

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0108
Valid 04/03/2024

ROSEHILL NABB LANE
ALTON

ERECTION OF 2NO. HOLIDAY
LODGES

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on character and appearance and settlement setting
- Impact on the amenity enjoyed by existing neighbours
- Sustainability
- Highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

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 an area of former orchard adjacent to the applicant's detached two storey dwellinghouse (Rosehill). The land is laid to grass, interspersed with shrubs. Vehicular access to the site is taken direct off Nabb Lane.

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.

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.

PROPOSAL

This is a resubmitted full planning application for two timber holiday lodges following the refusal of the previous scheme for the two units, on 14th July 2023 (ref: SMD/2023/0226), for the following reasons:

1. The development would be harmful to the character, appearance and heritage of the area and the setting of the village. It would relate poorly to the character, density and pattern of the existing rural development that provides the setting to the village and an area of transition between the village and the surrounding countryside. In these respects there would be conflict with policies SS8, SS10, SS11, DC1, DC2 and DC3

of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. The benefits associated with the provision of new tourist accommodation and the support to rural tourism that would ensue, would not outweigh the harms identified and the conflict with the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan policies in those regards.

2. The development would adversely affect the residential amenity enjoyed by the near neighbour to the north. It would be positioned within close proximity of the neighbour's garden boundary and introduce an intensity of recreational activity in a position that is established as providing separation and tranquility. In these respects there would be conflict with policies SS8, SS10 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. The benefits associated with the provision of new tourist accommodation and the support to rural tourism that would ensue, would not outweigh the harms identified and the conflict with the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan policies in those regards.

The main difference with this new scheme is that the two units would be moved about 20 to 25 metres towards the south-east of the previous siting and about 10m to the north-east of the existing dwellinghouse. The previous siting was directly to the north of the dwellinghouse in the rear garden, leaving a gap of 8 metres between the north boundary of the property and the nearest proposed lodge to the boundary. The lodges would be placed alongside the two previously approved holiday lets of similar form and size (one being a converted detached garage to the house), forming a row of four holiday lodges. This would leave a gap of 11m between the boundary of the property to the north and the nearest lodge unit. The re-siting would be in the area previously proposed for car parking for the two units refused last year. Instead, a new parking area with four spaces (same number as the last scheme) would be formed off the access drive, a short distance along the drive from the main entrance to the property off Nabb Lane.

The general design, form and size of the units would remain the same as the previous refused scheme. However, due to more of a slope on the land than the previous area proposed, raised platforms with railings would be added in front of the lodge entrances (facing north-east), accessed by steps at the side, to allow a level entry into the units.

A Heritage Statement, dated August 2023, has been submitted with the new application along with a Planning Statement.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS8 Larger Village Strategy
SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy
SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy
SD4 Noise pollution
E4 Tourism Development
H1 New Housing Development
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 Historic Environment

DC3 Landscape Character
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Sections 6 (Economy), 12 (Design) and 16 (Historic Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2015/0756 conversion of garage into dwelling. DISMISSED at appeal.
SMD/2017/0825 Conversion of garage into annexe. Approved.
SMD/2019/0751 Alterations to the existing site access with visibility improvements. Approved.
SMD/2020/0656 Erection of 2 Holiday Cottages. Approved with revised location.
SMD/2023/0226: Erection of 2 Holiday Cottages. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 18/04/2024
Neighbour consultation period ends: 18/04/2024
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

Sixteen letters of objection have been received and the points raised reflect those raised in response to the previous application which were as follows:

- Detrimental impact on the amenity of the adjacent neighbour
- Unsustainable development – reliant on cars, limited public transport services, remote from tourist attractions, shops and services.
- The lane is narrow and dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. Additional traffic would exacerbate the danger.
- No drainage details should ensure foul system does not discharge onto neighbouring land
- The site is already overdeveloped
- Adversely affect the character and appearance of the area
- Mature trees and bushes would be removed with detriment to wildlife

Town / Parish Comments

Alton PC: Object.

“This application is very similar to SMD/2020/0656 and SMD/2023/0226 which the parish council objected to. The circumstances have only changed slightly in that no trees or shrubs are now proposed to be removed.

Application SMD/2024/0108 was unanimously objected to by the parish council for the following reasons:

- *Nabb Lane is a narrow road and the additional traffic would be a safety issue, indeed*

vehicles cannot safely pass each other on the lane.

• It is overdevelopment in the area and outside the village plan.

• The application is out of keeping with the area, invasive and unneighbourly, by the very nature of the lodges being holiday lets there will be an increase in noise and light pollution for neighbours.

• The environmental impact outlined above means that the development is not sustainable.”

Staffordshire County Highway Authority

No objection subject to conditions (provision of parking, turning and pedestrian access for guests).

Environmental Health

Repeated their comments in response to the previous application. No objection subject to conditions.

Conservation Officer

Objection.

By virtue of their scale, design, form, location and material palette; the scheme looks to be out of place and not an enhancement to the character of the well survived area. I echo my initial comments from a previously refused scheme of the same (2023/0226). Due to the formation of this former historic orchard of which the site is located, it provides a spacing and therefore setting among this section of Nab Hill and thus contributes to the heritage interest, and landscape of the settlement.

I do not believe there are exceptional circumstances for this case as viewed in the Heritage Statement, to permit materials ill-advised by the Moorlands design guide. If there has been deemed any, they are not clearly justified. The structures are not traditional, nor are they farm buildings to alleviate any envisaged crossover of materials and finishes.

