

PLANNING APPLICATION OBJECTION

Reference application number: SMD/2016/0251

Location address: Proctor's Nursery, Bank End Farm, 99 High Lane, Brown Edge, Stoke on Trent, Staffs.

Proposal: Retention of engineering works to provide additional Car Parking.

Dear Sirs

With regard to the above referenced application we would like to register our concerns and objections to the proposals on the following grounds. Primarily our objections are based on: -

- Total inadequacy of the existing accesses
- Traffic activity/numbers
- Excessive operating/opening hours/days
- Noise and disturbance and consequent loss of amenity to neighbouring residents in High Lane
- Loss of property value as a result of increased business activity
- Over development of the business on this site
- Material storage
- Lack of Planning Approval for use as retail Garden Centre
- Development in Green Belt

Existing Accesses

The existing main access is currently totally inadequate for the amount of custom/traffic that the Nursery/Garden Centre attracts, particularly at weekends, and causes traffic problems on High Lane directly opposite the access to Woodside Avenue and numbers 96, 98 and 100 High Lane.

The access will only allow one vehicle to either access or egress the site at a time, and the poor visibility creates a situation where vehicles clash at the entrance resulting in a significant potential for an accident to happen. We have evidence of staff from the Nursery standing in High Lane manually and verbally directing traffic to try and prevent this potential. This ad-hoc traffic management is in itself a dangerous operation for both their staff and other road users. Refer attached photographs, which illustrate the problem.

We live at number 98 which is directly opposite this entrance and these issues cause us significant disturbance in regard to both noise from vehicle movements, stationary traffic, blasting of car horns etc as vehicles clash half in and half out of the entrance and still partly on High Lane. Needless to say that this also increases the pollution in the vicinity from exhaust fumes.

The increase in parking facilities will only exacerbate these issues by increasing custom and the subsequent increase in problems for our neighbours and us.

Irrespective of the outcome of this application the issue of the access should be reviewed and addressed by the Highways Authority, as it is clearly unsafe. It is only a matter of time before there is a serious accident on what is a very busy road, where disregard for the speed limit is a constant. In addition this access also serves as the only pedestrian access and therefore there is the added risk to life from pedestrians clashing with vehicles in the narrow access.

Traffic movements

Proctors Nursery has grown significantly over recent years and has attracted a great deal more custom from the general public resulting in a massive increase in vehicles entering and leaving the premises on a daily basis.

If traffic movements were monitored and logged it would become clear that literally hundreds of vehicles use this Nursery. During busy periods at weekends, and particularly around days such as Mothers Day and the period prior to Christmas when they sell Wreaths and Christmas trees, they are even busier.

In addition to the public use of the Nursery there are also commercial HGV vehicle movements as the Nursery receives deliveries of plants from abroad, bagged materials such as peat, potting composts etc. These deliveries can arrive at any time of the week and at anytime of the day and we have experienced deliveries being made at 3am in the morning. These tend to be by large juggernaut/pantechinon type vehicles, from the Netherlands normally. These vehicles cannot enter the premises as they are clearly far too large and have to park on High Lane and have to be unloaded by Nursery staff by manually moving trollies over the highway. Clearly, this not only causes further traffic disruption and danger but a great deal more noise and pollution.

At times these larger delivery vehicles use an access lower down High Lane opposite the Bus Stop, which is also inaccessible to these vehicles. Alternatively, they park right in the entrance to Woodside Avenue and Proctor's staff have to cross High Lane to move materials into the premises. This is another example of a total disregard to road safety, the health and safety of their staff and the disturbance to neighbours, by the proprietor of Proctor's Nursery.

This has been further demonstrated by the proprietor carrying out the works without firstly seeking Planning Approval, by undertaking works affecting trees under preservation orders, and without choosing consult neighbours on their views.

