

From:
To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#) Planning
Subject: application SMD/2021/0784 16
Date: December 2021 13:27:48

I wish to object to the proposed development of this land on for the following reasons:

1. Drainage – Rushton is marshland, this field is the only remaining undeveloped land on Sugar St within Rushton; it sits on the lower slopes of the hill bordered by Alley Lane and Leek Old Road and is thus an important area for soaking up rainfall and surface run off.

This road surface of Sugar Street carries excess water every time it rains, heavy rains (which occur frequently) overwhelm the capacity for drainage, pooling on Sugar St, at the junction with Leek Old Road and running down onto the A523 causing dangerous flooding by the Royal Oak. The A523 is regularly closed at this point by the police, due to flooding. At least one dwelling opposite the proposed development has an insurance flood marker due to water previously entering from the road and this results in the A523 being closed due to flooding on a regular basis.

There is no explanation of where the exceedance flow from the proposed septic tank system will go – I presume onto the Sugar St. Please note that heavy rainfall is fairly normal in Rushton.

Please also note that the approved plans at Holly House (SMD/2021/0234) which accept that drainage is an issue here, will also increase surface run off and flooding risk.

The further development of this land will lead to increased flooding and it is not acceptable to continue to use an out of date, Environment Agency desk-top-exercise statement regarding flooding risk when there is publicly accessible evidence to the contrary.

2. Sustainability – Rushton does not need any more new housing, the current development of “Land off Sugar St” (behind Ivy Cottage) which sits opposite the proposed development already provides in excess of required development. There are also approved infill developments in addition to this. Rushton has an excess of housing of various types, sizes and ages which sit on the market for long periods (often years), thus demonstrating an existing over-supply.

Rushton has very few amenities: 2 churches, one open pub, a garage and a LandRover dealer. There is no employment opportunity within the village and the nearest town is over 5 miles away. There is no shop, no petrol station and there are no health facilities. The village school is situated close to the proposed development site and traffic using the school is heavy and pressured in the mornings and afternoons. The public bus service runs three buses daily between Macclesfield and Leek, the times of the buses would not enable someone to work fulltime or to get to school / college or to simply juggle the commitments that we all need to meet in our daily lives. Please note that the school transport service only takes children to Churnet View Middle School and Leek High School up to the age of 16, when in fact there are over 10 other post first-school educational establishments within Leek/Congleton/Macclesfield (not including Primary Schools) and to attend any of these the children will need to be driven, as will those over the age of 16 wishing to continue at catchment schools. Living here necessitates car dependency. The assertion that the only car journey necessary would be to Leek is facile.

3. Road safety – This section of Sugar Street is perilous for pedestrians; there is no pavement, the road is narrow and unlit and is used by heavy farm machinery as well as general traffic. The junction with Leek Old Road is difficult to navigate and the obvious dangers were recognised in the planning inspectors report regarding the development of the “Land Off Sugar St” opposite the proposed site – in his report he made a precondition of improvements to the junction to be completed prior to commencement of construction of the houses. Since his report the school transport service buses have been relocated to the Royal Oak Car Park which has resulted in greater pedestrian traffic (which is predominantly children), car use has increased, home delivery services have proliferated and the consequently the risks have increased. 5 years after Planning Inspector’s decision, the junction has still not been improved and this work has not been enforced by the council despite them being aware of this. It is unthinkable that even more traffic could be added to this unmodified junction.

The proposed development offers car parking spaces for the community; presumably at least in part, to enable access to the proposed entrance of the site which would be curtailed by road parking. Traffic entering and leaving this site will increase the risk to pedestrians using this narrow, unlit and unpaved lane – even with an increased splay the entrance is only a short distance from the junction with the A523, close to the blind junction of Alley Lane, the entrance to the existing development, the school entrance and a blind bend as the road progresses up Sugar St to the North West. Drivers will inevitably accelerate hard to exit the proposed development site in time to avoid unseen oncoming traffic and this will further increase risks to pedestrians. I strongly suspect that the “community use” spaces will be necessary for the occupants / visitors / tradesmen of the proposed new houses but should any parking be available on the proposed community car park rather than Sugar St, pedestrians will have to face 2 way traffic (currently only one direction at a time due to the car parking on the road) and they will have no potential refuge (currently it is possible to dart in between parked vehicles) as the road is bordered by a stone wall on one side and a hedgerow on the other.

Please also consider the context brought by the increased road traffic that will result from existing approved and under-construction developments, particularly as their parking provision will not suffice for modern day car use and the car dependency of the area.

4. Further ecological assessment is vital, wildlife is being marginalised and wildlife corridors are being closed off. There are many bats in this area and the field is used by birds of prey, Tawny owls nest in the area. The field is not treated with pesticides or herbicides and is therefore an important area for invertebrates.