

Wendy Strangeway

From: Pat Fitzgerald
Sent: 18 March 2018 17:53
To: Planning
Cc: Jenneke Fitzgerald
Subject: Comments upon Application NYM/2018/0094/FL Nissen Hut Sculpture Dalby Forest.
Attachments: Nissen Hut planning comments (2).docx

FAO Hillary Saunders

Please find attached our comments in respect of the above application.

Thank you.

Kind regards

Pat and Louise Fitzgerald

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Dear Mrs Saunders

We object to this application which is contrary to clauses 1 and 2 of Core Policy A of the National Park's Development Framework which states that;

1. *Priority will be given to providing a scale of development and level of activity that will not have an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape or the quiet enjoyment, peace and tranquility of the Park, nor detract from the quality of life of local residents or the experience of visitors.*
2. *Providing for development in locations and of a scale which will support the character and function of individual settlements.*

We have been regular visitors to the Dalby Forest for over 20 years and in 2015 our son and daughter in law moved into 10 Low Dalby which is very close to this new attraction.

Like others they chose to live in this small hamlet because of the natural beauty and tranquility of the surroundings.

Appendix 3 of the NPA Design Guide states that "*The small hamlet of Low Dalby in the Dalby Forest is **exceptional***". As such it must be protected from the harmful loss of amenity that this application causes by adding further visitor numbers in an already overused location.

In recent years the Forestry Commission have been promoting and developing visitor attractions that now frequently funnel large numbers of visitors through the village into an area of the forest that hitherto was a quiet footpath to Ellerburn.

The Forestry Commission makes no attempt to advise visitors to respect the privacy of the residents. On the contrary, residents often feel they are being treated as part of the exhibits with their homes and gardens being photographed and their paths and steps being used for play areas by young children.

This is due to the introduction of the highly popular Gruffalo and Highway Rat themed walk for young children that has created a "honey pot" attraction on weekends and holidays. Visitor experience is also spoiled by the regular unpleasant crowding and queuing on footpaths and around the children's themed attractions.

Development Policy 3 also states that: *The design takes account of the safety, security and access needs for all potential users of the development.*

At busy times, the route through the village exceeds its safe capacity, as visitors with small children have to mix with fast moving mountain bikes and manoeuvring vehicles as they pass through the residents' narrow private parking area.

The Forestry Commission has over 8000 acres of woodland at Dalby yet proposes to site this attraction close to the village, which already suffers from a minority leaving litter and dog dirt, picnicking on the grassed areas and allowing unsupervised children to play noisily thus intruding upon the privacy of residents.

Clearly adding yet another attraction to this busy location will actually be off-putting to new visitors to the sculpture who, according to current promotional publications, will be expecting to find a "shy sculpture" hidden "deep in the forest", not be swept along an existing busy themed walk for very young children right next to the largest settlement in the Dalby Forest.



There will also be a culture clash between those who will visit the sculpture and the very young who visit the Gruffalo. So it makes sense to site both attractions in very separate locations.

The Forestry Commission appear to have decided upon this site (perhaps having looked at a couple of locations on a quiet day with the artist) without undertaking any consultation with the residents or indeed the National Park and have chosen this location, on the existing Gruffalo path, because it is "ready made" for them.

This will be a nationally important "destination" work of art, permanently sited here in the Dalby Forest. Therefore before the application is determined the applicant should be required to submit a comprehensive schedule of alternative sites giving an objective assessment of each location.

Development Policy 3 states that: *The scale, height, massing, proportion, form, size, materials and design features of the proposal are compatible with surroundings and will not have an adverse effect upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers.*

However this sculpture is a **large concrete structure**, which is to be sited in an elevated location sitting above the mature tree line of the valley and thus will be very visible to the nearby homes and from the homes and forest drive across the valley.

The applicant suggests that it will eventually become screened by trees but, at the chosen location, the trees are deciduous and will not provide any cover in winter. The natural concrete finish will be bleached by the sun which will reflect off the domed roof structure. Its stark appearance so close to the village, will look more like a substation than a work of art.

Also because it will sit into the bank with many shapes and projections forming the moulded exterior, it will inevitably become an attractive climbing frame for the young children who dominate this route. Worse still, their shrieks and shouts will be very audible to the nearby Low Dalby residents causing further harm to their amenity. This is already a problem for some residents across the valley due to the Gruffalo walk.

Therefore, before the application is determined the applicant needs to detail how physical access to the structure is to be restricted so as to prevent it becoming a noisy playground attraction.

Also, in its planned location, the structure needs long ramped pathways, one of which is already well **outside of the application "red line"** and very close to 10 Low Dalby creating more intrusive noise from the excited children who will freewheel down the ramps causing the same unsightly foot and cycle erosion that has happened to the Gruffalo ramped paths due to short-cutting between the path legs.

Therefore if this location is to be seriously considered the applicant should be required to redesign the ramped paths keeping well within the red line and deleting the unnecessary northern dogleg that is so close to the houses.

Furthermore, in this location the proposal creates a circular link to the quiet top pathway, running close to the rear gardens of numbers 5 to 10 Low Dalby. This track is not only very close to these homes but is elevated above the them giving uninterrupted views down into bedroom windows and rear gardens totally destroying what little privacy remains for the residents.

This seems to add insult to injury. The Gruffalo and Highway Rat walk has already destroyed any privacy that the residents had in their front gardens and now this proposal could duplicate the problem at the rear. In the case of number 10, privacy will be lost on all three sides of their garden and increased noise disturbance will also be a problem.

Furthermore this path runs closely alongside the tanks that provide the only water supply to the village. This major increase in activity therefore creates unacceptable risks to the security of the water supply.

Before the application is determined the applicants should be required to show how they intend to prevent this track being adopted as the obvious desire line back to the Visitor Centre through use of physical barriers, planting and signage.

Summary of the main reasons for objection:

- Adds visitor numbers to the already unpleasant overcrowding on the Ellerburn pathway.
- Fails to respect the privacy of residents and will have a further negative impact on the tranquility of this part of the National Park.
- Adds to the number of children and cyclists channeled through the often congested narrow private parking area in front of private gardens endangering the safety of visitors.
- In winter months the sculpture will be very visible from the homes and the forest drive across the valley.
- The sculpture will attract young children to play on it creating noise and further loss of amenity.
- The ramps are too close to No 10 and will attract downhill cycling dangerously mixing with pushchairs and wheelchairs and causing rapid erosion.
- The existing elevated track close to homes will be used by visitors and intrude further upon the privacy of residents.
- Use of this track will also create unacceptable levels of risk to the security of the village water supply.

The residents of Low Dalby do not want to banish visitors or indeed works of art from the Dalby Forest. They more than any group, recognise the attraction and beauty of the forest and want everyone to enjoy this very special place. However visitor numbers at this location are at times well above enjoyable levels and will be further exacerbated by this proposal.

We therefore urge the NPA to **refuse** this application and encourage the Forestry Commission to relocate this important work of art and rethink the existing concentration of visitors along the Ellerburn Path in order to overcome the conflict with residents and make these attractions more enjoyable for all.

Thank you for taking the time to read our comments.

Pat and Louise Fitzgerald
Harrogate.