Woodside avenue is a Private road and is also directly adjacent our Bungalow, as we live on the corner of Woodside Avenue and High Lane. Again we are suffering significant disturbance as a result in addition to being responsible for the maintenance of our section of Woodside Avenue, which is not suitable for these HGV's

Days of operation/operating hours

As Proctor's nursery has grown over the years to become a popular Garden Centre for the public the days and hours of operation have increased considerably. The premises is open 7 days a week, and barring a few days over the Christmas period, is open all year round including Bank Holidays.

In terms of their own nursery operations the day normally begins between 5am–6am and continues through until dusk and sometimes beyond, with a tractor/forklift moving around the site throughout the day. This is with total disregard to the disturbance that this causes neighbours. The noise emanating from the tractor type vehicle used makes it feel like we are living opposite a permanent building site. Operational hours should be controlled as they might be for building sites.

The public is able to access the premises throughout the majority of this period, but in the main is concentrated between the hours of 8am to 5pm.

Typical Example

Entrance Gate open 6.15am. Business operations and Proctor's Commercial vehicle movements commence.

Public access from noted from 08.30 onwards

Closed to public at 5pm

Operations eventually ceased at 10pm

Noise and disturbance and consequent loss of amenity to neighbouring residents in High Lane

It is clearly evident that the activities of Proctor's Nursery already cause significant disturbance to neighbouring residents to which the proprietor pays no regard whatsoever and any increase in further activity can only exacerbate that situation. Our loss of enjoyment and amenity is significant and should not be disregarded in consideration of this application. We are very concerned that an increase in parking will lead to further growth in activity.

Over development of the business

Proctor's Nursery began life as a business supplying plants to the wholesale market and over the years has grown exponentially to become more of a Garden Centre serving mainly the public sector with plants and other materials. This is no longer a Nursery growing plants etc as they import plants to develop, pot and offer for sale. It appears that no planning approvals have been either sought or

given for the use that it currently enjoys as a Garden Centre. As such, we have had no opportunity until now to express and register our concerns and the effect that this business is having on our lives.

How long will it be before we are faced with excessive location signage, intrusive lighting.

This business is rapidly outgrowing the site on High Lane and therefore measures should be taken to curtail further development and to improve the current access issues as a matter of public safety and some urgency. We expect this to be done using the Planning process.

Material Storage

As the business has grown the demand for raw material, plants, shrubs, trees etc has obviously increased resulting the amount of stored materials on site taking up more and more room, becoming more visible and aesthetically unpleasant. Of course, this also results in an increased number of commercial vehicle deliveries to site. This particularly affects the residents lower down High Lane who are directly opposite the storage area and polytunnels.

Planning Approval

It would appear that there has never been any Planning Approvals for this business, other than for some poly tunnels some years ago and for a replacement dwelling, which is on the site and which is occupied by a family member.

Surely, an operation of its this magnitude should be subject to some form of planning control to protect the amenity and health of the neighbouring residents, notwithstanding the issues of road safety, environmental impact and the health and safety of their staff.

Additional Comments

Whilst we have serious concerns about the growth in Proctor's Nursery we do recognize the importance of the need for local rural business's and the local employment it provides.

We have no wish to see this established business close, and have used it ourselves on many occasions, but we would not like it to develop further into an extensive Garden Centre that will have further adverse effect on the amenity and enjoyment of our property and location.

We are very concerned that the application pays no regard to the issues outlined above and fully expect that the Delegated Planning Officer will consider our

objections, take them into account and undertake consultations with the Highways Authority and Environmental Health Department as a minimum. We are aware that the Parish Council have indicated no objections to the proposals, but as they have failed to consult us to obtain our views they have no awareness of our concerns or of the significant impact of this application on our lives on a daily basis. For the residents of the southern end of Brown Edge this will come of no surprise.

It should also be noted that on the Planning website the application incorrectly states the Parish and Ward as Cheddleton (refer attached screen copy)

Supporting photographs attached on separate sheets

The above views have been shared with our neighbouring residents who indicated that they concur with our concerns and will be registering their own objections.

Yours faithfully

Mr and Mrs I Brassey

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22ND May 2016