

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

22 October 2020

Application No:	SMD/2020/0315	
Location	The Larches, Reacliffe Road, Rudyard, ST14 8RU	
Proposal	Erection of Agricultural Workers Dwelling	
Applicant	John Munroe Hospital Group Ltd	
Agent	Sammons Architectural	
Parish/Ward	Horton	Date registered: 19 th June 2020
If you have a question about this report please contact: Benjamin Hurst tel: 01538 395400 ex 4127 benjamin.hurst@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk		

REFERRAL

The application is before committee at the request of Cllr Norma Hawkins so that the amenity concerns of nearby residents can receive full consideration.

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The Larches is one of two bungalows that lie to the north of the large former 19th Century dwelling, 'Fairview', a property that has been considerably extended over the years and, at the beginning of this Century, became the core of the John Munroe hospital complex. The hospital offers mental health treatment services for adults and older people who require active rehabilitation or longer-term care. The two bungalows are under the hospital's ownership and have been annexed as such. The Larches is a male only ward that provides up to six residents under the care of the hospital with specialist inpatient rehabilitation. The existing accommodation has six bedrooms and, within extended space, a large occupational therapy facility.

2.2 The Larches and its neighbour High Ash back onto the woodland that is between the property and Rudyard Lake, half a kilometre to the north west. There is a 33metre open gap between the two adjacent bungalows and this space provides a hard-surfaced car park. As annexes, they each sit within space that could be identified as separate curtilages independent to that of the hospital.

2.3 The Larches was a broadly L-shape bungalow, built as a replacement dwelling in the 1980s. The footprint was extended in 1998 to add two bedrooms and then, after it was annexed by the hospital, it was extended considerably again to add an

occupational therapy room. These extensions added to the length of the bungalow adjoining the eastern side of the bungalow.

3. THE APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 This application is the resubmission of a proposal that was refused earlier this year because it would have made a further enlargement to the bungalow which has already been very significantly increased in size and, as such, it was considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. With this submission the applicant provides additional supporting information and proposes design improvements and a marginal reduction in footprint.

3.2 The proposed enlargement would make a side addition that extends from the original gable end/side wall of the bungalow at the western end. It would be 2.9m by 7.5m (compared to 2.9m by 9.2m as previously proposed) adding almost 3metres to the length of the bungalow. However, a reduction in depth allows for an improvement to the design that sits the addition within the dimensions of the existing gable as a subordinate element with a step down to a lower roof ridge and a step back to a recessed front elevation. The development would require some excavation of the adjacent land level and the rebuilding and setting back of a retaining wall that supports the area of carpark above.

3.3 The extension would supplement the existing facility and accommodation with an additional bathroom, an office, and a resident's kitchen. The applicant explains that the accommodation is provided under the guidelines and routine inspection of the Care Quality Commission with the purpose of ensuring that "health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high quality care and encourage care services to improve". In their latest report dated January 2020 that followed an inspection in November 2019, a copy provided with the application, they identify a shortage of toilet provision as a shortcoming. One patient toilet is provided with a shower for six residents meaning that when the shower is in use there is no other toilet facility available for patients. It is the applicant's case that a new toilet and shower room at the Larches would help address that shortfall.

3.4 There is also an apparent issue around the nursing office that currently doubles as a clinic for the administration of medicine. The Care Quality report makes a reference to an unannounced focused inspection that they made in 2018 after medicine safety concerns were raised by a whistle blower. That inspection revealed significant concerns around the management of medicines across all wards and the providers were served with a warning notice under s. 29 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008. The provider has since made satisfactory improvements in response to that notice – medicine is stored elsewhere on the complex; there has been staff training; and they have developed a reliable mechanism to monitor and manage the supply of medicines. However, it is the applicant's case that, while they continue to use the nursing office as the clinic and they cannot store medicine at the Larches, office duty interruptions and frequent trips to collect medicines present certain practical inefficiencies, difficulties and challenges with that ongoing management. The applicant hopes to address these with the provision of a small new office and a separate clinic at The Larches.

