

10 Low Dalby

Pickering

YO18 7LT

25 03 2018

Dear Mrs Saunders

RE: Planning Application NYM/2018/0094/FL

I wish to register our objection to the above planning application.

In order to set this in context I would like to firstly quote the NYMNPA LDF Development Policy 14:

Tourism and Recreation: ***The development will not generate an increased level of activity, including noise, which would be likely to detract from the experience of visitors and the quality of life of local residents.***

And also NYMNPA LDF Development Policy 3:

Design: ***Development will be permitted where the scale, height, massing, proportion, form, size, materials and design features of the proposal are compatible with surrounding buildings, and will not have an adverse effect upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers.***

Having looked at the applicant's submission in detail I think that the proposed development ***WILL generate an increased level of activity, including noise, which WILL be likely to detract from the experience of visitors and the quality of life of local residents, and WILL have an adverse effect upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers.***

I first visited Dalby Forest 25 years ago as a teenager and was inspired by the tranquillity and scenery this part of the National Park has to offer. I have worked in the National Park since 2007 but have only been lucky enough to be able to afford to live here since 2015. We moved to Low Dalby because we wanted to not only be more conveniently placed for my employment, but because the tranquillity of a small hamlet within the National Park and the peace and quiet it would offer, for us far outweighed the convenience of living in a larger village or town.

Having been regular visitors to Dalby Forest for many years we knew that it was a popular visitor destination with its excellent mountain bike trails and other attractions, however even we were shocked to see how many visitors walk/cycle through the actual residential area of Low Dalby village. At peak times the public footpath that runs in front of the houses and doubles as the residents' access to their homes is not a peaceful location at all and comparable to a noisy town centre high street on a Saturday afternoon. Every visitor who wants to follow the Gruffalo themed Ellerburn Trail (and there are many of them) has to walk past the residential properties twice, once on their way out, and again on their return to the car park. Since we moved to Low Dalby the Forestry Commission have expanded the use and promotion of this trail even further with the 'Park Run' starting immediately outside our home first thing every Saturday morning, and other events

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such as night time cross country running races with head torches, and Canicross (cross country running with dogs) events both starting in the village.

We accept all of this and have not once complained to the Forestry Commission about their use of the residential area for events and promoted trails. We do not guard Dalby jealously. We want other people to enjoy the scenery, wildlife, recreation opportunities and importantly tranquillity the forest has to offer. Unfortunately the tranquillity of Low Dalby has already been reduced too far, and another visitor attraction in the immediate vicinity of the village will destroy what little tranquillity is left for residents and visitors alike.

In a forest of over 8000 acres (not including Cropton Forest, Langdale Forest or Sneaton Forest) we think it is totally unacceptable to build another heavily promoted visitor attraction immediately next to a residential area, increasing conflict between residents and visitors, putting more pressure on parking, increasing noise and invading the privacy of the people that call this home. For Dalby Forest to continue to expand and increase visitor numbers and still remain a successful tourist destination, visitors need to be spread out more rather than all herded in to one very small part of the forest, where the largest residential area for miles is located. The North York Moors National Park Management Plan sets out a 'vision for the Park' which includes the statement '*A place where visitors are welcome*'. Construction of further high profile visitor attractions immediately adjacent residential properties will have an immediate and profound impact on the residents of Low Dalby, and sadly this will result in visitors **not** being welcome. This planning application does not fit the criteria of sustainable development without it being sited somewhere more appropriate.

Our main concerns with the proposed siting of this sculpture however are far more significant to us than the fact that the tranquillity of this part of the National Park will be further eroded. Our home is the southernmost property in the village and neighboured by a public footpath to the front, an adjoining property to the north, and woodland to the south and east which currently affords our rear garden our only privacy from the public. The planning application includes the construction of new pathways that zig zag through this woodland to the south of our boundary, at one point (according to the applicant's plan) coming within only a short distance of our house and garden (and clearly beyond the applicant's red line). The construction of this path will actively encourage visitors into the woodland to the side of our house, which will undoubtedly cause us to suffer from an increase in noise and loss of privacy. Having worked as a National Park Ranger in the North York Moors for the last decade I have been involved with numerous projects where the Ranger Service and Public Rights of Way Officers have supported and assisted landowners with the diversion of public rights of way away from their properties in order to afford them more privacy, safety and security. To sanction the construction of a brand new heavily promoted path that needlessly brings the public closer to a private residence would not only be contradictory to these past works regarding the diversion of public rights of way, but also counter to the NYMNP Core Policy A 1 that states that development should not '*detract from the quality of life of local residents*'.

Low Dalby is remote and very dark at night. I have serious concerns that the construction of these paths will furthermore make our home vulnerable to crime by enabling people easy access to the side and rear of our property and the backs of neighbouring properties. The NYMNP Local Development Framework states that one of the spatial aspirations of the 'Communities' Community

Strategy is *'reducing crime and the fear of crime'*. This planning application will however **increase** residents' fear of crime.

