

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
Date: 16 April 2021 17:28:48

Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0113

Site Address: Land At Bridge End Macclesfield Road Leek Staffordshire ST13 8LG

Comments by: James Gosnold

From:

Highfield Lodge
Highfield
Highfield
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 8SG

Submission: Objection

Comments: I would like to submit comments on the following points:

Lack of site notice displayed

Material change of circumstances since the 2013 appeal decision and 2017 Reserved Matters planning decision

Effect on the living conditions of occupants living on Bridge End, with particular regard to parking provision

Effect of the development proposed on highway safety, with particular regard to pedestrian and cyclist safety using the private access track

Effect of the development proposed on users of the public footpath (PROW6) and the visual amenity of users of that footpath

Access to Highfield

Detailed comments are as follows:

As of Friday 17 April there was no site notice displayed. I would suggest that a site notice should be displayed on the entrance to the access track leading up to the cricket club as well as on the entrance to the public footpath (PROW6). These are both very popular walking routes used by residents of Leek and failure to correctly display site notices in these locations prevents interested parties from being aware of the application and from commenting on it if they so choose. I would also query why residents of the Highfield estate have not been consulted given that they are likely to be affected by the scheme's proposed use of the access track.

The applicant's Design and Access statement states that there has been no material change in circumstance since the 2013 appeal decision and the 2017 Reserved Matters decision. This is incorrect and disingenuous. Since 2013 there has been a significant change in the policy framework, notably two more recent iterations of the National Planning Policy Framework and, significantly, Staffordshire Moorlands have recently adopted a new Local Plan. There is also now a five year supply of housing land in place. I would also make the point that at the time of the 2017 Reserved Matters application the permission granted by the appeal decision was still extant and as the applicant will be aware whether or not the principle of the development was acceptable would not have been a matter before the Council.

Additionally, the physical circumstances regarding the site have changed significantly. Nearly 3 years have elapsed since the 2013 appeal decision was determined. A site visit to Bridge End will confirm that the road is heavily relied upon by the residents to provide on street parking. In the intervening years car ownership has increased significantly. The majority of dwellings along Bridge End have no off road parking provision and residents are therefore reliant on on street parking to park their vehicles close to their homes. Given the busy nature of Leek Road and the fact that it is some distance away there are few practical alternative locations for local residents to safely and conveniently park. The access track has a gate across it at the point where it meets Bridge End and this location is routinely used as a parking place for up to 3 cars for nearby residents leaving no space for vehicles to pass beyond it. Additionally, parked vehicles line Bridge End on both sides making the road narrow and single width for much of its length. This would give rise to practical and safety difficulties for any vehicle attempting to pass along the road to access the track. I have taken a photo taken at 10 am on a Friday to illustrate this point but unfortunately the format of submitting comments online does not allow me to submit it.

As the Council will be aware Bridge End and the access track are privately owned and therefore any dispute regarding access rights are not a planning consideration. Nevertheless, the issue of the availability of on street parking spaces for residents of Bridge End is a planning consideration that should be weighed in the balance of any decision. The practical effect of allowing this application (in the event that the development took place) would be that the vast majority of residents would have nowhere to park their vehicles anywhere close to their home. This would be significantly harmful to their living conditions with particular regard to parking provision.

There are also highways safety issues as to how vehicles would be able to pass safely along Bridge End to access the site given the restricted width of the road due to the presence of parked vehicles.

A site visit will confirm that both the public footpath (PROW6) and the access track leading up to the cricket club are very popular and well used walking routes. This has always been the case but particularly so since the coronavirus lockdown in March 2020 as since then more people are walking in their local area. It is plain to see that both tracks are well worn and used throughout the day. The access track also provides a convenient and safe route for pedestrians and cyclists travelling from the town centre to Highfield and the cricket club (for training, matches and ancillary events). The alternative walking route along the main Leek Road is not well used as the pavement is narrow in places and traffic travels very fast along the road, particularly beyond the 40mph speed sign. The width of the pavement is such that it is impracticable for parents with young children, prams or wheelchair users to use this route safely as a means of accessing the Highfield estate from the town centre. However, no regard or assessment of this issue has been made by the applicant. I am therefore unclear how the safety of pedestrian and cyclist users of the access track will be taken into account both during the construction phase of the development and once completed how the conflict between cars accessing the development with pedestrians will be managed? The access track has steeply sloping sides that have extensive vegetation along them and so forward visibility is restricted. There are also limited passing places for pedestrians to take safe refuge to avoid vehicles.

As previously mentioned both the public footpath and the access track are well used and popular paths. Yet there is no mention in the application documents of the steps that will be taken to ensure that access to the public footpath can be maintained safely for users, particularly during the construction phase. There has also been no assessment of the affect on visual amenity for users of the public footpath. PROW 6 is part of a wider footpath network that users regularly walk along to enjoy views of the countryside looking across to Highfield, Gun, Morridge and Hillswood (towards Tittesworth Reservoir). How has the effect of users of the footpath been assessed in terms of the affect on their visual amenity when walking along this route?

The application documents mention that access will be taken for the development from Bridge End. But the plans are not clear as to how the design of the development will prevent residents of the scheme from driving

through the cricket club car park and exiting the site via the Highfield drive. A recent 2019 appeal decision (3232103) confirmed an Inspector's concerns regarding the use of the Highfield access for additional development and negative impacts on highway safety due to restricted visibility when exiting onto the main Leek Road. Therefore I would request that the applicant is asked to demonstrate clearly on a revised plan what physical measures will be put in place to prevent the use of Highfield as an access for both construction traffic and future residents of the scheme.

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