3.4 The applicant did not seek any pre application advice from the Council regarding the application.

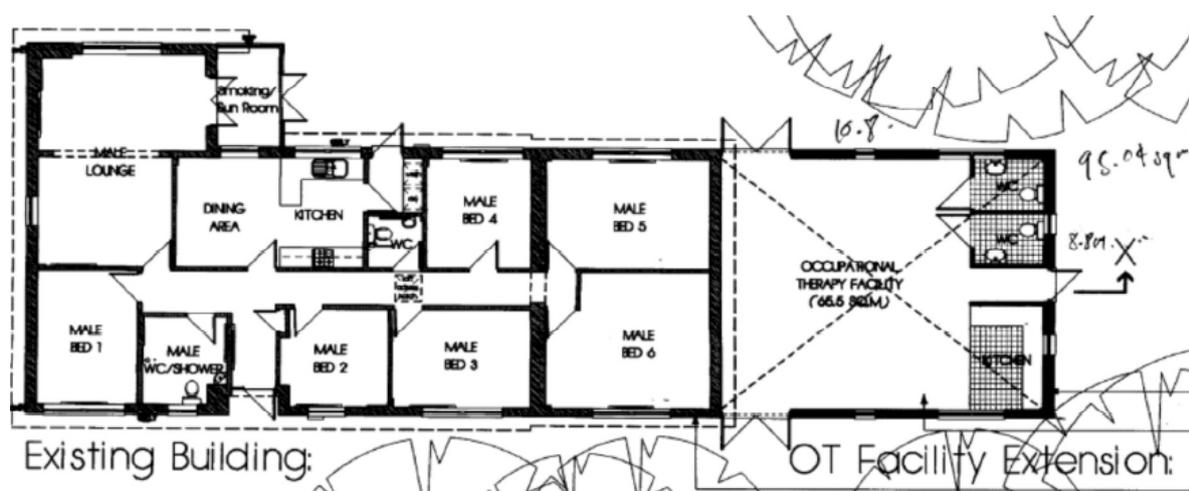
3.5 Details of the application scheme can be viewed at:

<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=128617>

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

81.09909 Details of Replacement Dwelling. Approved 1981.
1998 Bedroom and Study Extension (marked as Male Bed 5 and Male Bed 6 below)
08/01879/FUL Addition of Occupational Therapy Room. Allowed at Appeal.
SMD/2019/0738 Single Storey Side Extension. Refused

The layout and floor area of the existing bungalow with the addition of the occupation room



5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 The Development Plan comprises of:

- The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Document (adopted Sep 2020)

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (LP)

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

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations to protect residential amenity

- DC2 Historic Environment
- DC3 Landscape Character

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised.

5.6 The following sections of the NPPF are particularly relevant to this application:

- 2: Achieving sustainable development
- 4: Decision Making
- 12: Achieving well-designed places
- 13: Protecting Green Belt
- 16: Protecting historic environment

6 CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 7th Aug 2020

Neighbour consultation period ends: 13th July 2020

Press Advert expiry date: 7th Aug 2020

Public response to consultation

6.1 A total of six letters of objection have been received from nearby neighbours. Generally, the objectors remark that they live within the Conservation Area and Green Belt where they would expect a certain degree of tranquillity. They think that the hospital facility, and this building in particular, has been expanded considerably over the years to the extent that it has reached capacity and further addition would result in overdevelopment. There is general complaint about the nuisance factor of noise and disturbance generated by staff, deliveries and patients, and there is a concern that more development would add to this. There is concern too that while the proposed space is marked out as kitchen, bathroom and office, facility and rooms could internally be rearranged to provide additional bedrooms for more patients.

Horton Parish Council

6.2 Strongly Object. It would be more overdevelopment in a conservation area. The problems have unnecessarily been brought about by previous extensions.

Arboriculturist

6.3 No objection subject to conditions. The site lies within the extent of Woodland W2 protected under TPO No. LR.8, a large swathe of woodland to the rear (north) of the site. There is a significant mature Larch at the woodland edge which may be affected however, the extension would be some 9m from the stem of the Larch, and comfortably clear of its BS 5837-driven Root Protection Area for a tree of this size. The proposed extension itself should have no significant impact on this tree.

6.4 A new retaining wall and steps set back further from the building are indicated on the plans, to accommodate the proposed extension and access path around the building as extended. However, there is no detail to show how the retaining wall would relate to the bank at the rear of the car park where the existing steps are to be removed. It appears that such an arrangement, in principle, could be constructed to avoid harmful impact on the mature Larch tree, or other trees at the woodland edge, however, further details should be sought by condition.

7 OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 The main issues relate to considerations of Green Belt impact and the extent to which the development might be harmful to the amenity of existing residential neighbours. If the development would be harmful in any of these regards it is necessary to consider whether the considerations and circumstances put forward by the applicant and any other benefits outweigh that harm.

