clear that the environment will be extremely “cramped”

5. It is claimed in the application that the majority of the house with large plots are outside the Conservation Area

We would point out that within the northern conservation area at least 17 properties enjoy ample garden space, ranging from 3 acres around a dwelling to houses with good sized gardens at the rear of the property.

We would therefore support the remarks made by the Conservation Officer in the pre application advice that the “centre of Birlingham is predominantly a green and open conservation area.” and that this application within a very small space with minimal garden amenities would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area

6. The application’s Design and Access Statement claims that the design of the “new development does not exhibit any material change in height, scale or mass from the profile of the existing garage”

In our opinion the design will produce a roof line quite out of keeping with neighbouring properties and provide a jarring and disruptive effect within the Conservation Area.

7. The new dwelling will be only 3 metres to the proposed new boundary to the Old Coach House and only 5 metres from the building itself.

It is hard to see how such proximity can fail to be detrimental to the amenities of the Old Coach House and any future occupier.

8. Design Concept. The Design and Access Statement claims in para 5.2 that “the design has sought to replicate the cottage style and appearance of the Old Coach House as viewed from the road and in conformity with the vernacular of Birlingham Village.”

We would comment that the choice of full height glazed windows for the south and west elevations is in complete opposition to the traditional fenestration of the adjacent Old Coach House and will provide an intrusive and very unwelcome feature in the Conservation Area. This is in contravention of the Local Plan policy ENV12 which states that “the proportions and designs of new development and alterations to existing buildings should respect the context provided by adjacent buildings”

It is specious to claim that the elevation is screened to the west by existing trees as without a Tree Preservation Order there is no guarantee that the planting will remain.

In conclusion we believe the application is not consistent with the policies in the Wychavon District Local plan and in particular Policies ENV1 and ENV12 and should be refused

January 2014