CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/10431
Application Type:	Householder planning permission
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	03 January 2024
Case officer:	Joe Leesam

Site Address:	1 Well Meadow, Burbage, Marlborough, SN8 3AD
Proposal:	Proposed External Wheelchair Access (Front Garden)
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Note: A site visit was not considered necessary for this application as the case officer has previously visited site considering a withdrawn application of a very similar nature at the same site in recent months.

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015):
Core Policy 51 - Landscape
Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design & Place Shaping

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Sections 16 & 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Plan 2019-2024

Burbage Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2026

REPRESENTATIONS

Burbage Parish Council - “This application was discussed at the meeting of Burbage Parish Council on 11th December. It was agreed unanimously that there is no objection to the application.”

Conservation Officer - “The site is a modern bungalow on a corner plot entrance from the High Street into a small cul-de-sac of contemporary dwellings. The site is within the Burbage Conservation Area.

High banks, along with trees and hedges are a key feature along the High Street, and the site’s two roadside elevations are true to this defining characteristic.

The proposals seek to alter the Well Meadow elevation's high green bank to provide a hard landscaped ramped access to the bungalow. Due to the levels of the site, and access guidelines for such items, the ramp is formed from three ramps and landing areas before it reaches the level of the dwelling's entrance.

The sequence of ramps and railings combine to have a rather negative visual impact on the otherwise softer green banks and garden character of the site, at risk of becoming more visually urban in character. In saying this, it is not the High Street elevation but the return into the cul-de-sac and therefore it will be read more in association with the modern bungalow and its immediate environment and setting. The requirement of such a feature by the applicant is obviously understood.

If it is minded to approve the application, opportunities should be sought to secure the softening of the hard landscaped elements with a planting scheme, so that the frontage does not appear overly urbanised in such a sensitive rural location: this is to limit the visual impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area."

Third party representations - Seven responses received.

Summary of the one response on opposition:

- The three concrete ramps proposed will severely impact on the character and appearance of the landscape of Well Meadow.
- The property is located within a Conservation Area.
- The property is located adjacent to grade II listed buildings.
- The ramps will dominate the landscape due to their raised positioning and the high frontage of the property.
- Brick walls, concrete paths and metal handrails will look harsh against the current natural grassed bank and will be an eyesore for us as the opposite neighbour and from the High Street which is part of the conservation area.

Summary of the six responses in support:

- The applicants have been isolated and stuck in their home due to the steep steps.
- Changing the access to their property would allow them to remain with their community.
- The proposed plans will enhance the path by planting larger shrubs.
- Most public and private buildings are required to have wheelchair access and thuis property should be no exception.
- Don't think the pathway will be an eyesore once the path has been planted up with the appropriate shrubs.
- The proposed planting will attract wildlife.
- The grass bank affected by the proposal is fairly recent – it was constructed as part of the development of the splays at Well Meadow and the High Street.
- There is an existing precedent at 157 High Street (20/09357/FUL) where approval was given to removing a grass bank outside the old Post Office and replacing it with a parking area.
- Only the view north up the High Street would be affected, and landscaping has been proposed to obscure this view.

- The view is not considered to be a ‘key view and vista’ in the Burbage Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposal.
- A number of policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy support this application: CP 46 (meeting the needs of Wiltshire’s vulnerable people), Strategic Objective 3: to provide everyone with access to a decent affordable home, para. 6.40 “delivering the right types of homes to support good health and social wellbeing, including sufficient accommodation for Wiltshire’s ageing population.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

K/59148/F – Single storey extension. Approved With Conditions 28/08/2008.

PL/2023/06101 – Proposed External Wheelchair Access (Front Garden). Withdrawn by Applicant 26/09/2023.

K/77/0391 – Demolition of conservatory and erection of extension. Approved 15/07/1977.

K/75/0421 – Extension to existing bungalow to form study and extra bedroom. Approved 19/08/1980.

ASSESSMENT

The application relates to 1 Well Meadow in Burbage, Marlborough. The application site comprises a single storey bungalow located at the entrance to a residential cul-de-sac which is entirely made up of single storey dwellings. The building consists of white painted render with red brick detailing and double roman tiled roofing. It is set within the settlement of Burbage. To the North and West of the site lies other residential properties, to the East lies High Street with multiple listed properties located on the other side of the road. To the South is the road leading into Well Meadow and more residential properties lie beyond. The application site is washed over by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

Proposals:
The application seeks consent for the instillation of an external wheelchair access.

