

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

17 September 2020

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| Application No: | SMD/2019/0766 | |
| Location | John Munroe Independent Hospital, Reacliffe Road, Rudyard | |
| Proposal | Removal of two conservatories and their replacement by the erection of two day room extensions and a further extension linking these. | |
| Applicant | John Munroe Hospital Group Limited | |
| Agent | Sammons Architectural | |
| Parish/ward | Horton | Date registered 19/6/2020 |
| If you have a question about this report please contact: Lisa Howard tel: 01538 395400 ex 412 Lisa.Howard@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk | | |

REFERRAL

This is an application which has generated a number of objections and therefore is a locally controversial planning application.

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

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| Approve |
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2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site relates to the John Munroe Hospital complex, which lies on the northern side of Horton Road, within the settlement of Horton northwest of Rudyard. The site is located within the Green Belt as defined by the Local Plan Core Strategy Policies Map. The planning unit comprises the main hospital building, secure outdoor amenity space and associated car parking. Two detached bungalows, 'High Ash' and 'The Larches' located to the north and northwest of the main hospital building provide ancillary accommodation to the facility and are used as part of the rehabilitation programme that the hospital offers.

2.2 An agricultural field used for grazing separates the application site and Horton Road. A number detached residential properties and St Michael's C of E First School are located to the northwest of the site; and further residential properties and Horton Lodge Community Special School can be found to the south east. Woodland bounds the site to the north.

2.3 The land on the northern side of Horton Road rises and accordingly the application site holds an elevated position relative to the highway. The access drive to the site is positioned adjacent to the northwest site boundary shared with 'Lodge', a detached private residence. The driveway leads to a split level car parking area located to the west of the main John Munroe Hospital building. High Ash and The Larches are both located to the northwest of this area. Additional car parking is located to the east of the site.

2.4 Dedicated patient outdoor amenity spaces are bound by secure 'no climb' fencing and the application site boundary is served by a mature belt of trees and established hedging.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 This application seeks approval to demolish two existing conservatory extensions and a flat roof extension located on the eastern side of the building. A single storey extension is proposed to replace the existing extensions. Having regard to Green Belt policy an amended plan has been submitted by the Agent. In the interests of clarification the following assessment is based on drawings numbered 2019-2450-02D.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

| Application Reference | Description | Outcome |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| SMD/2015/0060 | Installation of a containerised biomass boiler | Approved subject to conditions, 21.07.2015 |
| SMD/2014/0542 | Change of use from dwellinghouse to care home (The Maples) | Refused, 23.02.2015 |
| SMD/2013/0047 | Erection Of single storey rear extension | Approved subject to conditions, 02.05.2013 |
| SMD/2012/0095 | Change of use of former reservoir and store and partial removal of embankment of southeast elevation | Approved subject to conditions, 26.06.2012 |
| SMD/2010/1040 | Change of use of dwellinghouse (C3) to care home (C2) | Approved subject to condition, 15.11.2010 |
| SMD/2010/0728 | Change of use of dwellinghouse (C3) to care home (C2) incorporating single storey front and rear extensions and conversion of garage to living accommodation | Refused 28.09.2010 |
| SMD/2009/0553 | Lawful Development Certificate for Proposed Use: Use as a supervised health unit of 6 occupants | Negative Certificate Issued, 01.10.2009 |
| SMD/2010/0798 | Erection of side conservatory to be used as a ladies only lounge | Refused, 28.08.2008 Appeal Allowed, 14.07.2009 |
| SMD/2009/0926 | Retention of car park | Approved subject to conditions, 24.12.2009 |
| SMD/2008/0904 | Conservatory to be used for ladies only lounge | Refused, 17.12.2008 |
| SMD/2008/0899 | Single storey extension to The Larches for occupational therapy use | Refused, 17.12.2008 Appeal Allowed. |
| SMD/2008/0709 | Side conservatory | Refused,28.08.2008 |

