

2 Darleyshire Cottage
Leek Road
Wetley Rocks
Stoke on Trent
ST9 0AR

03/05/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Proposed Development APPLICATION NUMBER SMD/2021/0242

South Fields Farm Leek Road, Wetley Rocks: Creation of vehicular access.

Planning permission for this development was not originally granted through the planning Application for the commercial development at this location. We objected to the creation of vehicular access as part of the original application and we object to this application for the creation of additional access and route due to its location on the green belt and due to concerns of highway safety.

Our objections to this application are based on increased movement of vehicles, including slow moving lorries, onto and off the A520, and more importantly to the creation of an additional access point at a location where there have been a significant number of serious accidents including a death. Please see our original objections below which still stand detailing our objection on the basis of general highway safety and our own personal safety.

The current application cites approval given on green belt for the new housing, further down the road in Wetley Rocks, as being a precedent for approval for this application. However, the two instances are not comparable.

Firstly, the new access created in Wetley Rocks is where there is a 30 mile an hour speed limit. As traffic is moving slower, there is less chance of high speed vehicles suddenly coming upon slow moving HGVs turning onto and off the highway. Furthermore, as the approved access in Wetley Rocks is for residential use, the majority of vehicles accessing and exiting the site are not slow moving HGVs.

Secondly, the access route approved in Wetley Rocks was necessary as there was no other means of access. Whereas this application is made to create a secondary route, as there is already an existing route in use. The intention to use the existing route in future for sole access to the house, enhancing its private commercial value, is at the detriment of the public good, in that it creates an additional and unnecessary route through green belt.

Thirdly the application suggests that this new route will improve safety for vehicle accessing the highway, as the original route access was unsafe, but if this was the intent of the application, then the original route could have been modified instead.

Here are our main original objections raising safety concerns. Firstly the creation of a second access route, will create an additional location where slow moving vehicles will turn onto or off the highway where there is a 50mph speed limit. In addition, if approved, there will be two rather than 1 routes in existence on the green belt land.

Furthermore we feel that the creation of a new driveway and accesway is contrary to green belt policy on the grounds that it is essentially replacing green field with hard/tarmac surface, reducing the area of green belt that is actually green, resulting in negative impact in terms of environmental benefit. The suggestion that hedge planting will be an environmental

improvement, is negated by the fact that established hedgerows currently supporting wildlife will be cut down to allow for the development and the area of wet grassland will be reduced.

The planning application cites the new access route as improving road safety by providing better visibility. However, this completely ignores the fact that the location of the new access is at the top of a slope just before a dangerous hidden dip. It is therefore a more dangerous location for an access point: As you drive from Cellarhead towards Wetley Rocks, there appears to be a long straight road. Vehicles behind slow moving or turning vehicles, are tempted to move into the right hand lane to overtake and are suddenly faced with a vehicle rising out of a hidden dip immediately in front of them. There have been 4 serious accidents outside our house in the past 10 years on this apparently straight road, and, prior to moving into our house, there was a death in a car accident opposite the suggested location for the new entranceway.

1. A bus drove into our neighbour's wall and ended up in their field last year.

2. Last year also, a car attempting to overtake caused a serious accident involving three vehicles, one of which ended up in a neighbours field (wall still hasn't been repaired and the drop from the pavement into the field is unprotected and safety hazard barriers have fallen into the field).

3. The year before this a car ended up on its roof opposite 1 Darleyshire Cottage and the occupants of the car including a woman and little girl ended up in our house for first aid awaiting paramedics and transport to hospital. This was the result of overtaking before the hidden dip again. It was extremely stressful for all concerned.

4. A lorry drove into our wall in 2013 taking out 20 foot of drystone wall.

5. Before we moved into our house 15 years ago a motorcyclist was killed at the entrance way of our neighbour's house at Darleyshire Farm. This is exactly opposite to the site of the newly proposed access. The neighbours blocked up and ceased using this entranceway and moved their access further up the road towards Cellarhead to a safer position.

All these accidents happened in exactly the location indicated on the planning application which appear to be a long straight road. Despite the 50mph speed limit cars frequently drive faster, and despite double white lines in places, people still overtake where there is no visibility of oncoming traffic due to the hidden dip.

The creation of a new access point, increasing the number of points at which vehicles slow down and turn off and on to the road; plus the increased vehicle movements, due to expanded business capacity, will increase the number of times cars attempt to overtake on the apparently clear road and end up in head on collisions with vehicles rising out of the hidden dip.

A site visit to the location to view cars appearing over the hidden dip would be valuable to understand the nature of the dangers and the nature of the hidden dip and how an apparently clear road suddenly seems to produce a car coming from the direction of Wetley Rocks.

We believe the new access way is a safety risk as it creates increased hazard on the public highway and so should be refused. We also have a personal objection to the new access route, as both ourselves and our neighbours have to reverse into our driveways in order to ensure that we can then exit safely onto the road with clear visibility in both directions. This is an exceptionally busy road with vehicles travelling at 50mph. In order to reverse into our driveways we need to pull up on the side of the road and wait (indicating) for traffic to clear behind us, before reversing into our driveways. We are often subject to abusive and

impatient behaviour from vehicles who have to wait behind us for oncoming vehicles to pass, before they are able to overtake our waiting vehicles and head towards Cellarhead.

The addition of a new access way close to our driveways will increase the number of slow moving/stationary vehicles blocking the highway in the same location, increase waiting times for drivers on the A520, and increase incidents of road rage and potentially unsafe driving.

In summary, we do not wish to prevent local businesses from thriving, but in this particular instance we genuinely believe that the creation of an additional access point at this particular location, just before a hidden dip is increasing danger and consequently, the frequency of serious accidents in the future, and so we feel we have to oppose this aspect of the development.

Furthermore we have concerns that vehicles and lorries turning into and out the new access will detrimentally affect our ability to reverse into our driveway, making it more dangerous and subjecting us to more incidents of abusive and impatient behaviour from other road users.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Burrow and Carl Bown

OWNER OCCUPIER, 2 DARLEYSHIRE COTTAGE, LEEK ROAD, WETLEY ROCKS,
STOKE ON TRENT