
From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
Sent: 05 August 2021 18:32
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0465 Site Address: Land Off Stile House Lane Leek Staffordshire Comments by: Anne W. Morris

From:
Easing Villa
Stile House Lane
Easing Moor
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 7LS

Submission: Objection

Comments: I write in opposition to the above application which has only reached my attention today. I walk past the application site every day exercising my dog and can state with absolute certainty that a notice of this application has never been displayed otherwise I would have made my objection sooner. This is in clear breach of your obligation to publicise the application and I think that you should consider extending the period for public consultation until a reasonable period after notice of this application is displayed outside the site.

I object to this application on the following grounds:

1. On its own admission Charna Ecology carried out the ecological appraisal in a sub-optimal survey period and the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) should be discounted accordingly. Consideration of this application should therefore be postponed until a full Biodiversity Impact Assessment is provided by the applicant as suggested in Paragraph 14 of the PEA.

2. The PEA acknowledges that the stream along the northern boundary is ecologically significant and should be protected. Paragraph 100 states that:

“the proposed structure should be sited as far away from the watercourse as possible and retain a minimum 8 metre buffer zone along the northern boundary”.

Reference to the site plan shows that the applicant is not following this recommendation and this application should therefore be refused otherwise damage will be caused to this biodiverse resource.

3. Paragraph 3 PEA states that the field site is 'poorly draining loamy soil'. It is therefore going to be very difficult to install a septic tank to serve the property applied for without a significant risk of polluting the stream referred to above. In the circumstances the applicant should be asked to prove that the installation of a septic tank is in fact possible before the application is considered.

4. In his Planning Statement the applicant's consultant makes a succession of sweeping generalisations to the effect that this application complies with planning policies SS10, SS11, E4, DC1 and DC3, but he omits the detail that proves the opposite as I point out below.

SS10

This paragraph of the Local Plan restricts development to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside. This planned property provides basic accommodation that can easily be provided in the adjacent township of Leek which has two hotels and other holiday accommodation, and which is only a short walk away.

SS11

This paragraph states that the development should be of:

'a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area'. It also stipulates that 'consideration of the landscape character will be paramount'. The site falls under the Ancient slope and Valley Farmlands Landscape Character Area of the Churnet Valley. It also fits in the Gritstone Highland Fringe. How can anyone suggest that a two bedroomed wooden hut fits into the locality dominated by stone walls and stone buildings much less enhances it? The application, I contend contravenes this policy and should therefore be refused.

E4

This policy states that 'new tourism will only be supported if it compliments the distinctive character and quality of the area'. This application does neither and should be refused. It also provides that new facilities should only be supported where needs are not met by existing facilities. There is no evidence lodged with the application to suggest that there is an unmet need for the accommodation applied for and I would contend that there is in fact a surplus of holiday accommodation in the area.

DC1

This policy stipulates that any development should 'add value to the local area incorporating detailing and materials applicable to the character of the area'. The design incorporated in the application is of a crude, simple timber structure completely incongruous to the locality and therefore not applicable to the character of the area.

DC3

This policy restricts development which has a 'significant adverse impact on the Landscape and Settlement character'. This proposed development has such an impact and should therefore be refused..

Paragraph 5.1 of the Planning Statement contends that local planning policy explicitly supports the application but omits to mention that this support is conditional on compliance with Policies SS10 and E4. Since a wooden structure in a landscape dominated by stone contravenes these policies as demonstrated above this application must be refused.

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