

DCAdmin

From:
Sent: 26 June 2024 01:01
To: DCAdmin
Subject: Objection to Application # 2024/62/91242/E, SHepley Rd, Stocksmoor

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Proposed Residential Development
Transport Assessment
Application # 2024/62/91242/E

I object to the proposed development on several grounds: economic, transport, social and environmental. They all contravene the concept of sustainability.

Economic

The proposal will increase the size of the hamlet by 30% — a huge increase. There have already been several stages of development, the last but 5 or so years ago on Cross Lane.

The claim of people 'working from home' assumed by the developers is fallacious: WfH does not provide efficiency and more and more operations are requiring employees to go to an office to boost productivity.

We have frequent power outages (another as I write this) which will not be improved by greater draw on the electrical grid.

There are few to no employment opportunities within the hamlet other than minimal pay part-time work in the pub (and that is not seeking more workers).

The report by Moseley Assocs seems to suggest that cycling is an option. This is not Holland. Every route in and out of the hamlet is a hill, most with no or poor pedestrian footpaths. We do have an increasing number of sport cyclists, but they are keen, fit men in Lycra, cycling for enjoyment, NOT housewives doing the weekly shopping, children going to school, or people going to work. That people will cycle for other than recreational purposes is pure fallacy.

Walking to do the shopping, going to the doctor, or to school is another fallacy. A mother (perhaps with two young children) will not walk to Shepley and carry goods back: there is a steep, no-footpath, unlit slope in each direction. We do have walkers, but they wear hiking boots and carry walking poles, not bags of potatoes.

People will have to travel to work. Another 50 houses in a location with no jobs is not economic sustainability in action.

Transport

People will have to travel to work. This leads to a major objection: access.

The proposed access is on a blind, sloping bend. Stony Wood Lane (SWL) is extremely narrow and there are frequent collisions. The developer's report cites the Crash Map from 2011 — this is ludicrously out of date. It mentions only a single serious incident in Shepley. Incidents on SWL They may not be recorded as 'accidents' as people may not always be injured, but vehicles are damaged. There was an accident on the road 18th June, where two cars were extensively damaged. Two months ago, there were two crashes at the crossroads in Stocksmoor, a car having to be hauled out of road works in one. There have been at least two others in the last several months.

One supporting document talks about the 85 percentile travelling below 30 mph. It is the other 15% who are the problem. Many of those speed. Cross Lane (no pillars or sleeping policemen) is used as a satnav route by non-residents to Barnsley, Wakefield & the M1. The crossroads junction cannot be seen from any distance because of the slope. It is also necessary to inch forward over the broken line to see each direction. From Shepley Rd, a driver needs to be halfway out across the southbound lane to see anything in either direction, despite the Stop sign.

Traffic from the proposed development WILL use SWL — 85% of present residents use it now. It is the shortest, most fuel efficient route to the nearest shop (Shepley Co-op), doctor, pharmacy, school, and library. It is already overcrowded and overused.

The alternative routes (despite the views of the Moseley Report) are also problematic: Dam Hill has an acute turn at Thunderbridge, residents' cars parked near the top restricting the road to one lane, a difficult uphill junction to Penistone Rd requiring much head swivelling, and traffic coming down tending to cut the corner.

Birks Lane is narrow, steep, has several obscured bends, eroded edges and becomes flooded when it rains (see later). Thunderbridge Lane is always restricted to one lane by parked cars, has the added hazard of inebriated people and children crossing the road to the wedding venue, and another difficult junction with Penistone Rd. This is very busy in the morning and crossing to Kirkburton extremely difficult.

The claim that there is an hourly bus service is inaccurate and the bus goes only to Huddersfield. Getting to other villages not on that route (e.g. Kirkburton) is horrendously time consuming/expensive. There is a railway station, but the train is frequently cancelled or delayed meaning connections are difficult and cannot be relied on. The single ticket machine is on the Sheffield side, necessitating negotiating a steep slope in each direction which many older residents find extremely difficult. It is illegal to travel on a train without a valid ticket and is a fineable offence.

I have mentioned cycling (recreational only) above. There are also an increasing number of horse riders in and around Stocksmoor. They also use SWL. Drivers do not always respect the animals.

We have increasing numbers of walkers too. They present another challenge: there are no footpaths on SWL. Increasing the number of cars will result in a greater chance of injury. More cars, cyclists, horses, pedestrians on SWL = danger.

The site plans suggest 120+ cars on site. The Moseley plan suggests an average of 25 trips per peak hour. By their estimation, an increase of 20% traffic on SWL. This is not insignificant. A one vehicle in each direction face-off is one thing, when three or more cars are involved it becomes even more problematic, especially as most drivers seem not to know the Highway Code for these situations. The stone walls are obscured by foliage, there are frequent stone slips from the uphill side, and there are no street lights and reversing is not easy.

The site is not sustainable based on using public transport, or cycling, or walking. Cars are our only realistic option.

Social

An increase of 30% in a settlement with no facilities other than a pub would mean an enclave of new residents who have no connection with the existing ones. The Village Hall is barely big enough to seat all the people who met to discuss this proposal.

The "tranquil rural feel" noted in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal would be destroyed by the long construction period required for 50 houses, and on completion, the two-storey houses nearest Station Rd would visually and psychologically overwhelm the existing bungalows: the land they would be built on rises considerably. Residents on Station Rd would lose light, especially the early morning light, as well as the views and sense of space so desired by all of us.

50 houses: 100+ toilets. There are already problems with sewage as it passes down to Thunderbridge. It will overwhelm the (already enhanced) system in Thunderbridge.

Surface water run-off too will be a problem. Claims of attenuating it will prove inadequate (as they have on Dam Hill and Thunderbridge).

We have frequent power outages (one yesterday), another 50 houses plus electric car chargers will draw even more on these resources.

Environmental

The area was designated Green Belt until the 2010s when the Council changed it to Safeguarded Land at the stroke of a pen. This meant the land was supposed to be protected until 2030s.

Downstream Shepley Mill Wood is designated ancient Strategic Green Infrastructure Network, and Stone Wood (SW) and its Dike (or Beck) are within the Biodiversity Opportunity Zone. To the north is part of the Wildlife Habitat Network. This valley is probably the only remaining valley in Kirklees not having been subjected to 'development' As such, it should remain untouched. The land slopes down to the SW Dike and the inevitable increased surface run-off will enter the Dike, bringing with it the also inevitable contamination from garden sprays, fertilisers, etc. residents will use. This is in addition to whatever contamination is, again inevitably, washed off the site during construction.

The site is used as a hunting ground for the small mammals, badgers, foxes, owls and other birds of SW. They will be negatively affected by the construction noise and activity, housing, light, noise, cars and deliveries. Saying the development will not impinge on nature is nonsense: nature is a network and needs all elements to be present to function properly. Sources of food cannot be removed without detriment.

The proposed development is not adding to environmental sustainability and must be rejected.

I have another worry that the plan is for 50 houses, but there is still green space to the east. I suspect that there will be a request by the developer to increase the number of dwellings due to "unforeseen economic/development difficulties encountered when developing the site" or some such excuse, making more houses "necessary to ensure viability" (aka 'to increase profits').

Why are so many Huddersfield town centre shops and buildings above the ground floor empty? Why are there so many brownfield sites still littering the area? It is easier and more profitable for developers to build on greenfield sites. This trend must be reversed to attain any degree of sustainability. Councils must offer inducement to developers to rethink their plans.

Yours

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