
From: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0635 Site Address: Land at Hurstons Lane Alton Staffordshire ST10 4AP
Comments by: Andrew Cooper

From:
Hurstons Cottage
Hurstons Lane
Alton
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Submission: Objection

Comments: Whilst I have no objection to a single house being built on a suitable part of this site, I do have objections to some aspects of the proposal:

Previous successful applications for this site have been for a single house and have not proposed the wholesale removal of the three trees present on the site.

The shape of the site itself is roughly that of an elongated right-angled triangle. Whilst the site is of a reasonable size it only allows suitable development at the wider southern base of the triangle and any development becomes more problematic as the site narrows towards the northern point. One house at the southern base should not present any real issues. Any further development past the mid-point towards the north will impinge on either the cottages on The Hurstons or the trees bordering Hurstons Lane, or both. The proposed solution appears to be to destroy the trees bordering Hurstons Lane. Additionally, the proposed development on Plot 2 does not appear to meet the standard specified in Section 7 Policy H1 (3e) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020): 'All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings'.

The report suggests that the tree, T2, a Wych Elm is in poor condition that will get infected with Dutch Elm Disease. I note that the report does NOT say that the tree is infected. The tree that can be seen outside the clutches of the ivy appears sound. It does appear to me to be somewhat drastic to destroy a tree because it MAY become infected with a disease. As Wych Elm trees are now comparatively rare surely the better option is to take measures to preserve the tree by removing the ivy and giving it a greater chance of survival?

To a layman the Sycamore, T1, appears to be a magnificent tree, with no obvious sign of decay. The Woodland Trust says the following about the Sycamore: 'Mature trees are extremely tolerant of wind, so are often planted in coastal and exposed areas as a wind break.' So, this does not tally with the report stating that 'The main fork is potentially very weak and could fail in bad weather.' Note that the report says 'POTENTIALLY' and is not more definite. It is also interesting that the Arboricultural report states 'The Ivy has been severed making the main fork easier to inspect' and later on says 'Dead Ivy on stem' with the implication that this is a negative sign. The Woodland Trust also says that a Sycamore tree can live for 400 years, so we should leave for future generations to enjoy.

A second opinion would seem to be called for in the case of both of these trees. I also draw the Council's attention to a previous application for this site, SMD/2014/0468, when an appeal, APP/B3438/W/15/3006312, was refused and the following was included in the Appeal Decision: 'Of the trees on the appeal site, the most notable is a

Sycamore about halfway along the south eastern site boundary. The appellant's Tree Survey and Assessment identifies this tree as being of moderate quality with moderate priority for retention. However, it makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the area in combination with the other mature trees along Hurstons Lane. The premature loss of the trees would therefore be detrimental to the character of the locality and in particular the Conservation Area (CA) in which the appeal site is located.

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