Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

ROSEHILL
NABB LANE, ALTON

MAY 2023

Site Address:
Rosehill, Nabb Lane, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4AY

Applicant:
Mr. P. Bain

Proposal:
Erection of 2no. Holiday Lodges

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 2nd May 2023
Job Reference: RDP/2023/029

Report Prepared By:
Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
28 Ferndale Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7DJ
Email: rob78duncan@gmail.com
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. P. Bain to seek full planning permission for the construction of 2no. timber holiday lodges on land that forms part of the domestic curtilage of Rosehill, Nabb Lane, Alton.

1.2 The application follows on from the previous grant of planning permission for the provision of 2no. holiday lets on the site via the conversion and extension of an existing garage, and the siting of an additional lodge alongside (LPA Reference: SMD/2020/0656).

1.3 The proposed holiday lodges are to be sited to the northwest of the existing dwellinghouse, with vehicular access taken off Nabb Lane via the existing access serving Rosehill. Parking for four vehicles, along with associated turning space, is to be provided on an expended area of hardstanding which is to be created alongside the existing hardstanding / driveway that currently serves the dwellinghouse and previously approved holiday lets.

1.4 The holiday lodges will each occupy a footprint of 48 square metres and stand to a maximum ridge height of 3.4 metres. Their accommodation is to be comprise of an open plan kitchen / living area, along with two double bedrooms and a bathroom. The proposed holiday lodges will also benefit from pedestrian access onto Nabb Lane via the footpath previously approved under application SMD/2020/0656.

1.5 No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access to the site, and there are no plans to remove the existing boundary hedgerow forming the boundary between the site and Nabb Lane.

2 Site Location

2.1 The application site lies on the eastern side of Nabb Lane, approximately 80 metres south of its junction with Denstone Lane. The site currently comprises part of the domestic curtilage of the applicant's detached two storey dwellinghouse (Rosehill) and is laid to grass, interspersed with shrubs. Vehicular access to the site is taken direct off Nabb Lane.

2.2 Residential development extends to the north of the site, comprising of Ash Croft and the Grade II Listed Nabb Cottage beyond that. Open fields extend to the east / southeast of the site, with the fields dropping down gently towards Denstone Lane beyond. The carriageway of Nabb Lane encloses the west / southwest boundary of the site, and is separated from the site by a mature, high hedgerow. A further Grade II listed building, Paradise Farm, lies approximately 85m distant from the proposed development, on the opposite side of Nabb Lane.

2.3 The centre of Alton village lies approximately 650 metres to the north and is readily accessible on foot or by bicycle, with illuminated footways available for the entire length of the journey, save for the short distance (80m) along Nabb Lane to its junction with Denstone Lane. The site as a whole is located within the open countryside, a short distance from the defined settlement boundary of Alton.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering (amongst others):

- Quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers

- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community

- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce

- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural

diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that these objectives will be achieved by, amongst others,

- Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD

- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E4.

3.4 Policy SS11 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Churnet Valley Strategy' and states that within this area particular support will be given to the following forms of development and measures:

- Short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;

- The expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities and the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities;

- Measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character and heritage assets of the Churnet Valley;

- Measures to remediate and restore derelict land, buildings and features including the appropriate redevelopment of sites;

- Actions to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the valley, including the maintenance, buffering and connection of designated sites and actions to mitigate climate change.

- Measures that support and integrate the heritage transport infrastructure of the valley, sympathetically with enhancing and developing links to strategic footpaths, cycle and horse riding routes.

- Measures to improve connectivity and accessibility to and within the Churnet Valley by sustainable transport means having regard to the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

3.5 Policy SS11 goes on to state that any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. Strong sustainable development and environmental management principles should also be demonstrated. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

3.6 Policy E4 of the Local Plan relates to 'Tourism and Cultural Development' and states that new tourism and cultural development which complements the distinctive character and quality of the District will be supported having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5 to SS10. In addition:

1. New tourist, visitor and cultural accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering either:

   A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or

B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or

C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

3.7 Policy E4 goes on to state that new accommodation, attractions and facilities should support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities, and that all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance

3.8 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;

- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;

- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;

3.9 Policy DC2 of the Local Plan relates to 'The Historic Environment' and states that:

1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.

3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.

4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.

5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.

6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.

7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or

heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.

3.10 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by (amongst other measures):

- Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

- Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of boosting the rural economy and ensuring highway safety. The content of the NPPF has been taken into account in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Tourism Strategy (2022-2027)

4.2 The recently published Tourism Strategy places an emphasis on raising the profile of the Staffordshire Moorlands so that it becomes a stronger destination as a place for both day visits and longer holidays, improving the current offer and unlocking the District's potential and boost the local economy. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Churnet Valley Master Plan (2014)

4.3 The Churnet Valley Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document sets out guidance aimed at promoting and enhancing the Churnet Valley as a tourist destination within the Moorlands. The content of the Master Plan has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application proposes the siting of 2no. holiday lodges on a site that is located within the open countryside, as defined by the adopted Local Plan. Policies SS10, SS11 and E4 of the Local Plan give support to small-scale tourism developments within the rural areas, with the latter policy stating that new tourist and visitor accommodation should be developed in locations that offer either:

A) Good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or

B) In locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or

C) In areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

5.2 In determining the previous application on the site (SMD/2020/0656) the Local Authority concluded that the tourist amenities within Alton village, such as food shops and eating places, were easily accessible from the site via cycling or walking, noting also that the edge of the village was only 75 metres away. The Local Authority consequently concluded that the proposal was consistent with part A) of policy E4 and was therefore acceptable in principle. This new application for the provision of 2no. holiday lodges commands the same conclusions, as they are to be located closer to the village than the previously approved holiday accommodation on the site.

