

## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

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**SMD/2016/0454**  
**Valid 16/08/2016**

**HEATH HOUSE FARM**  
**ROSS ROAD**  
**WHISTON**

**RETROSPECTIVE**  
**APPLICATION FOR NEW**  
**VEHICULAR ACCESS**

**(FULL - MINOR)**

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### MAIN ISSUES

- The impact on the character and appearance of the rural area.
- The impact on highway safety.
- The impact on trees.

### DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in the open countryside and lies within a mile of the village of Whiston which lies to the north. It comprises part of a field and abuts Ross Road, a narrow country lane, which lies to the west. There are two farms adjacent to the site (to the south-west and south-east – Heath House Farm).

### PROPOSAL

The application is for the retention of a gravelled access road/track which runs from Ross Road to another existing access track which has been built to connect the neighbouring field to the east (where a dwelling is approved to be built) to the existing farm access road serving Heath House Farm. There is no information to state what the access road is for.

### RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

#### **Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)**

SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy  
SS7 Churnet Valley Strategy  
DC1 Design Considerations  
DC3 Landscape

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

Section 7 (Design)

### SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2012/1192: Reconstruction of stable block to provide dwelling and holiday let. Approved.

SMD/2014/0606: Agricultural building for livestock. Withdrawn.  
SMD/2016/0253: Vehicular access and barn structure. Withdrawn.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Publicity**

Site Notice expiry date: 21.9.16  
Neighbour consultation period ends: 8.9.16  
Press Advert: N/A

### **Public Comments**

None.

### **Town / Parish Comments**

Supported.

### **Staffordshire County Council Highways**

No objection subject to standard conditions.

### **Tree/Landscaping Officer**

The access track has caused damage to the roots of trees alongside Ross Road.

## **OFFICER COMMENTS**

The gravel access road exists and this is therefore a retrospective application which seeks to approve the unauthorised works. There are no details as to why the access road is needed as there is an existing access to the plot to the east which has an approval for a new dwelling and holiday let. This connects onto the farm access track for Heath House Farm which was the approved entrance to the proposed dwelling. This is far more discreet than the new access road subject to this current application which is very visible from Ross Road, the nearest public highway. The absence of a hedgerow along this part of Ross Road makes the unauthorised access road even more visible from the road. I consider the access road, as well as not serving any obvious purpose, is harming the rural and open character and appearance of the area and is far more harmful than the approved access road which connects onto a rural farm track (which is more in keeping with the area). Furthermore, there is evidence that tree roots close to the access point onto Ross Road have been harmed although it is unlikely that the extent of any damage already caused will have an immediate impact on tree condition or stability.

## **CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

The existing access road is harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :     REFUSE**

**Case Officer:** Chris Johnston

**Recommendation Date:** 7.10.16

X *B.J. Haywood*

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Signed by: Haywood, Ben

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**