The Nissen hut sculpture will be sited on an existing path that runs along the rear of properties 5 – 10 Low Dalby. This path is currently little used by the general public as there are many more better maintained and promoted paths for the public to choose from. It is essentially a track to access the village water supply tank. However, if this development were to go ahead large numbers of the public visiting the sculpture will be actively encouraged on to this track, and will inevitably follow it back to the village and car park to make the short walk up to the art installation into a circuit. This will result in a vast increase in the number of people using this track which, elevated on the hillside behind the houses, gives uninterrupted views into the back gardens, and rear bedrooms and bathrooms of houses 5 – 10 Low Dalby. This will greatly reduce residents' privacy and the tranquillity of their rear gardens that offer them their only private outside space. There is also a greatly increased risk of the water tank on this path being tampered with, damaged, or vandalised. As this tank is the residents' only water supply the consequences of such actions would be disastrous. This furthermore **increases** the risk of and fear of crime for residents.

The sculpture is being commissioned with the centenary of the First World War in mind, and from the information provided in the applicant's Design and Access Statement sounds as though it is going to be a very large, striking and thought provoking work of art – something that surely to be appreciated in full needs the appropriate location for its sombre significance to be contemplated meaningfully. We therefore cannot understand why the applicant has chosen to site it only a short detour from, and effectively as an additional feature of, the Highway Rat Activity Trail, which is aimed at families with children aged 2-6. The sculpture will be another attraction on this trail and treated by children as though it were a playground or climbing frame. The noise disturbance residents currently suffer from visitors is generally only a temporary nuisance as visitors make their way past the houses en route to the start and finish of the Ellerburn Trail. However, siting a sculpture which will be a destination for visitors in its own right, will lead to people congregating at this one point, and the noise generated by them will not be a passing nuisance but a continuous disturbance. Voices travel very effectively outdoors in areas where there is little constant background noise, and like the residents of the other side of the valley at Dalby Beck who can hear the voices of people following the Ellerburn Trail, residents at the south end of the village will be able to hear those who are gathered at the sculpture.

Social cohesion of the community at Low Dalby is in danger of being lost because the influx of visitors has become so great that residents no longer spend time in their front gardens, but rather retreat into their houses or rear gardens in order to afford themselves some privacy from the general public. This is particularly pertinent at times such as bank holiday weekends when residents are most likely to be off work and at home, which is exactly when visitor numbers are at their highest. Residents do not really have much of an opportunity to talk to one another in the typical way neighbours might do in the street, because the village is overrun with day trippers. We have no community space such as a village hall, pub, or church so the areas in front of our houses, the village green etc. are essential spaces for fostering relationships and a sense of community. Sadly for us these communal areas are just becoming more open space in which visitors to the forest can indulge in their recreation activities, as the Forestry Commission continues its drive to maximise visitor numbers and profit, and Low Dalby village itself is treated as another visitor attraction, and the

residents as merely an inconvenience to the FC. The National Park Authority has a *'duty to foster the economic and social well being of its communities'* but the social well being of the community at Low Dalby is under threat by this proposed development which the applicant, in its Design and Access Statement, states is intended to form part of a strategy *'to increase the number of visits to Dalby Forest even further in particular focussing on off peak times and dates for these visits'* despite the fact that already *'visitor numbers have increased from 350,000 to 460,000 in the last 10 years'*.

The access paths to the sculpture have been designed to be accessible for all users including wheelchairs, pushchairs, mobility scooters etc. However there has been no provision for disabled parking other than the current bays at the main car park approximately 300m away. This will obviously result in visitors to the sculpture who have mobility difficulties seeking the most convenient place to park and abusing the Residents' Only private parking area opposite 9 and 10 Low Dalby. This will increase congestion, reduce the safety of people using the public footpath, and increase conflict between residents and visitors. In order for this project to be properly inclusive to people with mobility difficulties (as is a requirement of the NYMNPA's Local Development Framework point 7.8.) it would be much better sited somewhere closer to the visitor centre, disabled car parking spaces, and disabled toilets, and ideally on level ground rather than the current proposed steep slope.

The design of the sculpture in its current proposed location is also not without aesthetic impacts on the landscape. The NYMNPA Local Development Framework Policy 3 states that in order to *'maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the National Park'*, development will be permitted where the *'siting, orientation layout and density preserves or **enhances views into** or out of the site'* and where the *'**scale, height, massing, proportion, form, size, materials and design features** of the proposal are compatible with surrounding buildings, and **will not have an adverse effect upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers'***. According to the applicant's Design and Access Statement the sculpture is 11m long by 5.1m wide and 3.2m high, and made from *'precast reinforced concrete sections in the shape of corrugated panels over a pre fab structure'*. At this size it will very likely be visible from the public footpath that doubles as the Dalby Forest drive adjacent Upper Dalby Wood, approximately 250 metres to the south west of the site. Despite being screened by deciduous trees in summer, it will be visible for 6 – 7 months of the year in the same way that the nearby village septic tank is visible, even though the septic tank is smaller in size and camouflaged by green colouring and chain link fencing. As this is a *'work of art'* rather than a utilitarian agricultural building, this may be the intention, but perhaps somewhere more hidden would be more appropriate in a National Park, rather than this setting a precedent for future development.

I hope that the aforementioned reasons are sufficient grounds for the NYMNPA to refuse this planning application in its current form, and to work with the applicant in order that the sculpture can be sited in a mutually satisfactory location. The National Park will then be able to welcome with great delight this fantastic opportunity to host the work of a Turner Prize winning artist in perpetuity, without animosity or controversy.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Yours sincerely

Matthew and Jenneke Fitzgerald