

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0372
Valid 04/06/2021

TITTESWORTH VISITORS
CENTRE BLACKSHAW
LANE
MEERBROOK
LEEK

2 X FREESTANDING
ENTRANCE SIGNS

(ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT)

MAIN ISSUES

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

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in countryside a couple of miles to the north of Leek and to the east of the village/hamlet of Meerbrook and comprises the road entrance to Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre, which is off the road which connects the village to Blackshaw Moor and A53 to the east and is on the south side of that road. The visitor centre is run by Severn Trent Water.

PROPOSAL

This is an Advertisement Consent application to replace two ground-mounted entrance signs identifying the visitor centre, one each side of the entrance road on grass road-side verges. The signs would be a similar size and height to the current ones and placed in the same position. They would have the same purpose of identifying the entrance to the visitor centre. The current signs are blue on a dark grey background, have a semi-circular shape and a height of 3.0 metres and a width of 1.6 metres. The replacement signs would have roughly the same dimensions but are rectangular in form. The sign is orange on a dark blue background.

A Planning Design and Access Statement has been submitted which states “the new signs are required to bring the signs up to date, in line with Severn Trent’s current brand, thereby making the visitor centre site more readily recognisable.”

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Section 12 (Achieving Good Design).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

There have been previous approvals for signs at the site, the most recent being in 2012.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 4.8.21

Neighbour consultation period ends: 4.8.21

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

Local Highways Authority

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The signs are to be replaced to reflect the latest “branding” of Severn Trent Water who run the visitor centre. They are the same size, height and siting as the current signs and have the same purpose of identifying the main entrance. The main changes are the colours, which with the addition of a bright colour such as orange would make the signs more prominent than before despite no increase in size or height and the same siting. However, only part of the sign would have this colour. The rest of the sign would be dark blue which would blend in easier with surrounding area. The size of lettering (which would remain white), would be no larger. They would also not be illuminated. I do not consider the new signs would be more prominent to the extent that the character and appearance of the area would be harmed. The entrance to the visitor centre is surrounded by trees and would not be visible from a great distance beyond the site and not harmfully prominent when approaching from the road as they are set back from the road next to the entrance gates. They would also not be too prominent to the extent that they would be distracting to passing motorists not visiting the centre and therefore would not harm highway safety. No objection has been raised by the local highways authority.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the rural area and would not harm highways safety. The proposal would therefore comply with the Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the NPPF and therefore Advertisement Consent for the replacement signs should be granted.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 13.8.21

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council