

[REDACTED]

From: Karen Wright <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 15 June 2026 20:36
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Planning objection re SMD/2026/0216
Attachments: IMG_5047.JPG; IMG_5048.JPG; IMG_5049.JPG; IMG_5050.JPG

[REDACTED]

Application Number: SMD/2026/0216
Site Address: 137 Willow Drive, Cheddleton, Leek, ST13 7FG
Proposed Development: Conversion and change of use from residential garage to short term holiday let.
Objector Details: Karen and Adam Wright / "The Owners & Occupiers"
Objector Address: 135 Willow Drive, Cheddleton, Leek, ST13 7FG - neighbouring property on Willow Drive

Dear Planning Officer

We are writing to register our strongest possible objection to the above referenced planning application for the conversion and change of use of the detached garage at 137 Willow Drive into a commercial holiday let unit.

While we note the applicant's references to the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Strategy, council policies explicitly state that tourism growth must not come at the expense of highway safety or residential amenity. This proposal represents an unsustainable overdevelopment of a highly restricted plot within St Edward's Park, which was previously master planned as a premium residential estate, sensitively developed to avoid overcrowding and to maintain the open parkland feel. We believe that this proposal fails fundamentally against both local plan policies and national guidelines.

We request that the application be refused based on the following material planning considerations:

1. Violation of Our Existing Residential Amenity and Overbearing Impact

The proposed development directly conflicts with the objective of the Space about Dwellings guidance, which is to provide privacy for existing residents and the protection of their amenity to enable reasonable enjoyment of their residence and garden with a degree of freedom from unwanted social contact.

As the detached garage intended for conversion forms part of the shared boundary line and is located a mere 93cm from our home, it will severely impact our existing residential amenity.

While a quiet, dark, incidental storage structure is acceptable on a boundary line, converting this building into an active, independent, self-contained commercial holiday let unit introduces a permanent, inhabited structure directly adjacent to our home. Shoehorning a standalone commercial unit into this space creates an unacceptable, oppressive, and overbearing impact and fails to protect our basic right to quiet residential amenity.

This proposal is completely contrary to the originally approved spacious, master-planned layout of the peaceful parkland residential development of St Edward's Park.

2. Intense Noise Disturbance to First-Floor Bedrooms (Policy DC1)

The application directly violates Policy DC1 (Design Considerations) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, which legally obligates the council to protect existing residents from harmful noise and loss of amenity at all times of the day and night.

The proposal seeks to carve out and isolate a minuscule 5-metre depth (28m²) enclosed outdoor garden space directly abutting our property boundary line. Our home structure sits a mere 93 centimetres away from this boundary line.

Due to the very small internal square footage of the proposed holiday let (33m²), guests will structurally be forced to use this outdoor micro-garden as their primary living and socializing space. Furthermore, given St Edward's Park's tranquil woodland setting, holidaymakers are inherently incentivized to spend the vast majority of their daytime and evening hours outdoors.

By partitioning off this confined area just 93cm from our walls, the applicant has created an acoustic "noise funnel." The frequent outdoor talking, laughing, and drinking, etc, will completely destroy the quiet enjoyment of our private family home and garden, making it impossible to relax or work from home during the day. Furthermore, because sound travels upward, this ambient noise will rise directly into our first-floor bedrooms, causing severe nighttime sleep disturbance. Holidaymakers lack long-term accountability to the street, and forcing a transient "holiday atmosphere" only 93cm from our family home, especially during the working/school week, is entirely unacceptable.

Work has already begun on the proposed garden with fences erected and the views from our bedroom window and rear garden are shown in the attached photographs, which clearly demonstrate the proximity of the proposed commercial unit and garden and the problem this will create.

Previously, this space was part of a large, open garden in keeping with the St. Edward's Park strategic premium design making the most of the woodland area and as such sound naturally dissipates. By partitioning off this small, confined area directly adjacent to our home, beneath our first-floor bedroom windows, the proposed holiday let will cause severe, unacceptable sleep disturbance and be intrusive to the quiet use and enjoyment of our garden and residential amenity.

3. Air Pollution and Detriment to Environmental Amenity (Smoke, Vaping, and Odours)

Due to the highly restricted, 5-metre depth (28m²) enclosed design of the proposed garden for the holiday let unit, it represents a severe threat to our environmental amenity regarding air quality and odours. The proposed holiday garden directly adjoins our boundary and sits less than one metre from our home's structure.

Because short-term holiday rentals strictly prohibit smoking and vaping inside the premises, guests are structurally forced to use the outdoor areas. Given that this micro-garden is tightly confined and in very close proximity of our primary first-floor bedroom windows, smoke, vaping fumes, and heavy odours from BBQs will have no path for natural dispersal. Instead, these airborne pollutants will drift directly into our habitable rooms, both through the open sliding doors at the back of our property, which are directly adjacent to the proposed garden and upwards to our bedroom windows.

This concentrated source of odour and air pollution directly violates Policy DC1 of the Local Plan regarding the protection of healthy residential living environments and would greatly restrict us from

opening our doors and windows as we do at present, to enjoy our quiet woodland setting and fresh air.

4. Transient Disturbance and Rhythmic Intrusion

The constant cycle of new guests arriving late at night, slamming car doors, using the outdoor space regularly in the manner of holiday guests, in a loud fashion introduces a disruptive, transient pattern of behaviour entirely out of character for the bottom of a quiet residential cul-de-sac. Permanent residents have a long-term interest in keeping the peace with their neighbours, whereas short-term commercial occupants do not.