5.3 Policy E4 also states that new accommodation should support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the areas where needs are not met by existing facilities. In determining the previous application on the site (SMD/2020/0656) the Local Authority commented that:

> *"**It does appear there is a demand for more tourist accommodation in general**. Furthermore, it is noted that although there is a large significant supply of accommodation at Alton Towers resort, including log cabins, this is mainly hotel or serviced accommodation and the resort provides all the catering and entertainment facilities, leading guests to be unlikely to leave the resort to support shops, pubs, or eating establishments in the village or other tourist attractions in the area" (our emphasis)*

5.4 The Local Authority went on to conclude that:

> *"The proposal would at least **offer a different form of tourist accommodation for visitors who do not want to stay bound by a resort and want a different experience** e.g. explore the wider area and other attractions of the Churnet Valley and to eat at pubs in the village rather than within a resort. i.e. **the proposal would widen the range of the type of accommodation on offer in the Alton area**". (our emphasis)*

5.5 The same conclusions apply to this proposal for 2no. holiday lodges on the site. They will also serve to increase the accommodation offer within Alton and help to facilitate overnight stays within the District. Facilitating more overnight stays is a key objective of the Local Authority's recently published Tourism Strategy which identifies a lack of accommodation investment and a

dominance of day visitors being weaknesses of the tourism economy in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

5.6 The Tourism Strategy sets out a series of aims and objectives aimed at growing the tourism economy in the Moorlands, including the following:

- *Get visitors to stay longer in the area by developing itineraries that combine Alton Towers with other experiences especially 'Activities' and 'Attractions', moving from a day visit to an overnight, or a 1 night to a 2 night visit.*

- *Encourage accommodation development – small scale, quality, catered & self-catered that keeps visitors in the local area.*

- *Expand, improve and encourage the development of accommodation to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions.*

- *Encourage accommodation development in the towns/villages, at existing sites where services are already in place.*

5.7 The submitted proposal firmly accords with these aims and objectives, and will provide two self-catered units of accommodation, in a sustainable location that is within easy reach of existing services and facilities, and which will help to support additional overnight stays within the District. They are small-scale facilities and will provide a different type of tourism offer to those on offer at Alton Towers. The benefits of this proposal to the tourism economy carries significant weight in favour of permission being granted and leads to the overall conclusion that the proposal is consistent with the requirements of policies SS10, SS11 and E4 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

5.8 The proposed holiday lodges adopt a simple, low-key style of design, akin in many ways to a domestic outbuilding, and will be finished in timber cladding, giving the lodges a muted appearance within the site. With a ridge height of 3.4 metres the buildings are also modest in scale and will not derive any significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with the existing mature hedgerows along the western site boundary providing an effective visual screen to the development.

5.9 The proposed lodges will furthermore be located within the established domestic curtilage of Rosehill, with built development to both its north (Ash Croft) and south (Rosehill) such that the development will not result in any encroachment of built development into the surrounding countryside.

5.10 The proposed holiday lodges will furthermore be non-permanent in nature, and thus will be capable of being removed from site in the event that they are no longer required for holiday let purposes in the future. The proposed design and layout of the development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Impact

5.11 To the north of the site, approximately 50 metres distant, lies the Grade II Listed Nabb Cottage. To the southeast of the site, approximately 100 metres distant lies the Grade II Listed Paradise Farmhouse. The impact of the proposed development on the setting of those listed buildings will not be material as there will be no direct intervisibility between the development and those heritage assets.

5.12 If the Local Authority were to disagree with those conclusions and find the proposal to amount to 'less than substantial harm' it is submitted that the

public benefits of boosting the tourism economy, in line with the recently published Tourism Strategy, would outweigh that harm. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policy DC2 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Residential Amenity

5.13 The lodges are to be located within the domestic curtilage of the existing dwelling, in between it and the neighbouring property to the north (Ash Croft). The siting of the lodges will not derive any conflict with the Local Authority's Space About Dwellings standards, and consequently will not give rise to any loss of privacy / overlooking concerns in respect of the neighbouring occupiers.

5.14 During the determination of the previous application, concerns were raised by neighbouring occupiers about disturbance from the proposed holiday cottages on residential amenity, in particular the comings and goings of guests. The proposed lodges, by virtue of their modest size, will not attract large groups and are aimed at couples / families.

5.15 The two uses can co-exist without causing unacceptable disturbance to local residents and the lodges will be circa 20 metres distant from the neighbouring property. The comings and goings of guests along the pedestrian footway will not give rise to any materially greater impact on residential amenity than that which has already been established through the previous grant of planning permission under application SMD/2020/0656. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policy DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Highway Safety

5.16 The application site benefits from an existing access onto Nabb Lane which is shared between the existing dwelling, and the two previously approved holiday lodges. The same access will be used to serve the two additional lodges in this application, with four parking spaces to be provided to serve them. There is ample manoeuvring space within the site to ensure that vehicles can exit the site in a forward gear, and the site benefits from good visibility on egress. The previously approved pedestrian footway will furthermore serve to ensure that guests of the holiday accommodation do not have to walk along the full extent of Nabb Lane, as per the arrangement that was found acceptable under application SMD/2020/0656. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed holiday lodges constitute a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The site has good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, including local village services.

- The proposal will facilitate longer stays in the area and associated participation and experience of other tourism activities, in accordance with the recently published Tourism Strategy for the District.

- The lodges have a simple, unobtrusive design and will not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

- The proposed development will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

- The proposed development will not give rise to harm to the setting of nearby Listed Buildings.

- The proposal will not give rise to any material adverse impacts to highway safety within the locality.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, SS11, E4, DC1, DC2 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Churnet Valley Master Plan.