

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2026/0205
Valid 08/05/2026

HUMBLE BEE BANK RED
ROAD
ALTON

ALTERATIONS AND
EXTENSIONS

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Humble Bee Bank is a stone built 19th century cottage. On high ground, the cottage fronts and looks over woodland clearing and the steep sided valley of Rakes Dale to the south. The rear of the cottage backs onto the edge of the sweeping woodland that is contiguous with the Dimmingsdale valley to the north. The property is accessed from Red Road via woodland tracks that provide public footpath and popular woodland walks – Alton footpath 11 runs across the rear of the dwelling.

The cottage appears within a landscape that is identified in the 2008 Character Assessment as being of a 'dissected sandstone cloughs and valleys' character type that is of the highest sensitivity. Key characteristics - Deeply incised wooded valleys with narrow winding watercourses and sheep and cattle farming with smallholdings.

The site is within walking proximity of the Dimmingsdale hub and opportunity site that is identified in the Churnet Valley Master Plan SPD. There are public footpaths passing the site and linking to the hub.

Originally, the property was a simple two up two down dwelling with a single storey stable/outbuilding to the side/west. The property appears on the County Council's record of historic farmsteads, described as a 19th-century smallholding.

Alterations and significant enlargement in the late 1980s elongated the width of the dwelling with a side extension to the east, which included ground floor additions to the front and rear under cat slide roof arrangements. A two-storey gable outrigger was added to the rear/north elevation pushing toward the higher ground level of the woodland edge. More recently, without planning permission, a small timber frame lean to porch/conservatory has been added to the dwellings original front/principal elevation.

The existing survey drawings include recent alterations that have already been carried out – a section of the original stone wall at ground floor level has been removed using acro props behind the glazed lean to porch; and a large dormer roof enlargement has been introduced to the south/principal elevation (extends forward of an original wall of the dwelling and requires permission).

PROPOSAL

Proposed development described on the application form as 'Alterations and Extensions'.

The form specifies the use of low-level stone walls, oak timber frame and glazing with plain clay tiles to match those of the existing dwelling.

The application drawings detail a proposal to enlarge and make alterations to the front/principal, south facing, elevation of the dwelling.

From left to right, across the elevation, the proposal includes:

- Stable UPVC windows replaced with oak framed windows
- Split stable door in the adjoining outbuilding replaced with a patio/French window (oak framed)
- Two storey gable addition extending a total of 4.5m from original wall of dwelling to present with an oak framed glazed elevation beneath full pitch tiled roof
- Two tall dormer window enlargements with full pitch roofs
- Replace sliding patio window with oak framed patio window
- Replace upvc window with oak frame window

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting

Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands (SPG)
Space About Dwellings (SPG)
Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018 (SPD)
Churnet Valley Master Plan (SPD)
Landscape Character Assessment 2008

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

88/01307/OLD Extension to form hall porch living room and larger dining room with bedroom and bathroom on first floor. APPROVE.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 3rd July 2026

Neighbour consultation period ends: 3rd July 2026

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Alton Parish Council: No Objections

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Acceptance

The property is located on public footpath Alton 11 and Alton 68 off Red Road. Red Road is a D classification road (Road No. D1141) and is subject to a 60mph speed limit. Public footpath Alton 11 and Alton 68 converge and run across the frontage of the property.

The proposal does not result in an increase in the number of bedrooms and will not adversely affect the existing parking arrangements.

It is considered the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the adopted highway and therefore I have no objection (SMD/2026/0205).

Note to Planning Officer; Public footpath Alton 11 and Alton 68 converge and run across the frontage of the property. It is noted that Staffordshire County Council Public Rights of Way Team have not been consulted.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

For the purposes of the Local Plan, the site has a remote and isolated location in an 'other rural' area of countryside that surrounds the village settlements. The site is 2.5km to the south of Oakamoor and 1km to the northwest of Alton.

In an 'other rural' area, strategy policy SS10 applies. To meet local housing needs Local Plan area strategy policy SS10 for the other rural areas, provide allowance and support for extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The Council will assess schemes having regard to the original dwelling, in cases where cumulative change has occurred.

The site is located in an area that is attractive to tourists and recreational visitors within the area of the Churnet Valley. The Churnet Valley is identified in the Local Plan as an area for sustainable tourism. Local Plan Churnet Valley Strategy policy SS11 and the Churnet Valley Master Plan SPD apply and development should be in accordance with the Masterplan and policy SS11. The policy requires that development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and

conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

Local Plan Policy DC1 requires that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD.

In particular, new development should incorporate creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area; and, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Local Plan policy DC3 states that development which leads to a prominent intrusion into the countryside should be resisted.

The proposed development would affect the southern elevation of the building, it is this elevation that presents the principal architectural appointment to the open ground at the front of the property.