Impact upon the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties:
Due to the application’s nature as an external wheelchair access, there are no concerns raised regarding residential amenity. The introduced built form will not add any significant amount of height to the existing property and will therefore not impose any light blocking or be considered to create an oppressive environment for any neighbouring residents. There will also be no new windows/doors introduced as a result of the proposed development, so there is no risk of any overlooking occurring as a result of the proposed plans.

Scale, design, materials and impact upon designated heritage assets:
Local Authorities are required by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas, their setting, or any features of special architectural or

historic interest possessed respectively when considering development proposals that affect the setting or views into them. This is locally reflected within Core Policy 58.

The host dwelling is located at the entrance to the Well Meadow Development, on a corner plot which is somewhat prominent due to the high bank upon which the dwelling is located. High banks are a defining landscape feature of the Conservation Area. While the Well Meadow development is of modern construction and mostly located outside the Conservation area, the host dwelling is located within the Conservation Area, being at the very edge of its boundaries. 1 Well Meadow itself is of relatively modern construction, offering little architectural or heritage value to the wider conservation area and the adjoining properties throughout the rest of the Well Meadow development are of the same nature.

The proposed wheelchair access will be located on the side elevation adjoining Well Meadow and is situated in the location furthest from The High Street as possible. The proposed plans are similar to a previously withdrawn application, with small changes to the proposed materials and the addition of planting to soften the appearance of the ramp, particularly from The High Street.

Conservation have been consulted on the proposal and have responded with the following assessment:

“The sequence of ramps and railings combine to have a rather negative visual impact on the otherwise softer green banks and garden character of the site, at risk of becoming more visually urban in character. In saying this, it is not the High Street elevation but the return into the cul-de-sac and therefore it will be read more in association with the modern bungalow and its immediate environment and setting. The requirement of such a feature by the applicant is obviously understood.

If it is minded to approve the application, opportunities should be sought to secure the softening of the hard landscaped elements with a planting scheme, so that the frontage does not appear overly urbanised in such a sensitive rural location: this is to limit the visual impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.”

With the comments from conservation in mind, the proposal can be considered to have a minimal impact upon the special character and appearance of the conservation area due to its location allowing it to be more associated with the modern bungalow and the rest of the modern Well Meadow development than with The High Street, despite it being situated within the Conservation Area. The proposed planting intends to disguise the view of the ramp from The High Street and conservation have suggested the securing of a planting scheme to ensure the frontage does not appear overly urbanized in the sensitive rural location; this will be conditioned as part of the approval.

With the planting scheme conditioned, while the proposed plans have a negative visual impact upon the green bank itself, the proposed plans are not considered to have a negative impact upon the wider conservation area due to the visual tie to the more modern estate and screening from the vantage points within the Conservation. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable on heritage grounds. For the same reasoning, the proposed plans are considered acceptable on visual amenity grounds.

It is therefore considered, having regard to the points made above, that due regard has been given to the statutory duties set out within Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Policies 57 and 58 of the Core Strategy.

Impact upon the North Wessex Downs National Landscape:
The proposed extension will be read in context with the host dwelling and as there will be no encroachment into the open countryside, no harm will be caused to the special qualities of the National Landscape.

Conclusion:
There will be no negative impact to neighbour or visual amenity as a result of the proposed development. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in the context of its surroundings and is in accordance with the general criteria set out in the aforementioned policies of the local development plan and that of the NPPF (2023).

RECOMMENDATION:
Approve with conditions.

Conditions: (3)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Existing Floor/Site Plan & Front Elevation, Block & Location Plan *1 Well Meadow - 01 Rev A*
- Proposed Ground Floor/Site Plan & Sections A-A, B-B, C-C, Block & Location Plan *1 Well Meadow - 04 Rev B*
- Application Form

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 Before the proposed wheelchair ramp is first brought into use, a planting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The planting scheme shall

provide a detailed planting specification showing all plant species, supply and planting sizes and planting densities. All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of the planting scheme shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the first use of the approved ramp or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner. All planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage. Any plants which, within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development, in the interest of protecting visual amenity and heritage assets.