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| | | Appeal Dismissed. |
| SMD/2008/0707 | Two storey extension to The Larches for occupational therapy use | Refused, 28.08.2008 Appeal Dismissed. |
| SMD/2008/0704 | Staff car park | Approved subject to conditions, 28.08.2008 |
| SMD/2005/1204 | Erection of wooden chalet for occupational therapy | Refused, 24.11.2008 |
| SMD/2004/0412 | Extension and alterations to car park | Approved subject to conditions, 24.08.2004 |
| SMD/2000/0384 | Extension for 2 no. conservatories | Approved subject to conditions, 05.06.2000 |
| SMD/1998/0523 | Demolition of garage and workshop and erection of single storey extensions to provide additional bedrooms, lounge and access improvements | Approved subject to conditions, 10.02.1999 |
| SMD/1988/1417 | Extension to form staff room, office and residents kitchen | Approved, 06.05.1998 |
| SMD/1987/1220 | Change of use of use to residential home for the elderly | Approved subject to conditions, 30.11.1987 |
| SMD/2016/0052 | Alterations and extension to form single storey bedroom annex (Female only) | Refused, 19.05.2016 |
| SMD/2018/0010 | Installation of septic tank (retrospective) | Approved, 05.03.2018 |
| SMD/2019/0738 | Proposed erection of single storey side extension (The Larches) | Refused, 07.02.2020 |

5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 The Development Plan comprises of:

- Saved Local Plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (adopted 1998).
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2014)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (1998)

5.2 Development boundaries within the 1998 Adopted Local Plan are still in force until such time as they are reviewed and adopted through the site allocations process.

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (26th March 2014)

5.3 The following Core Strategy policies are relevant to the application:-

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SS6c other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC2 The Historic Environment
- R1 Rural Diversification

Emerging Local Plan

5.4 On July 20th 2020, the Council published the Inspector’s final report thereby drawing a close to the examination in public. The report concludes that with the recommended main modifications, the plan satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As such, the main modifications which accompany the Inspector’s report provide a clear indication of the final policy wording when read in conjunction with the Local Plan Submission Version (2018).

5.5 In this context, the Council’s position on the weight to be given to the policies (as modified) in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is considered below:

- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at the most advanced stage of preparation prior to adoption as the Inspector has concluded that the Local Plan is sound subject to the recommended modifications being made.
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies – the Inspector has now drawn his final conclusions and there are no further matters to resolve
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework – the policies (as modified) have been found by the Inspector to be sound in the context of the 2012 NPPF under which the Local Plan has been examined. One of the “tests of soundness” that the Local Plan has successfully been measured against is whether it is “consistent with national policy”. Because the Local Plan has been prepared and examined under the 2012 NPPF, it should be noted that in some limited cases, its policies do not directly reflect current national policy. However, planning law requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Current national policy is a material consideration and should be given weight accordingly.

5.6 Given the above, all policies (as modified) should be given substantial weight.

The polices of relevance to this application are as follows:-

- SS1 Development Principles
- 1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC 1 Design Considerations
- DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy NPPF

National Planning Policy Guidance

Rudyard Conservation Area Character Appraisal

6. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Press Notice expiry date: 5th February 2020

Site Notice expiry date: 6th August 2020

Local residents have been notified by letter.

One letter expressing no objection has been received.

Letters of objection have been received from 6 households raising the following issues:-

- I would like to object to this further extension linking two extensions on the grounds that at a previous hearing it was stated and by a planning officer that John Munroe had reached saturation point at the current site.
- The John Munroe Hospital is situated in the Green Belt and this application fails to demonstrate any very special circumstances. During the planning meeting relating to application SMD/2016/0052 and following a site visit, Councillor Ellis, then Chairman of the Committee, stated that the hospital had reached capacity at the Rudyard site and that planning did not expect to see any further application.
- The site sits within a Special Landscape Area and a Conservation Area thereby highlighting the need to preserve the local environment.
- The development would lead to the removal of a large bay window which is one of the remaining features of the original building and would totally alter the appearance of the east elevation.
- The proposal reveals a shift from glazed conservatories which can clearly only be used as communal living areas for residents to a large brick built extension which will have potential to be used 1) as additional single room accommodations for patients 2) free up other areas in the main building to create additional single room accommodation. This would further increase patient capacity of the hospital and have a direct knock on effect to the issues which impact local residents including significant traffic congestion, light and noise pollution. As mentioned at the planning committee meeting re: SMD/2016/0052, the site is already overdeveloped in relation to the environmental and community context of the village of Rudyard, and any additional increase in patient numbers would further damage the fragile balance of rural living and visitation vs. the commercial objectives of an independent limited company with a turnover in excess of £10 million year ending 31/01/2019.
- It is also important to note that JMHG are also currently applying to build a 2.8m wide single storey extension alongside the West elevation of The Larches (SMD/2019/0738), hence this application should be evaluated in the context of the overall development plans of the hospital.
- Further development on the site will lead to yet more intrusive noise and disturbance.
- With the expansion of this hospital the local people have witnessed/heard some very disturbing language.
- Serious concerns have been raised locally regarding the regularity with which patients have absconded and caused distress to members of the public with their demeanour and level of confusion.
- Property values in the immediate area would be adversely affected.
- Our property is by the drive to the hospital. With each granted planning permission it has further damaged the amenity of the area on each occasion. Increased vehicular traffic.
- We refer to planning application reference SMD/2016/0052 in respect of a proposed single storey side extension to the John Munroe Hospital which was refused by the Planning Committee on 14th April 2016. An appeal was submitted. In response to the appeal paragraph 4.2 stated as follows: "The John Munroe Hospital building has an extensive planning history and has benefitted from a series of extensions and alterations, which cumulatively are disproportionate in scale and proportion to the

