Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

ROSEHILL
NABB LANE, ALTON

NOVEMBER 2020

Site Address:
Rosehill, Nabb Lane, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4AY

Applicant:
Mr. P. Bain

Proposal:
Erection of 2no. Holiday Lodges

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 24th November 2020
Job Reference: RDP/2020/167

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. P. Bain to seek full planning permission for the construction of 2no. Holiday Lodges on land forming part of the domestic curtilage of Rosehill, Nabb Lane, Alton.

1.2 The holiday lodges will each provide an open plan kitchen / living area, along with two double bedrooms and a bathroom. The lodges will each occupy a footprint of 49.2 square metres and stand to a maximum ridge height of 3.5 metres.

1.3 Access to the site will be taken via the existing vehicular access serving Rosehill, which has recently benefitted from planning consent to secure improvements to visibility under application SMD/2019/0751. Those approved works have since been implemented.

1.4 The existing driveway / parking area will be expanded to provide four parking spaces adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site for use by occupiers of the holiday lodges. A pedestrian footway will be provided alongside the northeastern boundary to provide access to the lodges themselves.

2 Site Location

2.1 The application site lies on the eastern side of Nabb Lane, approximately 80 metres south of its junction with Denstone Lane. The site currently comprises part of the domestic curtilage of the applicant's detached two storey dwellinghouse (Rosehill) and is laid to grass, interspersed with shrubs. Vehicular access to the site is taken direct off Nabb Lane via a recently improved access (SMD/2019/0751 refers).

2.2 Residential development extends to the north of the site (Ash Croft and Nabb Cottage) with open fields extending to the east / south east of the site, with the fields dropping down gently towards Denstone Lane beyond. The carriageway of Nabb Lane encloses the west / southwest boundary of the site.

2.3 The centre of Alton village lies approximately 650 metres to the north and is readily accessible on foot or by bicycle, with illuminated footways available for the entire length of the journey, save for the short distance (80m) along Nabb Lane to its junction with Denstone Lane. The site as a whole is located within the open countryside, a short distance from the defined settlement boundary of Alton.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering (amongst others):

- Quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;
- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce
- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable

tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that these objectives will be achieved by, amongst others,

- Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD

- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E4.

3.4 Policy SS11 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Churnet Valley Strategy' and states that within this area particular support will be given to the following forms of development and measures:

- Short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;

- The expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities and the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities;

- Measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character and heritage assets of the Churnet Valley;

- Measures to remediate and restore derelict land, buildings and features including the appropriate redevelopment of sites;

- Actions to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the valley, including the maintenance, buffering and connection of designated sites and actions to mitigate climate change.

- Measures that support and integrate the heritage transport infrastructure of the valley, sympathetically with enhancing and developing links to strategic footpaths, cycle and horse riding routes.

- Measures to improve connectivity and accessibility to and within the Churnet Valley by sustainable transport means having regard to the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

3.5 Policy SS11 goes on to state that any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. Strong sustainable development and environmental management principles should also be demonstrated. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

3.6 Policy E4 of the Local Plan relates to 'Tourism and Cultural Development' and states that new tourism and cultural development which complements the distinctive character and quality of the District will be supported having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5 to SS10. In addition:

1. New tourist, visitor and cultural accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering either:

   A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or

B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or

C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

3.7 Policy E4 goes on to state that new accommodation, attractions and facilities should support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities, and that all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance

3.1 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;

- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;

- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of boosting the rural economy and ensuring highway safety. The content of the NPPF has been taken into account in the preparation of this Planning Statement and is discussed within the Planning Assessment below.

Churnet Valley Master Plan (2014)

3.2 The Churnet Valley Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document sets out guidance aimed at promoting and enhancing the Churnet Valley as a tourist destination within the Moorlands. The content of the Master Plan has been taken into consideration in the preparation of the application and is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

SMDC Tourism & Economic Impact Assessment

3.3 This document was prepared by the Local Authority to provide an appraisal of the role and impact of the visitor economy of the Staffordshire Moorlands. It also aimed to identify the opportunities for economic growth based on the visitor economy, with a particular emphasis on the Churnet Valley corridor. The content of this document is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application proposes the siting of 2no. holiday lodges on a site which is located within the open countryside, as defined by the adopted Local Plan. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the Rural Areas Area Strategy and gives support to small-scale tourism development where it accords with policy E4. Policy E4 of the Local Plan confirms that new tourist and visitor accommodation should be developed in locations that offer either:

A) Good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or

B) In locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or

D) In areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

5.2 In this particular case the application site benefits from good connectivity with a number of other tourist destinations and amenities, including amongst others the following:

- The Blacksmiths Arms PH
- The Bulls Head PH
- The White Hart PH
- The Alton Bridge PH
- The Talbot PH
- Alton Towers Resort

- Dimmingsdale Valley
- Denstone Farm Shop
- Peakstones Inn
- Peak District National Park
- Peak Wildlife Park
- Croxden Abbey
- JCB Lake and Golf
- Churnet Valley Railway
- Churnet Valley inc. Froghall Wharf, Consall Forge

5.3 A large majority of these facilities are accessible on foot, or via existing public transport connections available within the village. The site is also noted to lie only 650 metres from the village centre where a variety of local services are available, including public houses, mini-supermarket and newsagents. There is a pedestrian gateway located in the northwest corner of the site providing direct pedestrian access onto Nabb Lane.

