

Alandeyne
Cedar Hill
Alton
Staffs
ST10 4BQ

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Planning Department
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek

September 19th 2023

Inspectorate reference: APP/B3438/W/23/3317913

SMDC Planning application: SMD/2022/0409/A

Land off Cedar Hill, Alton, Staffs, ST10 4BQ

Dear Sir /Madam

I WISH TO OBJECT TO THE ABOVE APPLICATION

5 decades of planning applications and refusals

Historic planning documents available at SMDC offices in Leek inform of the considerable back catalogue of legacy planning applications for the field, land off Cedar Hill Alton.

51 years ago, in 1972 the first application to build within the field was submitted and refused. Subsequent applications were refused in 1974, 1976, 1980, 1985, 1996, 2019 and 2022.

Four applications (1974, 1976, 1980 & 1985) were dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate.

After a pause of 23 years from the 1996 application, the approval of planning on a former brownfield site in Alton (SMD/2018/0017) was interpreted as the green light for another application to build in the field, land off Cedar Hill. Application SMD/2019/0555 was submitted and refused in December 2020, a further application was submitted and refused in 2022.

However, despite both of these recent applications being refused, planning within the field is now being sought on a technicality relating to 5-year plans.

There is an element of pantomime surrounding these incessant, abhorrent applications, but for residents of Cedar Hill and Battlesteads it is far from comical. This appeal has become the sixth application for housing development in a little over 4 years residents of Cedar Hill and Battlesteads have been invited to comment upon. Enough is enough, 6 applications in such a short space of time is excessive and tedious.

Evidential document to protect Churnet valley landscape (1)

Historic Environment Character Assessment: Staffordshire Moorlands (2010)

The site and location of the field is nestled within the countryside outside of the defined settlement boundary of Alton village. The steep sloping landscape contributes to the character and heritage at the western entrance to the village and has been defined as being a Special Landscape Area.

The site and location form an integral part of the heritage landscape detailed within the SMDC document:

Historic Environment Character Assessment: Staffordshire Moorlands (2010).

The full document is available here:

[https://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/media/949/Historic-Environment-Character-Assessment-August-2010---Appendices-1-and-2/pdf/HEA for website Appendix 1 and 2.pdf](https://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/media/949/Historic-Environment-Character-Assessment-August-2010---Appendices-1-and-2/pdf/HEA%20for%20website%20Appendix%201%20and%202.pdf)



Towards the end of the document within APPENDIX 1 ALTON are the Historic Environment Character Zones (HECZs) for Alton.

Of particular significance is area ALHECZ 3 Toothill (page 10) and its map (page 13).

Also, the area ALHECZ 4, South of Toothill (page 14) and its map (page 17).

When viewing the respective maps on page 13 and page 17, it is interesting to note that the hedgerow/wall that borders the field at Cedar Hill, being the most southerly point of area ALHECZ 3 is also the most northerly point of area ALHECZ 4, i.e. the road (Battlesteads / Cedar Hill) the field and hedgerow provides continuity between area 3 and 4.

HEA document, assessment of the landscape in which the field nestles is given in section:

1.4 ALHECZ 4 – South of Toothill

Extracts from section 1.4.1 Statement of heritage significance:

'The historic landscape character is dominated by piecemeal enclosure of probable post medieval date, which is typified by a distinctive enclosure pattern comprising dog-leg or reverse 'S' field boundaries. The historic field pattern is well preserved; few field boundaries have been removed in the period since the late 19th century' (page 14).

Historical value: 'The surviving historic field pattern dominates the character of the zone which is typified by its dog-leg and reverse 'S' shaped field boundaries with their mature hedges and trees. The extant historic buildings represent the deliberate planning of a small settlement constructed in the late 1890s which is likely to have been closely associated with the quarrying industry in the local area. The clay pit associated with the brickworks is likely to survive as an earthwork and the presence of a collection of mature trees enables its location to remain legible within the landscape' (page 15).

'The integrity of the historic landscape character, in the well-preserved field systems in particular, positively contributes to the aesthetics of the heritage assets' (page 15).

'The field pattern is particularly characteristic of piecemeal enclosure and its importance is enhanced by the survival of the historic field boundaries. The settlement pattern is one of low density; the exception being the collection of late 19th century properties on Battlesteads. Consequently, the historic landscape character has little capacity to absorb change. Advice on planning within the Conservation Area should be sought from the Staffordshire Moorlands Conservation Officers' (page 15).

Evidential document to protect Churnet valley landscape (2)

Staffordshire Historic Environment Records (HER)

The unique and stunning beauty of the countryside and Churnet valley landscape in which the field, land-off Cedar Hill, nestles is clearly obvious. However, what is not always appreciated is that within a relatively small radius of only 150 m from the field there are 7-listings of historic sites/monuments on the Staffordshire HER website available here:

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MST4423&resourceID=1010

Each monument/site has a unique HER identifier (PRN primary record number) the closest of which is the site of the old Brickworks (HER number 04840).

The site of the brickworks and associated clay pit are located within the field, less than 40 m from the proposed development.

Shown overleaf are extracts of maps from the character zones detailed within the Historic Environment Character Assessment document. Coincidentally, these maps also show the historic sites/monuments.

From the maps the location of 4x former quarries adjacent to the field are shown. The former brickworks are shown in map 5.

The disused quarries and the old brickworks make a valuable contribution to an understanding of the local vernacular architecture and the integrity of the historic landscape within this small corner of the Churnet Valley.

Summary

Alton village is defined by its historic landscape character as detailed in the SMDC Historic Environment Character Assessment document which states:

The integrity of the historic landscape character across the project area survives particularly well and consequently the heritage assets can be seen to make a significant contribution to the sense of place in the landscape around Alton (page 26).

Hence, might I respectfully suggest that all who are engaged within this appeal process consult the Character Assessment document, in particular, appendix 1 and the Historic Character Zones ALHECZ 3 and ALHECZ 4 (shown overleaf) which elegantly describes the historic landscape in which the field, land off Cedar Hill is located.

This document can then be used alongside SMDC planning policy to refuse this application once and for all.

Thank you for reading my comments, I trust you will take these into consideration when determining this planning application.

Kind regards
MK Sowter
Alandeyne Cedar Hill Alton

Appendix 1 Alton: Staffordshire Moorlands HEA

