

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

22 October 2020

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.

This application was deferred by Members at the meeting held in September to enable consultation to take place on amended plan number 2019-2450-02E.

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

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 2019-2450-02E.

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	Refused, 17.12.2008 Appeal Allowed.

	occupational therapy use	
SMD/2008/0709	Side conservatory	Refused, 28.08.2008 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 (2020)

- 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.

Following deferral of the application by members at the Planning Applications Committee on 17th September 2020 further consultation has been carried out. Two representations have been received at the time of preparing this report and are detailed as follows:

- Despite this application having undergone some revision, the key principles still apply with regard to development within the Green Belt area, and the fact that the hospital sits within the Rudyard Conservation Area. We therefore continue to object to this application. The grounds for objection outlined in the letter received are the same as those previously outlined and referenced above.
- With regard to the amended plan which has been submitted on behalf of the applicant we would refer to our letters of objection dated 2nd January 2020 and 14th January 2020 and we wish to raise the following further points of objection.

1. The new plan still shows that the bay window between the two conservatories which is part of the original Victorian Fairview house and which is a large mullioned and transomed bay window would be removed. The property is not listed but it is in the Rudyard Conservation Area which was created in 2016 to protect the area and its buildings. Particular attention should be given to the Rudyard Conservation Area Appraisal Report. At page 44 it states that “the conservation area designation has been put in place to safeguard against further harmful development so far as this can be achieved by the need for planning permission.”. At page 17 of the Appraisal Report it states as follows. “The three listed buildings located within the conservation area at Rudyard do not reflect the quality of a large number of buildings within the area; late Victorian and Edwardian buildings are listed sparingly and many buildings of distinctive quality from this period are unlisted”.

The Appraisal Report refers to Fairview as a valued building on a number of occasions. At page 18 of the Appraisal Report it states as follows. “There are very few detached villas, which is surprising given the opportunity afforded by the many land auctions. There are just five large houses, which could be called true villas”. It specifies that one of these true villas is Fairview. At page 19 of the Appraisal Report it specifically highlights Fairview. It states it was built in 1879-1880. It states “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”. Fairview is clearly an important and valued building in the Conservation area and planning permission should not be granted which would result in the removal of one of the original large mullioned and transomed bay windows or allow extensions not in keeping with the steep pitched roofs as the extension proposed would be flat roofed whilst the current conservatories are pitched roofed. At page 3 of the Appraisal Report it sets out “the distinctive, key characteristics of Rudyard”. One of these it states is “a few large 19th century villas”. At page 38 of the Appraisal Report it refers to “Character Area 3 – Villas and Rudyard Vale”. It states that “to the east of Camrose Hill, where the ground begins to plateau, are the large houses of Horton Lodge and Fairview.” It is clear that although the building is not listed it is a valued building in the Conservation Area and should therefore be protected.

2. Please find attached a photograph of the large bay window which is between the two existing conservatories. This photograph was attached to the application to erect the second conservatory. This is a prominent part of the original structure and should not be removed.

3. The further response from the Applicant's agents states that the public footpath past the rear of the hospital now comes to a dead end. And they have supplied 3 photographs which they state show the hospital can not be seen from the footpath. This is all completely not true. This is in fact a well-used footpath which leads from the main road past the side of Wits End which is a private bungalow at the side of the road and goes past High Ash and the Larches and round past the rear of the hospital and past the hospital car park and goes on to the Staffordshire Way. It is from the footpath where it goes past the car park at the rear of the hospital that the two conservatories can be seen. The photographs taken by the Agents are from the footpath well before it reaches the rear of the hospital. At page 16 of the Appraisal Report it states that "the area surrounding Rudyard is used by large numbers of visitors and residents and there is a well-established network of public footpaths which take in many of the areas of special interest. Much of the setting of Rudyard can be appreciated from this extensive network, which include the following". One of the footpaths it states is "Footpath 51(Horton) leading from alongside Wits End through the woods and along the back of the John Munroe Hospital site".

