

Objection to planning application HPK/2016/0128 – Land at New Horwich Road

Dear Mr Ollerenshaw

7 April 2016

I wish to object to planning application HPK/2016/0128.

The Whaley Bridge Council has stated their opposition to this planning application, raising 15 points of objection. Points 5 and 6 give the opinion that the images provided are deceptive. In this document, I seek to highlight some ways in which I believe the pictures, and computer generated views, are indeed deceptive. I also seek to highlight some omissions, and errors in the submitted plans and associated documents.

The following remarks all relate to the applicant's document [Design & Access Statement Rev 03](#). Unfortunately, the document has no page numbers – the numbers I use here number the pages from 1 to 18, where page 1 is the title page.

In the introduction on page 2, the applicant discusses the “absence of a five year supply of housing”. I understand that the region now has a five-year supply which meets the agreed figure required for the region. This being the case, all references to the claimed shortfall in housing supply (pages 1; 15 – Justification for design proposals – final para.; 16 – para.1; 18 – item 5 in the list) are no longer relevant.

On page 3, the applicant describes the neighbouring terraced properties as being “[staggered as necessary to accommodate change in site topography](#)”. It is notable that the Victorian terraces in New Horwich Road alternate such that where there are houses on one side of the street, there are none on the other. This is not, I believe, enforced so much by the topography of the land, but ensures that, although the terraced houses themselves are small, they each enjoy a significant degree of privacy.

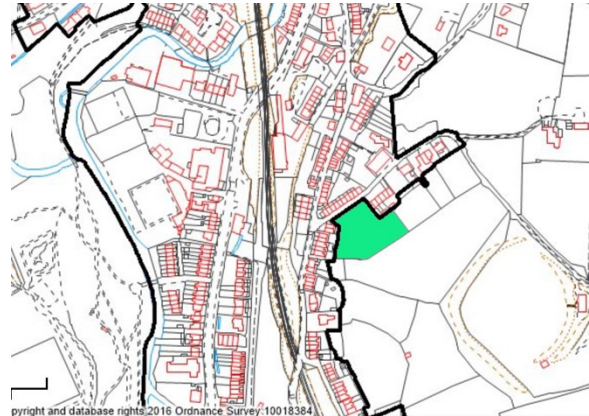
On page three, the applicant claims “[The site is surrounded by residential development to the north, east and west](#)”. This could give the impression of a plot with buildings on three sides. I think this is misleading, the map from Google Earth with the proposed house overlaid (right) shows buildings to the North and West, but open land to the East and South. It should be noted that on some maps (e.g. on page 12, and also on some High Peak planning maps, a building is shown on the South edge of the plot. In fact, the current owner of the field demolished this stone barn shortly after he acquired the land and no such building now exists.



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On page 3 (penultimate para.) the applicant acknowledges that: “The site is located within the conservation area and outside the built up area of Whaley Bridge and is therefore within an area designated as countryside defined in the High Peak Local Plan (2008).” However, this is contradicted on page 12 (para. 2) where it is stated that: “The site sits within the central area of the ‘built up areas’ as defined in policy GD2 and the Whaley Bridge Conservation Area.”

The High Peak inter-active planning maps (<http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/hp/council-services/planning-and-buildings/interactive-planning-map>) clearly show the whole area of the field to be outside the designated ‘built-up’ area (the site of the applicant’s land is shaded in green):



Page 5 – This shows 8 views of the land and is replicated from the earlier application.

These are highly misleading. They have been taken with an extreme wide angle lens and give the impression of a large field with distant houses.

There are many images, some taken with an extremely wide-angled lens, some computer generated, which give a very misleading view of the scale of the proposed development.

The section which follows shows how this distorted view has been achieved and attempts to show more fairly what the view of the property might be like from New Horwich road, and the proximity of the neighbouring houses on New Horwich Road and on Old Road, to the main habitable rooms of the proposed house:

On page 11 the applicant states: “We believe given the associated scale, layout and built form, building styles and materiality of our proposals we are recognizing the townscape and landscape character of the neighbourhood and its position within the conservation area.”

I would disagree that the scale is in character with the neighbourhood.

In this diagram, I have superimposed copies of two semi-detached houses at the corner of the New Horwich Road and Old Road (numbers 86 and 88).

It can be seen that the ground area of the proposed 5-bedroom house is greater than twice the ground area of these two properties, or over four times the area of a these typical nearly dwelling.



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The applicant states (Page 8 – Design proposals, Site layout) that: “The building is set back off New Horwich Road to reduce issues of overlooking and nestled into the hillside to reduce visual impact from the existing properties. The alignment of the block takes account of adjacent blocks and the character of the local area” and on page 11 (Design proposals – Design proposals (sic)) that: “The position and extent of the proposal ensures that the site is not over-developed and will not deprive residents of light, privacy or security, or cause serious loss of existing garden space which would harm the character of the neighbourhood.”

