

Comments for Planning Application 20/03090/OUT

Application Summary

Application Number: 20/03090/OUT

Address: Car Park East Of Blue Bell Mount Pleasant West Mickley Northumberland

Proposal: Outline application for construction of 3no. detached 4 bedroomed dwellings and re-configuring of existing carpark

Case Officer: Mr Callum Harvey

Customer Details

Name: Mr Ian Dickinson

Address: 23 Mount Pleasant, West Mickley, Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7LP

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: We wish to register our opposition to the proposed 'development'. There are many errors, inaccuracies and contradictions in the submitted proposal. The grounds for our objection are detailed below.

1. Proposed Site Plan

The drawing is inaccurate in so much as the northern boundary of the site is represented as being in line with the southern wall of the property opposite (No18 Mount Pleasant)

In reality the northern boundary of the car park is aligned with the southern boundary of the access road of Bat cottage.

Correcting this inaccuracy has the effect of making the site considerably smaller than is represented by the site drawing.

This calls into question the ability to accommodate the 3 properties and 18 car parking spaces.

The southern boundary of the proposed 'development' site is a public right of way crossing the land of the neighbouring property. This is not shown on the submitted 'existing site plan'

The 'proposed site plan', as submitted, implies that the development would include some of the land to the north of the site.

2. Design and Access Statement

The car park is "previously developed land"

We do not consider a thin layer of tarmac laid directly onto the natural surface constitutes

'previous development'. We would also point out that, at the time the land was sold to the then

Scottish and Newcastle Brewery, a restrictive covenant was placed on the site to prevent such a development as is being proposed.

Mickley is a sustainable settlement

The proposal is just outside the boundary of the small hamlet of Mount Pleasant and is on land considered as greenbelt. Mount Pleasant has a West Mickley postal address but is, to all intents and purposes, separate.

"In order to support the future viability of the Blue Bell Public House"

We would suggest that this proposal would have a detrimental effect on the future viability of the pub. The car park has been used to stage 'street food' events and there is, we understand, every intention to increase the use of this space for further events

"The carpark is currently dis-proportionate in size compared to the pub"

We would disagree entirely with this statement as the Blue Bell has and, hopefully will, stage many special events. These have always, on each occasion, resulted in a full carpark. Many people will leave vehicles overnight, returning the next day, to retrieve them.

Any reduction in car park size will only result in an increase in 'on street' parking.

The car park is sometimes used by local residents, with the kind permission of the landlady of the Blue Bell, as a means to alleviate some of the parking congestion in the village itself

"The trees, hedges and fences on the boundaries will be retained"

The document makes this statement and then goes on to only refer to the shrubs and trees on the south side of the site. There is a contradiction in the statement that "The marking out of the 20 parking bays to the South will necessitate the removal of some of the overgrown scrub" but then "however the trees and hedges to the South will be retained to screen the site and to preserve the natural habitat" The "scrub" and "hedges" are one and the same and provide nesting sites in spring and food for overwintering birds.

There are some trees to the eastern end of the existing site notably a semi mature beech. The site is a feeding site for Pipistrelle bats which can be observed, regularly, in spring and summer. These trees must be protected from root damage which would be inevitable on such a compact construction site.

"There is a level access doorway to the rear of the pub as the front entrance door has steps"

This is incorrect on 2 counts. Firstly there is no public access to the pub/pub garden other than through the front door. Secondly, if the proposer had bothered to check it would be obvious that the rear access to the pub is down steep steps to the back door

"Secure cycle parking is available to the rear of the pub"

There is a building to the rear of the pub but is not and, to the best of our knowledge, never been

"cycle storage" Again, only accessible through the pub via the front door as there is no other public access to the building

"The number 613 bus service from Hexham to Whittonstall, run by PCL Travel stops directly outside the pub"

A quick search reveals that this bus service does, in fact exist, but, according to the timetable operates a single return journey on Tuesdays. However, in 23 years residing in Mount Pleasant, we have not seen this bus let alone see it "stop directly outside the pub".

3. Planning Consent Application Form

Section 6

"Land which is known to be contaminated - NO

Land where contamination is suspected for all or part of the site - NO

A proposed use that would be particularly vulnerable to the presence of contamination - NO"

The proposer has indicated that the land is free from contamination, however the whole site and the land directly adjacent, to the north, has been subject to landfill. The area is shown on historic maps as "Heugh Dene" (known locally as bluebell wood) which was then, a southern projection of, the existing, High Close Wood. This was/is the source and subsequent course of the Bellasis Burn which we will refer to later. There appears to be no record of what the landfill was comprised of. Anecdotally, however, there are references to colliery waste (shale etc.), household refuse and possibly some fly tipping of what may be described as industrial waste.

Any development should be subject to a detailed land survey, a) to ascertain the makeup of the landfill and b) the stability / suitability of the landfill as a substrate.

Section 12

"Is your proposal within 20 metres of a watercourse (e.g. river, stream or beck)? - NO"

The proposed development is on the source of the Bellasis Burn which is culverted beneath the site. The culvert empties into High Close Wood and at times of moderate to high rainfall or snow melt can be heard "roaring" with the volume of water flowing through it. The mouth of the culvert has, on occasion, washed away and has required remedial work

There are causes for concern arising from this. Firstly any disturbance from a ground survey (drilling for example) may inadvertently introduce contamination into the burn via the pipe.

The Bellasis burn is used for watering cattle from Moralee Herefords at the point it exits Low Close Wood, south of the A695. It also provides a source of water for stock at the point it exits Common Wood, on Merryshields farm. Ultimately the burn discharges into the River Tyne, east of Merryshields farm. There is therefore a risk, however small, in contaminating the Tyne itself.

Similarly, excavation of footings for any buildings may also disturb around and introduce possible contamination into, the burn.

We would also point out that any blockage or damage to the culvert may result in further disturbance to the surrounding land. Although on a much larger scale we would draw attention to the collapse of the culvert on the Dewley Burn at Newburn, which resulted in the demolition of several properties.

In conclusion we consider the proposal to be speculative, wholly inappropriate for the site and factually inaccurate. Granting permission would set an unwelcome precedent

We urge you to reject the proposal

LA & IT Dickinson