original building. Accordingly, it is conceded by the LPA and the Appellant that any further additions to the site should be regarded as inappropriate development. The appeal was subsequently withdrawn.

- The Location and Block Plan is incorrect as it shows a separate building to the north west of the original building and not connected to it.

Response from Agent

- Green Belt policy allows limited infilling on previously developed sites providing that it does not have a greater impact on the openness on the Green Belt (part g. of para 145). The site is clearly a previously developed site, and the proposal effectively amounts to an infilling of the gap between two existing buildings. It is acknowledged the buildings either side of the infill development are rebuilt, but this form of development is allowable under parts c. and d. of para 145. In policy terms, the proposal complies to national Green Belt policy.
- To clarify the alleged errors in the D&AS, it is acknowledged that the reference in the Statement is not comprehensive in that it does not refer to the original change of use and to car park developments, but this reference was made about “additions” to the building to which changes of use and surface car parks do not form part.
- The public footpath along the northern boundary of the site is an historic path to “The Larches”. Now that The Larches is part of the hospital site, it is effectively a “dead end” and therefore not an attractive or well used route for the general public. Nevertheless, for those members of the public that are on that path, there are limited views into the site because of level differences and fencing/boundary trees and vegetation. I have attached three recently taken photos illustrating this.
- It is correct that the two conservatories were permitted at different times. However, the planning merits of the case are based on the fact that the two conservatories exist, not when they were built.
- Green Belt policy is focussed on the mass of buildings and the measure of intrusion these propose to the openness of the Green Belt. Green Belt policy does not therefore involve itself in the design and/or materials used in the construction of the proposal. Changes from mainly glass structures to a mainly brick structure are therefore not material to the Green Belt considerations of the proposal.
- Supervision of patients and access to facilities is clearly an essential part of care. At the moment the nursing station is poorly located to oversee the collection of day rooms in the “Coxon” part of the hospital. The proposal puts the nursing station and medicines store in a more central location where vision and access is easier and quicker. The combination of one of the Kipling lounges, the nursing station and the infill proposal gives a larger day room that gives flexibility to proposed dayroom activities. In terms of The Larches, the most recent Care Quality Commission Report has recommended a second patient toilet to be installed to cope with occasions when the current toilet/shower is in use.
- I accept my error in sending to you an outdated schedule of the bus service.

Town Council

Object. Horton Parish Council feels that this would be an overdevelopment of the site.

Local Highway Authority

No comments received

Severn Trent Water

No objection

Waste Services

There are no issues with the proposed planning application.

7. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 As with all applications, the LPA is required to determine this application in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there are material circumstances which indicate otherwise and in determining these applications, it shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, in so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations.

7.2 Core Strategy Policy SS1a establishes a 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' in line with the National Planning Policy (herein referred to as the NPPF) where: (1) planning applications that accord with policies within the Core Strategy will be approved without delay and (2) where there are no relevant policies or they are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise considering:-

- I. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or,
- II. Specific policies in within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted

Green Belt

7.3 The John Munroe Hospital Building has an extensive planning history and has benefitted from a series of extensions and alterations, which cumulatively, constitute disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Accordingly any further additions to the site should be regarded as 'inappropriate development' in accordance with paragraphs 144 and 145 of the NPPF and Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy and Policy SS10 of the emerging Local Plan.