4. The amended plan does not still show what the floor space of the proposed extension would be used for. The Agents state that the nursing station and medicines store needs to be moved to a more central location as justification for the application. The current location is not criticised by the Care Quality Commission in its last report. In any event if the nursing station and medicines store are being moved in to the main building why is it necessary to change the current structure where they are currently situated. A plan of the whole hospital has not been submitted with the application. A copy of a plan submitted with the application reference number SMD/2008/0709 is attached. This shows that where the nursing station and medicine store would be moved to is a bedroom as does the plan with the current application. How would that bedroom be replaced? Would it be put in the proposed new extension? Also, the attached plan shows that next to the Kipling Lounge is a large office. No reason is given why this could not be used for the nursing station and medicine store. The plan of the first floor shows two offices there. At the last Committee Meeting when the application was deferred the person speaking on behalf of the Applicant stated the conservatories needed to be replaced as they are too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. This could clearly be dealt with by roof covering being inserted for the summer and appropriate heating being installed for the winter. There has therefore been no proper justification given for the application.

5. In all the circumstances the application should be refused to respect the fact that it is a valued building in the Conservation Area.

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 Local Plan Policy SS1 states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvements of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services, amongst other things:

- A healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;
- Development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;
- Development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District, both now and for future generations.

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 SS10 of the adopted Local Plan.

7.4 The submitted Design and Access Statement presents the view that the site should be regarded as 'previously developed land'. As such, it is presented by the Agent 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 It is noted that NPPF 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.

7.6 The development as amended on drawing reference 2019-2450-02E proposes the replacement of two light weight conservatory extensions and a single storey extension with a stone built flat roof 'orangery' style extension. The existing footprint of the buildings to be demolished is 73.3m². The proposed extension would have a footprint of 73m². The volume of the existing buildings to be demolished amounts to 200m³ and the volume of the proposed extension is 1.5m³ greater in size. Taking account of these figures it is considered that the proposed development would result in no greater harm to the openness of the Green Belt and this application is therefore considered to accord with Green Belt policy.

Impact on the Conservation Area

7.7 The application site falls within Rudyard Conservation Area. In accordance with policy DC2 of the Adopted 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 Adopted Local Plan seeks to protect residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy, visual amenity and soft landscaping. 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 Space About Dwellings Guidance and will not generate any adverse effects in terms of overshadowing or overlooking.

7.14 Objectors complain that they already suffer from noise and disturbance and yet more development would add to this. While the planning history that relates to the complex as a whole is indeed lengthy, current capacity across the site is well established and this proposal which provides 2 day rooms to replace existing conservatories, should not affect or intensify site operations - it would not add to patient capacity or result in additional staff and in those regards there is no prospect of it causing noise and disturbance. The proposal is only to provide new facility for the existing established care of the resident patients. There is no evidence to suggest that there is any intention of using the additional space to increase patient capacity, the floor area and dimension is limited and specific to those stated purposes, it would not lend itself to the provision of either an additional bedroom or a reconfiguration of internal space to achieve those purposes. The rooms would not be big enough to be used as bedrooms as they need to be 12 sq m to meet current standards. However, for the avoidance of doubt and the purposes of reassurance, a planning permission could be subject to a condition that the extension is used only as day room facility.

Other Matters

7.14 The other comments made by objectors are noted. However property devaluation is not a material planning consideration.

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 of the same footprint and marginally larger volume. The replacement extension would have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing arrangement and as such I conclude that this application accords with the National Planning Policy Framework.

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. The building itself would not result in any adverse impacts on residential amenity and the proposal would not result in any increase in bedroom accommodation and therefore intensity of the use. As such this application is considered to accord with policy DC1 of the Adopted Local Plan.

8.4 Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant provisions of the Local Plan and the NPPF and a recommendation of approval is made

9. RECOMMENDATION

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

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

Reason:- To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Town and Country Planning, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.

2. Prior to any works above foundation level samples of types and colours of the facing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:- To ensure that the external appearance of the development is satisfactory.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2019-2450-02E.

Reason:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The extension hereby permitted shall be used only as a “day room” and shall not be used as bedroom accommodation at any time.

Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Informative

1. This is considered to be an sustainable form of development which accords with the provisions of the NPPF

B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee’s decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee’s decision.

