
From: Steve Massey
Sent: 23 October 2025 17:54
To: Lisa Jackson
Cc: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: SMD/2025/0367 - Broadhurst Farm, Leek Road, Waterhouses

Categories:

Lisa

I have the following comments on this application seeking planning permission for change of use of 3 holiday rental cottages to open market dwellings:

Summary: no objection; condition requested for planting scheme.

Detail:

There are no significant trees within or immediately adjacent to the application site; in any case the application is solely for change of use and does not include any physical development (with the probable exception – although not detailed in the application – of provision of fencing or other physical boundary demarcation to subdivide the existing shared garden as indicated on the site plan as proposed). Therefore there would be no impact on existing trees arising from the proposed change of use.

The rear (north-east facing) aspect of the group of cottages, and their existing shared rear garden area, are in clear view across an open intervening field from the A523 Leek Road with only timber post and rail fencing separating the garden from the field. There are a good number of mature trees generally in the surrounding fields, although not particularly providing screening of Broadhurst Farm and its associated former agricultural buildings including the current application cottages; many of these trees are Ash and clearly in various states of decline due to Ash Dieback Disease. In the short to medium term therefore, views of/into the application site and its farm context are only likely to become even more open and prominent as trees decline further, die and/or are removed. The shared garden is predominantly a large, featureless lawn, and already accommodates various items of outdoor furniture and paraphernalia such as picnic tables, hot tubs, swings and trampoline.

In theory, the proposed change of use would be unlikely to bring about significant visual change to the appearance and use of the existing garden area. There is perhaps a likelihood, though, that owners/occupiers of private dwellings would wish to introduce taller fences for privacy/security, and to develop their gardens to be more interesting/attractive with various ornamental plants, paths, paving, decking etc. There could well also be introduction of other features such as sheds, greenhouses, summerhouses/gazebos, washing lines etc as a result of permanent occupation of dwellings as opposed to holiday cottages intermittently occupied by a series of different short-term guests. Such intensification of garden use and features would be likely to create a more obviously domesticised appearance to a site in open countryside which still currently retains a reasonable degree of traditional simple rural agricultural character, and is situated only a field's width outside and clearly visible from the Peak District National Park boundary (along the A523).

To address Biodiversity Net Gain, the application indicates the proposed planting of 5 new trees close to the north-east boundary of the rear gardens, but these, although appropriate in themselves, would not provide any significant degree of screening or filtering.

Whilst I would suggest it would seem harsh to object to or refuse the application on grounds of the "gardenification" of what is (in practical and planning terms) already anyway a garden, approval of the application would provide the

opportunity to require some more effective and meaningful screening of the site in views from Leek Road, in keeping with, and mitigating against erosion of, the rural character and appearance of the area and to enhance the setting of the site. I would suggest a new mixed native species hedgerow along the full length of the north-east and north-west boundaries of the combined garden area, with the trees already proposed being incorporated as standard hedgerow trees – and ideally increased in number and species variety to include other appropriate species such as standard Hawthorn (i.e. as actual trees, not just as part of the hedge shrub mix), native Crab Apple, native Rowan.

In conclusion I have no objection to this application.

If an acceptable, more substantial and comprehensively detailed planting scheme can be secured prior to determination, I would suggest the following condition be imposed in the event that planning permission is granted:

1. The planting scheme shown on **(insert drawing/document numbers etc)** shall be fully implemented before the end of the first available dormant season (November to February inclusive) following commencement of the change of use hereby approved. The trees and shrubs etc planted in accordance with this planting scheme shall be properly maintained for a period of 5 years following planting. Any plants which within this period are damaged, become diseased, die, are removed or otherwise fail to establish shall be replaced during the next suitable season.

Alternatively, if the application is determined first the following condition would be appropriate:

2. Within 2 months after the date of this permission, a comprehensive planting scheme shall be submitted to the LPA for approval. The submitted scheme shall in particular make provision for the planting of new native species hedgerow, including a variety of suitable native species standard hedgerow trees, along the north-east and north-west boundaries of the combined private garden areas of the application dwellings. The submitted planting scheme shall include full details of all proposed new trees, shrubs and any other planting, giving specification for species, positions, planting sizes and numbers/densities of all new planting. The planting scheme once approved shall be fully implemented before the end of the first available dormant season (November to February inclusive) following commencement of the change of use hereby authorised. The trees and shrubs etc planted in accordance with this planting scheme shall be properly maintained for a period of 5 years following planting. Any plants which within this period are damaged, become diseased, die, are removed or otherwise fail to establish shall be replaced during the next suitable season.

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