5. Severe Detriment to Highway Safety and Insufficient Vehicular Access Geometry

The submitted "Site Plan as Proposed" (Drawing PL 01D) is unviable in the real world and presents an immediate hazard to highway safety:

- **The 2.67m Entrance Bottleneck:** The proposed layout relies on a driveway entrance that narrows to just 2.67 metres. While a stationary vehicle physically fits through this gap, a vehicle *cannot* enter it in a straight line. Vehicles must navigate a sharp, angled turn directly around the corner structure of building No. 137. The size of modern cars and the extremely restricted access to the proposed parking area means that in practice this isn't a workable solution to the parking problem.
- **Lack of Swept Path and Turning Space:** Because of the tight geometry, a moving car's front overhang and rear wheels will swing out wide (intertrack swing). A 2.67m opening leaves virtually zero margin for error and vehicles can not physically be parked in the way presented on the proposed site plan (Drawing PL 01D). Additionally, if vehicles have somehow been able to enter the courtyard space, there is completely insufficient space for a vehicle to perform a multi-point turn to exit in a forward gear. Thus, if a vehicle were parked in the allocated parking space for the holiday let, it would be impossible to exit the compound given the space available.
- **Displacement to the Public Highway:** Willow Drive is a narrow, residential cul-de-sac with no pavements. It is already heavily congested with multi-car households. Because residents will struggle to manoeuvre through the 2.67m bottleneck, vehicles will inevitably be displaced onto the narrow street or shared access to driveways. This will contribute to a risk of blocking critical access for emergency service vehicles (fire engines and ambulances) and municipal refuse trucks, heavily violating local transport safety policies. In addition, residents access to their own driveways and entrances may be impacted by displaced cars and visibility will be affected for children playing in the street.

6. Unlawful and Unpermitted Loss of Designated Parking Provision

The applicant's Design & Access Statement states that the detached double garage was historically and "informally" converted into a home gym by previous occupiers without the benefit of planning permission or building regulations approval. Legally, on the council's records, this building's permitted use remains a domestic double garage designed to mitigate on-street parking congestion.

No. 137 is a substantial 5-bedroom home. Under standard local authority guidelines, a 5-bedroom home commands a baseline demand of at least 3 off-street parking spaces, with a commercial holiday let requiring additional dedicated provision. Permitting the conversion of this double garage structure into an independent commercial unit—while squeezing the remaining spaces into an unworkable courtyard layout—leaves a severe deficit in realistic parking infrastructure for a plot of this size. A site visit would clearly demonstrate the difficulties.

7. Failure to Provide a Commercial Waste Management Strategy

Under the *Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations*, waste produced by a short-term holiday let is legally classified as commercial waste, not household waste. It cannot legally be mixed with or disposed of via the primary dwelling's standard domestic bins.

The applicant has failed to provide a Commercial Waste Management Strategy. Squeezing what will ultimately be three additional commercial wheelie bins (waste, recycling, food) into an already overdeveloped proposed layout is logistically unviable and will likely result in an eyesore for residents and detriment to the local environment.

8. The Creation of an Undesirable and Harmful Planning Precedent

Approval of this application would set a highly dangerous and undesirable planning precedent across the wider St Edward's Park estate. A significant number of properties within this master-planned development feature detached garages of similar design.

If permission is granted to convert this incidental garage structure into a standalone commercial hospitality unit, the Local Planning Authority will find it fundamentally impossible to resist future identical applications on neighbouring plots. The cumulative impact of widespread garage-to-business conversions would permanently destabilize the character of this premium residential development, exacerbating highways congestion, intensifying parking deficits, and systematically destroying the peaceful, family residential fabric of the entire estate.

9. Overdevelopment, Undesirable Subdivision, and Heritage Estate Conflict

St Edward's Park was intended as a tightly controlled, master-planned residential development to strictly limit housing density and preserve a sensitive, historic parkland setting. Work has already begun on the proposed garden with fences erected and the views from our bedroom window and rear garden are shown in the attached photographs. These clearly demonstrate the proximity of the proposed commercial unit and garden to our home and the overdevelopment of the plot. The problems this will create can be clearly visualised.

Squeezing an independent, self-contained commercial holiday let unit into this plot, together with a tight parking courtyard represents a harmful subdivision of the residential curtilage. This could be further exacerbated in the future if attempts were made to sell the newly created independent unit separately from the main residence.

Furthermore, Land Registry records (Title SF537858) indicate that the property is bound by strict estate-wide covenants managed by St Edwards Park Management Company Limited safeguarding the site against commercial trade, business uses, and overdevelopment. While private covenants are separate from public planning law, it signals to the authority that this development is fundamentally unviable under the estate's strict legal framework and will face immediate civil challenge.

Conclusion

This application is a clear case of overdevelopment. It attempts to force a commercial hospitality business into an incidental garage structure behind an unworkable 2.67m parking bottleneck,

ignoring vehicle turning geometry and severely compromising the safety of a narrow, pavement free residential cul-de-sac.

Furthermore, it fails to protect our existing residential amenity and introduces direct, concentrated noise and air pollution to our ground floor living spaces and primary first-floor bedroom windows via the 5m enclosed garden design and the mere 93 cm gap between buildings.

Finally, approving this application would set a destructive precedent that threatens the long term integrity of the whole St Edward's Park estate, as many of the issues covered would be exacerbated if other residents were to do the same.

For the reasons stated, we believe the proposal directly conflicts with Policy DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) regarding sustainable development and residential protection.

We respectfully urge the Planning Officer, the Highways Authority, and the Environmental Health Officer to conduct a site visit to observe the physical constraints on the ground, and subsequently refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

Karen and Adam Wright