



Vine House, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 1AE
T : 01335 342201 E : ashbourne@bagshaws.com
www.bagshaws.com

20th June 2022

Mr B Haywood
Head of Development Services
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6HQ

Re: Objection to Planning Application No. SMD/2022/0263 – Proposed Field Access – Land off Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks, ST9 0BN

My client – Mr D Halmarack, Spring Cottage Farm, Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks, ST9 0BN

I write in relation to the above planning application, on behalf of Mr D Halmarack who is an immediate residential neighbour to this proposal and strongly objects to the proposal on the following grounds-

Highways Safety and Insufficient Visibility

Mill Lane is an extremely busy, country lane which is heightened during certain times of the day. As illustrated on the attached Google Earth Street View extracts, traffic queues develop during school times.

The proposed new entrance (as shown on Plan 2021-2627-02) does not provide users with clear visibility in either direction due to the narrowness of the verge and high hedges and trees which bound this lane. If a clear line of sight was provided which meets the current County Council highways standard, a substantial section of hedgerow and established trees would need to be removed resulting in a significant visual impact and harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Green Belt and Visual Impact

The application site is located in the North Staffordshire Green Belt whereby policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) and chapter 13 of the NPPF (2021) are applicable.

Paragraph 148 of the NPPF states that *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that **substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.** ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*

Aside from the concern highlighted above in relation to the amount of the hedgerow and trees which will need to be removed to provide a clear visibility splay, the proposed plans require the removal of four established



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Associate Partner :
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trees. It is not clear on the submitted plans or in the Arboricultural Statement how many metres of hedgerow are being removed however, the removal of trees and hedgerow will be extremely harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and in direct conflict with Local Plan Policy SS10 and NPPF paragraph 150.

The proposed works also have a significant visual impact along this section of country lane and harmful to the landscape character. Opening up roadside views of the site will also result in visual harm with clear views of the van/ lorry bodies onsite, these being largely screened by roadside vegetation and established screening.

Loss of Biodiversity

In addition to the visual impact resulting from the removal of established trees, the uncertainty is relation to how much of the native species hedgerow is to be removed is concerning. There is also very little detail in relation to the proposed hedgerow works and how the existing hedgerow will be protected during works.

The existing multiple species native hedgerow and trees provides valuable habitat. The scheme does not offer any mitigation for the loss of biodiversity and removal of a healthy tree.

This scheme is in direct conflict with Local Policy NE2, which states “*Resisting development that would directly or indirectly damage existing ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or **species-rich hedgerows.***”

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this representation and inform me of any further updates or re-consultation on this application.

Yours sincerely

Mr C G Barks MRICS

For and on behalf of Bagshaws LLP



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