

From:
To:
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
Date: 11 August 2021 23:57:11

Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0374
Site Address: Land East Of Leek Road Wetley Rocks Staffordshire
Comments by: Helen Bridgett
From:
Rockfields Farm
Cheadle Road
Wetley Rocks
Stoke on Trent

Phone:

Comments: SMD/2021/0374

I refer to my previous comments about applications for a barn on this site. I wish to stress the great efforts made by local residents to convey their views when faced with significant change to immediate surroundings although such responses may present significant challenges. As a Parish Councillor I have been approached by several residents who are concerned about previous applications/appeal and the current application. Appeal found that there were grounds to refuse. However I now note that the NFU have chosen to comment upon this application which seems a novel turn of events especially given the allegorical representation given by the (?) officer.

It would appear that the flock has only recently been registered to Mr Stonier which gives some clarity over ownership rather than another person being deemed responsible. There has been a dead sheep in the flock which raised the subject of whom to alert.

The location of the barn will affect the view on entering and leaving Wetley Rocks.

Disparaging remarks are made in reports within this application about the woodland on site, but it is entirely typical of woodland standing on the end of the gritstone ridge. Several trees have already been felled onsite. This area is used by some of the five species of bats recorded within the sites vicinity. Local belief is that bats hibernate and/or roost both in the trees and in the tunnel for the Consall Valley Plateway which has its entrance within the site. Recent developments in Consall Valley have seen the Ravens spending more and more time over the application site. Every year cuckoos can be heard in the immediate vicinity. Kestrels nest within yards of the planned barn. Barn owls also breed within the same distance and hunt over these field where the building is proposed.,

Within the past weeks an accident demolished a section of stone wall on the A522 which comes as no surprise given the witnessed speeds of 80-100mph which are achieved by racing motorists.

SMD/2020/0267 and Previous Planning application SMD/2019/0197

SMD/2019/0197

This proposal appeared to be attempting to establish an operational farm base with machinery and significant fodder storage capacity and seemed to go significantly beyond the reasonably justifiable requirements of the 15.5 acres. In the documents it was stated that the applicant was looking to purchase 30/35 sheep. This contrasts with the description of the applicant's current livestock ownership and aspirations in application

SMD/2020/0267 under appeal.

The original application stated under Local Interest that an Archeological Report was not applicable. Heritage Statement also not applicable. However SMDC did include SCC Archeology/Historic Environment in their consultations. The County Archeologist response includes this ;The application has been assessed in light of the information held by the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and associated datasets. The HER shows that there are no designated heritage assets (e.g. Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas) within or in the vicinity of the proposal site that are likely to be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals. However, it does show that the proposals are located on and in the vicinity of the former line of the mid-19th century Consall Plateway, a railway which was constructed c. 1841 to assist with the transportation of burnt lime from Consall to Rangemore. The line closed in 1849, however it was still depicted as a track in the late 19th century and early 20th century Ordnance Survey Maps, and indeed the line of the plateway (as a track/footpath?) can be seen on recent aerial photographs on a southwest-northeast alignment. The Staffordshire Moorlands Historic Environment Character Assessment (HECA- CWWHECZ 5) identifies this plateway as a reminder of historic industrial activity in the wider area, and that a better understanding of this, either through the recording of surviving earthworks or below ground archaeology would contribute significantly to an understanding of early industry in the wider Churnet Valley/Staffordshire Moorlands.; He makes no reference to the plateway;s tunnel entrance which is situated in proximity to the the proposed building, goes under the road and emerges at Tunnel Farm. I have included an image of the Tunnel Farm section, also part of an old map showing the approximate location of the plateway as it skirts Blackbank Plantation then crosses the land in question to head towards Tunnel Farm. I have also included further documents which reference the plateway. Less of the tunnel, but SMDC were aware of the tunnel as it was they who filled it in. The stated aims and intention of SMDC should protect the plateway and tunnel. In general terms the surviving sites of early railways (that is, lines built before the public mainline railways, say before 1825) should be considered of interest and potentially valuable, and that would certainly apply to the Consall Plateway. It would be a great shame if the remains of the trackbed and tunnel were compromised by the new building.

The first application SMD/2019/0197 risked significant harm to the landscape character and appearance, also presented risk of significant change in character and loss of biodiversity contrary to policies SS6c, DC1, DC3 and R1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and to the NPPF. I consider these risks to still apply to the application under appeal.

SMD/2020/0267

This applicant;s agent states ;6.2 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS6c, R1, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.;

However, I consider that the proposals do not conform with these policies, nor with the provisions of the NPPF as they fail to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area, nor do they comply with the development plan and therefore they do not comprise sustainable development. The application also goes against Staffordshire HER PRN references as shown in my screenshot attachments.

Reference is frequently made to the dearth of archeological investigations in this area and to the possibility that such activity may take place in the future. This building and associated work could compromise such activity. Hardly anyone knows of the plateway, yet the industry of The Consall Valley and its associated archeology are of great industrial heritage significance.

The size and HEIGHT of the proposed building are considerably larger than would be expected and will be visible from a distance on the higher ground to the West.

Although this application is marked for consultation/reconsultations I am not convinced that this is the case. Not least because the County Archeologist did not re-issue his concerns. Worth not that Historic England had this to say: ¿Looking at our records, we were not consulted on this planning application. Unfortunately, it is out of our remit to get involved with applications which we have not been consulted on or made comments for.¿

In the most immediate vicinity 8 properties may be impacted by this development. Of these, 4 have been in very long term ownership. Therefore it is unsurprising that this demographic renders such local residents likely to find it difficult to make the responses to this plan of which they will readily speak when consulted in person. This seems unjust, especially when they are the very people most informed about the bio-diversity of this floristically diverse area which is home to mammals, reptiles, insects and many avian species. Some of these on the at-threat list.

All local residents are very aware of the danger on the A522, where accidents are frequently near-misses. Requests have been made to extend the 30mph restriction southwards towards the site in question because the straight road from where 30mph becomes 60mph is regularly used to race. These requests have been impeded by a lack of recorded collisions under police presence. I would request that consideration be given to the several octogenarians amongst the demographic who care about the locality but struggle to get their views represented.

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