The applicant provides a computer generated image of how the building would appear from New Horwich Road. I managed to (almost) replicate this view only by using a very wide 18mm angled lens (50mm is generally reckoned to give an undistorted view, that is, close to how

the human eye would normally perceive the scene).

The photographic image (right) was taken with a very wide-angled 18mm lens – the perspective of these two images is similar, however, the client’s architect has selected virtual camera position *inside* one of the houses opposite and at an *elevated* level which reduces the apparent height of the proposed house in relation to the sky line.

This third image was taken from the same position as the middle one, using a standard (i.e. undistorted view) 50mm lens.

To illustrate just how significantly the applicant’s computer generated image has been distorted the two photos below show my house on Old Road. Each picture below is taken from the same position:



Proposed Perspective from New Horwich Road



Taken at the perspective used in applicant’s Computer generated diagram (18mm lens)



Taken from same point using standard 50mm lens (natural human perspective)

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Privacy distances



The distance to the nearest houses on New Horwich Road and Old Road appears on the provided plan to be about 22m, and 21m respectively, that is, around the minimum recommended privacy distance. However, I understand it would be usual to allow an additional 2m privacy distance for each 1m of elevation. Unfortunately, as no spot heights have been provided, it is not possible to tell from the submitted documentation exactly how much higher the proposed house would be. However, the applicant does state (On page 8 of the Design and Access statement – Rev 003) that: [The access road has been designed in accordance with guidance provided by the Highways Officers DCC, with a gradient of 1:14 for the first 5m within the site with the maximum gradient within the site of](#)

[1:10. The access road has been designed in accordance with guidance provided by the Highways Officers DCC, with a gradient of 1:14 for the first 5m within the site with the maximum gradient within the site of 1:10.](#)

Using these figures would suggest a rise of 0.7m over the first 5m (5m at gradient of 1 in 14), and around 1.8m over the next 18m (18m at 1 in 10) giving a total of 2.5m height difference between the ground floor of the New Horwich Road houses and the *ground floor* of the proposed house. As the plans show the main living room and master bedroom to be on the first floor, presumably, the height of this floor (shown as 3m) needs to be added giving an elevation of the main rooms above the nearest houses on New Horwich Road to be approximately 5.5m. I believe this would suggest a recommended privacy distance of 32m would be appropriate, rather than the 21m currently indicated.

The applicant argues (Design Proposals – page 8) that: “The Alignment of the block takes account of adjacent blocks” I am not sure what is meant by this. The suggested position does not continue the line of existing terraces.

The two pictures which follow are taken from the position of the left and right windows of the proposed house. (Shown by the black arrows in the diagram above). The normal human eye perspective (50mm lens) has been used in each case.

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These images show the nearest houses to the development taken in their true perspective. This first is taken from the location of the proposed house towards the terrace opposite in New Horwich Road:



And the picture below towards numbers 86 and 88 Old Road:



The architect's plans show some trees planted between the proposed house and the rear of numbers 86 and 88 Old Road, such planting could seriously affect the light available to these houses. Confusingly the trees indicated on the plans would appear to be where the applicant has shown a steep bank so it is not clear how this would be possible. The location of the trees would also be likely to interfere with the area used to hang washing by residents of nos. 86 to 98 Old Road. These rights have been exercised for many years by the occupants, indeed, at least two of the properties had these rights enshrined in the original deeds (circa 1860).

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Visibility splays: These may be achievable to the up-hill side of the proposed vehicular access, but only by lowering both the existing stone wall and the earth behind it as the current height of the wall is higher than that advised in planning guidance. It should be noted that the earth on the field side of the wall is at the level of the *top* of the wall. This will cause further destruction of the area of the field which lies within the conservation area.

To the downhill side (to the right on exiting the site) the visibility splays could only be achieved by intrusion into the garden of the owner of number 86 Old Road. In fact, the downhill visibility is very severely limited both by the stone wall and by the owner's rear garden fence.

It will be noted that the construction of this building and the associated excavation will severely impact land designated as being within the conservation area of Whaley Bridge, shown shaded blue in this image :



On page 17 (Justification and Design Proposals) The applicant incorrectly shows area as suitable for building under the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) reference AS003.

I understand this area was removed from the SHLAA some time ago.

None of the drawings supplied suggest any form of wall or fence around the apparently steep sides of the excavated area. Presumably, these would be required for safety purposes.

Such a safety barrier would presumably further increase the visual impact of the proposed construction. Further, it is not shown how these steep banks would be made stable.

Again, the lack of spot heights make it impossible to tell the slope of the excavated perimeter, there are apparently steps rising from the rear garden at each end, but as shown on page 11, these seem to stop part way up the bank!

I urge you to reject this inappropriate planning application.

Peter Smith

From: Peter Smith – 94 Old Road, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, SK23 7LF