Despite some enlargement and alteration, carried out in the late 1980s, the cottage and the adjoining stable retain a simple linear form. Extension to the front has been limited to slim profile beneath the cover of a catslide roof. The character and proportions of the original cottage can still be read from the reveal of original stone work and elevation, particularly and importantly where the cottage connects to the stable, and the positioning of the brick chimneys. The quality and survival of historic arrangement and its contribution to the character and appearance of the area and landscape quality, rely on that simple linear form and the reveal of original elevation and respect for the cottage's connection and arrangement with the stable.

The proposed development would introduce a very prominent two storey gable projection on the front of the building that would introduce an awkward and poorly positioned element that would disrupt and be harmful to the simple, linear form of the building. Moreover, the gable projection would conceal and break through the only remaining part of the elevation that is original to the dwelling at the point of transition and connection where the side of the cottage adjoins the stable. This would make for a confused element to the building form that would disrupt the transition and connection between cottage and stable outbuilding. The addition would introduce architectural detailing in the form of full two storey height glazing set within a heavy oak frame that would not relate well to local vernacular or compliment the character of the original building and its approach to fenestration.

The proposed dormer window enlargements would be oversized and poorly proportioned. They would intrusively punch through the fabric of the main roof plain and drop toward the eaves at the bottom of the catslide roof. They would appear intrusive and dominate the roof and form of the dwelling (already apparent and evident on site with work that has already started without planning permission).

The proposal does not represent good design that would be respectful of the original dwelling's size, scale, linear form, character, proportions, and its relationship with the

local landscape. The proposed additions would introduce shape, size, and mass that would be at odds with the original dwelling and overly dominant on exposed and prominent elevation. The harmful development would detract from the positive quality contribution that the dwelling currently makes to the character and appearance of a local landscape and the significance of a non-designated heritage asset. The development would result in a prominent intrusion in the countryside. This would fail to reinforce local distinctiveness and be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The development would present as an unusual form and design of development that would appear as an oddity in this isolated position in the landscape.

These impacts that are all the more pertinent where they effect a building that is of some historic interest and a landscape that is of the highest sensitivity within an area that has some protection under the Council's tourism strategy.

The proposed development would not comply with the Council's Design Guide SPD and the Design Principles SPG. There would be conflict with policies SS10, SS11, DC1, DC2 and DC3 of the SMDC Local Plan; and the terms of the NPPF.

Impacts on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset

Humble Bee Bank, has its origins as a 19th century linear plan small holding. It is listed as such on the County Council's historic environment record. To that extent the property is a non-designated heritage asset.

The NPPF requires the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset to be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Despite some enlargement and alteration of the property in the late 1980s, from the front/south, the prevailing form of the linear farmstead remains largely unaltered and sections of the original stone elevation remain and are revealed particularly where the cottage adjoins and connects with the stable outbuilding. Bulkier additions, such as the two storey gable extension, were restricted to the rear where they hunker into the higher ground level and woodland edge behind. In these regards existing alteration and enlargement respect the property's 19th century origins as a farm cottage.

As a traditional, smallholding farmstead located to hillside and woodland edge it contributes to the heritage and character of the historic environment, a relatively rare surviving example. The significance of the asset is that of historic farmstead small holding on a linear layout. The proposed development would disrupt and break the linear form of the building, with poorly related development, this would result in a confused and awkward arrangement of building shape that would be considerably harmful to the significance of the heritage asset. In these regards the development would be contrary to policy DC2 of the SMDC Local Plan and the terms of the NPPF.

Highway Safety

Local Plan Policy DC1 requires that development provides for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.

The NPPF states that in assessing applications for development, it should be ensured that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

The site is remote from the public highway accessed via woodland tracks. The development would not increase bedroom numbers or reduce parking space. There would be no conflict with the Councils adopted parking standards or policy in these regards.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The Environment Act (2021) places a legal requirement on all development, unless otherwise exempt, to compensate for impacts on and loss of biodiversity habitats with the delivery of a 10% net gain on site or, where this cannot be achieved, off site, which can include the purchasing credits from a registered habitat bank.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that policies and decisions should minimise impacts on biodiversity and that development should mitigate or compensate for the loss of habitat whilst delivering enhancement and net gain in habitat.

The applicant describes the proposal as householder development and has made the application out in those terms. Householder development has exemption from the BNG legislation, another point which undermines the applicant's earlier argument that this is a dwelling which will contribute to housing land supply.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

There would be harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling's prominent and exposed southern elevations, the surviving arrangement of the historic farmstead plan, and the buildings appearance within and contribution to the high quality local landscape. The development would poorly relate to the traditional and vernacular architecture of the existing building, and dominate, the existing building form and, overall, make a prominent and unusual intrusion in the countryside. The harmful development would detract from the positive quality contribution that the dwelling currently makes to the character and appearance of a local landscape and the significance of a non-designated heritage asset. This would fail to reinforce local distinctiveness and be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. In these respects the development would be contrary to policies SS10, SS11, DC1, DC2 and DC3 of the Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020, the Design Guide 2018 SPD, the Design Principles SPG, and the terms of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 3rd July 2026

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council