5.4 The site also lies within the Moorlands Connect Bus Service area, which operates on an 'on demand basis' between the hours of 8am and 4pm Mondays to Fridays. Guests simply need to book ahead by a couple of hours either via phone or email and are then collected from their property and taken to their chosen destination. The area served by Moorlands Connect includes a large proportion of the Peak Park and the Staffordshire Moorlands, including popular destinations such as Hulme End, Alstonefield, Dovedale, Milldale, Warslow, Waterhouses, Longnor, Blackshaw Moor / Roaches, Alton Towers and Leek.

5.5 Consequently, future users of the holiday accommodation would benefit from good connectivity to other tourist destinations and amenities by all three means of transport. Having regard to these considerations the proposal can

be considered to be acceptable in the context of both policy E4(A) and policy E4(B) of the Local Plan.

5.6 The site is also noted to lie within the Churnet Valley Master Plan area, wherein there is a focus on improving the tourism offer to attract more people to come and visit and stay within the Moorlands. The Local Authority's Tourism Economic Impact Assessment identifies that in 2009 there were 3.35 million visitors to the Moorlands, but of those, only 7% were overnight visitors. The Churnet Valley Master Plan was prepared to help address that and to encourage more people to this tourism area, with policy SS11 confirming that *particular support* will be given to the provision of short stay and long stay visitor accommodation.

5.7 The Churnet Valley Master Plan identifies the Alton Character area as being of high landscape value dominated by Alton Towers Resort. It goes on to note that the area is under significant pressure from visitors and further development and that there are conflicting interests in this area, which need to be carefully addressed through sensitive management. Policy 8.3 of the Master Plan furthermore states that

> *"The provision of high quality all year round tourism opportunities is a **key requirement** of any proposal for new or extended tourist facilities and services. Businesses and communities are encouraged to work together to benefit their local area by improving the tourism offer. The aim is to help develop healthy, sustainable communities, who will benefit from the positive knock on effects of increased tourism to their area throughout the year"*
>
> *(my emphasis)*

5.8 The submitted proposal is located within the existing domestic curtilage of Rosehill and has built development to both its south (Rosehill) and north (Ash Croft). Both of these properties lie on the southerly fringe of Alton village, and form part of the existing settlement. The proposal does not necessitate any erosion of the surrounding countryside, being wholly contained within the existing domestic curtilage of Rosehill, and the site is located within easy walking and cycling distance of the village centre.

5.9 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside, with paragraph 80 of the NPPF confirming that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth. This proposal will help to encourage visitors to remain within the Moorlands and the Churnet Valley area, and in doing so the development will facilitate longer stays in the area and associated participation and experience of other tourism activities, to the benefit of the local tourism economy. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS11 and E4 of the Local Plan, the provisions of the Churnet Valley Master Plan and paragraphs 80 and 83 of the NPPF.

Design & Layout

5.10 The proposed holiday lodges adopt a simple, low-key style of design, akin in many ways to a domestic outbuilding, and will be finished in timber cladding, giving the lodges a muted appearance within the site. With a ridge height of 3.5 metres the buildings are also modest in scale and will not derive any significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with the existing boundary hedgerows along the southwestern, northern and northeastern boundaries providing an effective visual screen to the development. The proposed holiday lodges will furthermore be non-permanent in nature, and thus will be capable of being removed from site in

the event that they are no longer required for holiday let purposes in the future.

5.11 In terms of residential amenity considerations, the lodges will be sited sufficiently distant from the neighbouring property to the north (Ash Croft) such that there will be no contravention of the Local Authority's space about dwellings standards, and the main socialising area / front door of the lodges is to be located on the south facing elevation. Those factors, coupled with the presence of intervening boundary vegetation between the site and the neighbouring property, means the development will not have an adverse impact on residential amenity. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policy DC1 of the Local Plan and policy 8.7 of the Churnet Valley Master Plan.

Highway Safety

5.12 The application site benefits from an existing access onto Nabb Lane utilised by the existing dwelling, which will also be used by occupiers of the holiday lodges. Four parking spaces are to be provided on a new area of hardstanding adjacent to the southeastern boundary of the site, with ample manouvering space available to ensure that vehicles can exit the site in a forward gear. Nabb Lane is not a busy road, and recent improvements to the access, approved under application SMD/2019/0751 and since implemented, have served to improve visibility on egress. The site also occupies a sustainable location within easy walking and cycling distance of local services and facilities. Such considerations lead me to conclude that the proposal will not materially detract from highway safety in the locality, and that the proposal therefore meets the requirements of paragraphs 108 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed holiday lodges are considered to constitute a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The site has good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, including local village services, by both public transport, walking and cycling;

- The site is located within the Churnet Valley Masterplan area wherein particular support is given to the provision of short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;

- The proposal will facilitate longer stays in the area and associated participation and experience of other tourism activities, to the benefit of the local tourism economy;

- The lodges have a simple, unobtrusive design and will not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, or the amenity of neighbouring residential properties;

- The proposal will not give rise to any material adverse impacts to highway safety within the locality;

6.2 For these reasons the proposed development meets the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, SS11, E4 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Churnet Valley Master Plan.