Whilst there would be a minimal amount of direct harm on the listed buildings, it would however have a detrimental impact on the sense of place and wider landscape of which these assets and the grain of the settlement are experienced.

My concerns remain regarding amenity, form and scale of the primitive lane, and impact on the character and quality of the area.

I am unable to provide full support at this time and therefore recommend refusal.

SMDC Waste Collection Service

No issues regarding waste collections. Bins will have to be collected from Nabb Lane.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the character, appearance and heritage of the area and the setting of the village

The previous scheme was refused permission due to the impacts on the visual and residential amenities of the area.

The site lies outside the Conservation Area but on an historic lane leading out of the settlement characterised by a dispersed group of dwellings fronting the road, interspersed by mature gardens and agricultural land, marking the transition out into the rural area. Nabb Cottage at the junction with Denstone Lane and Paradise Farm are both Listed Buildings which sit to either side of the application site, whilst Rosehill and Ash Croft are characterful historic buildings which contribute to landscape character. Historic maps indicate that the application site was a former orchard (OS 1877) and outside the historic residential curtilage to Rosehill.

The site, formerly an historic orchard, provides a triangular wedge of land between the applicant's dwelling and the neighbour at Ash Croft to the north. It is very much part of, and contributes to, the character, density and pattern of development along this section of Nab Hill and the setting. They are well spaced rural dwellings with large gardens.

The revised scheme looks to reposition the same two units (in terms of scale, form and design), which were approx. 5m from the road to a location approx. 20m further away from the road from the previous siting, to the north east of the house. This would make them less visible from the road approaching Alton village and therefore it could be argued that this would have less impact on the rural setting of the village when approaching it from the lane and therefore the transition from village into the countryside. However, the form and design of the lodges remains the same. The mere repositioning of the lodges by a further 20m within the same property does nothing to address the poor relationship of the scheme to the character, density and pattern of development in the area. The area in which these units would now be placed is still reads as being within the curtilage of the dwelling and there is no physical feature separating this from the former site within the back garden and could have well been part of the former historic orchard. In fact, by clustering all four units together in a neat and compact row (i.e. the two proposed and the two previous approved) further, this creates an even greater density of development that is even more out of keeping with sporadic and spacious form of development in this rural area and therefore further harmful to its character.

It was previously considered that the construction of these lodges in the previous siting directly to the north of the house would not directly impact on the historic significance of the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings but they would have a detrimental impact on the wider environment in which these and other historic rural properties are experienced. It was also commented by the case officer that, *"they would look incongruous and out of place. This type of structure is more commonly associated with farm diversification, not on the road frontage at the entrance to an historic village. The size and appearance of the properties, and their parallel siting, will not allow them to*

be read as domestic outbuildings, and the high roadside hedge can't be relied upon to indefinitely screen them from the road."

Although the lodges have been moved further away from the road, this would not alleviate the impact on the heritage value of the area. The Conservation Officer maintained an objection to the application based on the revised siting (and the fact that the form and design of the lodges has not changed) and the impacts on the historic setting and landscape would still remain.

Overall, the revised scheme would still lead to harm to the visual amenities of the area which are not outweighed by the benefits of the holiday let development and therefore the first reason for the refusal of the previous application has not been overcome.

Impact on Amenity

The previous application was also refused due to the impact on the residential amenities of the area. The previous scheme was for two lodges directly to the north of the house, leaving a gap of 8m between the development and the northern boundary of the property, shared with a residential property further to the north. The case officer for the previous application commented that *"the site, formerly an historic orchard, provides a triangular wedge of land between the applicant's dwelling and the neighbour at Ash Croft to the north. It is very much part of, and contributes to, the character, spacing and density of the dwellings along this section of Nab Hill and, in turn, their normal enjoyment and expectation of amenity. They are well spaced rural dwellings with large gardens. The applicant has already gone a considerable way to opening this land up and increasing its exposure to the road and the adjacent neighbour by clearing mature shrubs and trees for within the site and its boundaries, including the boundary with Ash Croft which is now reduced to a timber close boarded fence and a hedge on the neighbour's side."*

It is not considered that re-positioning of the lodges approx. 20m would resolve the issues leading to the second reason for refusal of the previous application. The actual gap between the development and the neighbours property would only be increased by 3 metres from 8m to 11m, an insignificant distance. Although the closest part of the shared boundary to the new siting is the corner separating the south and east boundaries of the property to the north, the area immediately on the neighbours side of this part of the boundary still forms part of their garden area and residential curtilage and therefore an area of quite enjoyment to the neighbours. Furthermore, it was previously commented by case officer that holiday let guests would be likely to use the garden area to the north of the house, up to the south boundary of the neighbours property, as a garden/outdoor amenity area for themselves. Despite the proposed, repositioning of the units, the level of access to this area for the guests would effectively remain the same.

Overall, it is therefore considered that the new scheme would still lead to impacts on the residential amenities enjoyed by the adjacent neighbours to the north and that the second reason for refusal has not been overcome by the new siting of the two lodges and that the benefits of the further holiday lodge development would not outweigh the harms in this respect.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The amended development would still lead to harm to the visual and residential amenities of the area and would not overcome the previous reasons for the refusal of the previous application and remains contrary to the Council's Local Plan.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 29.4.24

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council