7.4 The submitted Design and Access Statement presents the view that the site should be regarded as 'previously developed land' and as such, it is argued that the proposed extension meets one of the exceptions to inappropriate development outlined at paragraph 145g), in that the development proposals comprise limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land. In order for the proposed development to meet this exception we must conclude that the proposed extension would "not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development".

7.5 Paragraph 145 c) also identifies that extensions can be appropriate provided that they do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The development proposes the replacement of two light weight conservatory extensions and a single storey extension with a stone built flat roof 'orangery' style extension. Calculations carried out by the planning officer conclude that the extension would be larger in footprint and volume than the existing structures and therefore would result in a disproportionate addition to the original building. Although the applicant explains the need to for the extension, to reconfigure the internal arrangement of the building to provide a larger day room, this is not considered to amount to very special circumstances. Consequently it is considered that the extension fails to comply with the relevant Core Strategy Policy, emerging Local Plan Policy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on the Conservation Area

7.6 The application site falls within Rudyard Conservation Area. In accordance with policy DC2 of the SMDC Core Strategy and policy DC2 of the emerging Local Plan, the

council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

7.7 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more importance the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

7.8 Paragraph 194 follows to state that "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."

7.9 Rudyard Conservation Area Appraisal provides the following description of The John Munroe Hospital:

'Fairview' was built overlooking Rudyard Lake in 1879-1880 by John Munro, a wine and spirit dealer, originally from Tain in the Scottish Highlands; the name was given to the small, speculatively-built cottage also owned by Munro to the north of the house – Tain Cottage. This rather large house stands in its own mature grounds to the north of Horton Lodge. It is now a private independent hospital but was designed as a single dwelling. Built in pink rock-faced gritstone, it is a masculine building with mullioned and transomed windows, steep-pitched roofs with Staffordshire blue clay tiles, bargeboards and substantial stone chimneys.

7.10 The John Munroe Hospital building is not listed and views of the building from public vantage points within the wider conservation area are limited. The proposed development would result in the removal of a series of ill-considered extensions to the east elevation of the building. The replacement extension, albeit of a more solid nature, would be finished in coursed natural stone to match the existing building. An appropriately worded condition to secure the approval of materials prior to any works above foundation level is recommended should Members approve this application.

7.11 The east elevation represents the fortuitous nature in which the site has been developed over time and currently comprises a series of ad-hoc additions that fail to respect the character or form of the original building. The proposed extension would serve to consolidate the single storey development on this elevation. The proposed extension has been appropriately designed to respect the character and appearance of the existing building and due to its siting would not result in harm to the character of the Conservation Area.

Impact on amenity

7.12 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping. Policy DC1 of the emerging Local Plan includes the additional measure of visual impact for assessing amenity. The Council also has an adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), Space About Dwellings which provides guidance to protect privacy for existing and proposed residents and to protect their amenities to enable the reasonable enjoyment of their residence and garden with a degree of freedom from unwanted social contact.

7.13 The proposed extension is located sufficient distance away from nearby properties to accord with the Council's Amenity policies and Guidance.

Other Matters

7.14 The other comments made by objectors are noted. However property devaluation is not a material planning consideration. Moreover, the behaviour of patients is a matter for the hospital to address, along with other services.

8. CONCLUSION & PLANNING BALANCE

8.1 The main issue for consideration of this application is whether the proposed development constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt and impact on the Rudyard Conservation Area.

8.2 The application proposes the demolition and replacement of a series of extensions with one single extension. The replacement extension would be larger in footprint and volume to the extensions it is to replace and as such we must conclude that the development would amount to inappropriate development, having a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework. Inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the green belt and the case outlined by the applicant for very special circumstances is not considered to outweigh this harm.

8.3 The application site is located within the Rudyard Conservation Area. However, the building is not listed. The proposed extension, by virtue of siting, scale and design would not be considered to result in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As such this application is considered to accord with policy DC1 of the Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATION

A That planning permission be refused on the following grounds:-

1. The proposed development constitutes an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt, for which no very special circumstances have been presented to outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Accordingly the development fails to comply with Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy, Emerging Local Plan SS10 and paragraphs 144 and 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative

1. This is considered to be an unsustainable form of development which fails to comply with the provisions of the NPPF

Site Plan

