

C/O Agent

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Application no: SMD/2014/0682

Determined on: 2nd December 2015

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015**

REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION

Location of Development:

Moneystone Quarry Whiston Eaves Lane Whiston Staffordshire ST10 2DZ

Description of Development:

Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except access for the erection of a high quality leisure development comprising holiday lodges; a new central hub building (providing swimming pool, restaurant, bowling alley, spa, gym, informal screen/cinema room, children's soft play area, café, climbing wall and shop); café; visitor centre; administration building; maintenance building; archery centre; water sports centre; equipped play and adventure play areas; multi-sports area; car parking, and managed footpaths and cycleways set in attractive landscaping and ecological enhancements.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in pursuance of powers under the above mentioned Act hereby **REFUSE** to permit the development described above in accordance with plans ref: PL1088.M.106 Rev 3, PL1088.M.110 Rev 3, PL1088.M.113 rev 2, PL 1088.M004 Rev 02, PB 1608-SK001 Rev B, PB1608-SK004 Rev E, for the reason(s) specified below:-

1. Notwithstanding the fact that this site is identified in the Churnet Valley Masterplan as an Opportunity Site for a high quality leisure venue with a maximum of 250 lodges, the Masterplan is clear in the Concept Statement for the Moneystone Quarry Opportunity Site at paragraph 7.6.5 that development needs to be of a scale which does not undermine the tranquillity and character of this sensitive part of the Churnet Valley. Policy DC 3 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document requires the Council to protect and, where possible, enhance the local landscape. Policy SS7 refers specifically to development within the Churnet Valley and, whilst it provides support for visitor accommodation and the provision of new tourist attractions and facilities, it requires them to be both compatible with the area and to be of a scale and nature which conserves and enhances the landscape. It

further confirms that consideration of landscape protection will be paramount in all development proposals.

It is considered that within the area identified as Multi Activity Hub area on the submitted Parameters Plan the intensity of activity, the extent of built development (see indicative Schedule of Accommodation) and height of buildings (up to 12m in parts) would result in a development that was visually intrusive, particularly from the public footpath which runs directly to the west of this part of the site and in wider views from Eaves Lane to the north and from public footpaths to the west and east. It would fail to respond to and respect this small scale landscape which the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment confirms to be particularly sensitive to change. Similarly the area identified as Black Plantation occupies an elevated location, visually and physically isolated from the remainder of the proposed development. In this location and notwithstanding the submitted Woodland Approach Notes setting out a proposed phasing approach to development within this woodland, it is considered that there is potential for development to be readily visible near the skyline in near and more distant views to the south. As such the proposal is in conflict with Policies DC3 and SS7 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document, the Adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD and the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes.

2. The traffic generated from the proposed leisure development comprising up to 250 holiday lodges together with traffic generated from day visitors to the proposed leisure facilities would result in a significant increase in the amount of traffic accessing the surrounding rural road network and particularly Eaves Lane/ Carr Bank to the east of the site access which would provide a direct route from the development to Alton Towers and Farley Lane which links Oakamoor and Farley. It is considered that the increase in traffic would lead to unacceptable congestion on these narrow country roads. Carr Bank, for example is largely single track with limited passing places and a steep gradient as the road enters the village of Oakamoor. Although there is an offer to agree a signage scheme, an intention to run a shuttle bus to Alton Towers as part of a Travel Plan to be secured by way of planning obligation and improve the A52/Whiston Eaves junction, these measures would not prevent guests using the aforementioned rural routes. Furthermore guests from Black Plantation will be heavily reliant upon the car to access all facilities within the Hub area via the wider rural highway network given that it is physically detached and remote from the main venue with no pedestrian connectivity provided due to the change in levels in this area. It is for these reasons that it is considered that traffic from the proposal will not be satisfactorily accommodated on the highway network and that the proposal fails to provide and /or encourage satisfactorily the use of sustainable travel modes contrary to Policy T1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

3. The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the setting of Little Eaves Farm, a Grade II Listed building which lies to the west of the site. There will be direct views from this heritage asset to the south/south east into the Multi Activity Hub Area owing to gaps in existing planting. Although it may be possible to provide landscaping within this area to filter views, the exact siting of the buildings, their form, mass and design is unknown. The existence of overhead power lines crossing into the site will compromise the ability to provide effective screening and in any event planting will take many years to establish. In the wider

landscape there would be views of the heritage asset particularly from Whiston Eaves Lane, from the public footpath which runs through the site and from the site itself. In these views the asset would be read in conjunction with the proposed development which would erode the agricultural hinterland in which the asset is experienced. The close proximity of the asset to the central Multi Activity Hub Area would also result in loss of tranquillity and seclusion, elements which also make a positive contribution to the significance of the asset. Considerable weight has been given to the harm that would be caused to the heritage asset as required by section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 when carrying out that exercise. The harm is judged to be less than substantial in terms of paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework but it is not considered that the public benefits arising from the proposal outweigh the harm. As such there is conflict with Policy DC 2 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document which seeks to safeguard and where possible enhance the historic environment.

4. Overall, the benefits of this leisure scheme when considered together would not be sufficient in this case to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm identified above contrary to Policies DC2, DC3, SS7 and T1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document; the Adopted Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD and the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework)

Informatives

It is considered that the proposals are unsustainable and do not conform with the provisions of the NPPF.

Signed on behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

NOTES

1. If you are aggrieved by the decision of your local planning authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. If the decision to refuse planning permission is for a householder application, and you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 12 weeks of the date of this notice. All other types of development have a 6

month deadline for submission of appeals. Appeals must be made using a form which you can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN or online at www.planningportal.gov.uk/pcs. The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal. The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to him that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order. In practice, the Secretary of State does not refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based their decision on a direction given by him.

3. If either the local planning authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted. In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council (District Council, London Borough Council or Common Council of the City of London) in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.