Impact on the Green Belt.

7.2 The site is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions that appear in the closed lists at paragraph 145 and 146 of the NPPF, in respect of the Green Belt other rural policy SS10 of the Local Plan reflects and defers to the national policy approach.

7.3 One of those exceptions that might be appropriate to the proposed development is at para. 145 point (c) which provides for the extension of a building that does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original. The original building in this case was a bungalow that was built as a larger replacement dwelling in the early 1980s (81-09909). The building was extended in 1998 to add a further bedroom and study and then, after it became part of the hospital complex, it was extended very significantly again in 2008 with 'inappropriate development' to provide an occupational therapy room. Unable to provide the facility anywhere else in the property it was found at appeal that 'very special circumstances' outweighed the Green Belt harm. An estimate using plan measurements from the planning history would put the two additions combined as having already increased the original building by around 80%. Although the proposed extension may in itself be quite modest, around another 22 sq. metres, against the form and size of the existing enlarged bungalow, it would result in yet more disproportionate addition over and above the size of the *original* building as built in the 1980s, and it would not therefore be provided for by the exception at para. 145(c) or any of the other exceptions.

7.4 The development, therefore, would be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt. Any harm to the Green Belt must be attributed substantial weight in the balance of considerations. However, the degree to which this development, within the context of its site and surroundings, is harmful to openness and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt could be considered quite limited. Particularly the development would sit in a small, enclosed area between the end of the bungalow and the retained edge of the car park. Set within an excavated depression, it would have a low profile from surrounding land and make limited encroachment from the

bungalow's gable end toward a higher land level that is largely parked much of the time with staff and visitor cars.

Design and impact on character and appearance of the locality and the Conservation Area.

7.5 Although they were not fatal to the success of the first proposal, which was refused because of its adverse impact on the Green Belt, there were certain criticisms of its design that have been addressed with this resubmission. Previously the development would have resulted in a very heavy asymmetric side elevation that would extend beyond the dimensions of the building's end gable with a continuous roof ridge and flat elevation. However, with this application the design has been much improved to make it subordinate and obviously secondary to the original bungalow. The depth of the proposed extension has been reduced to sit within the dimensions of the existing gable, it would have a step down in roof height and a step back to a recessive front elevation. This approach is generally compliant with the Council's 'design guide' and in turn 'good design' Policy DC1 of the recently adopted Local Plan.

7.6 In any event however, the end gable of this 80s bungalow and the land to the side are rather secluded by hedgerow enclosure and the development would not be prominent or exposed within the countryside landscape or have a close relationship with any of the historic environment associated with the Rudyard Conservation Area or 'Fairview', the old original dwelling. It would not have any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the wider area or the significance of those heritage assets.

Amenity

7.7 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 relative to a separate six patient ward, 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 six 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. Furthermore, an increased capacity would only compound those problems and shortcomings that have been identified by the Inspectors of the Care Quality Commission. 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 ancillary facility and that resident numbers do not exceed six.

7.8 Given the separation to neighbouring dwellings and the siting of the extension, boundary landscaping and topography, it is not considered that it will have any other amenity impacts in terms of overshadowing or overlooking from the building itself.

Other considerations and benefits of the proposal

7.9 With this submission the applicant provides supplementary detail and evidence to explain the needs and requirements of the facility that have become increasingly pressing following the inspection and report from the Care Quality Commission. This application is a direct and obvious response to the findings in that report. As an existing and established facility, the residential ward and living accommodation for the six patients is relatively modest and does not provide any scope to provide these facilities within existing floor space. There is a small toilet dedicated to staff and one toilet with a shower for patients. None of the bedrooms are particularly large, they have a kitchen diner and an adequate lounge. The occupational therapy room that adjoins the accommodation provides dedicated and specifically purposed function that was considered to be essential by a Planning Inspector, it is separate to the accommodation and there are no connecting doors that link the internal spaces. It is reasonable to conclude that existing floorspace could not be appropriately or adequately repurposed to provide the facility without significantly impacting on existing function and living standards that are already quite constrained.

7.10 Two of the development principles of the Council's new Local Plan, included in the list at SS1, is to deliver quality homes; and local services, including provision for education and healthcare to meet the needs of the community. The provision of these modest most basic facilities to secure the welfare and dignity of some of the district's most vulnerable residents, would appear to deliver in those regards and should be attributed significant weight. Overall, the need to provide existing resident patients with this additional facility that is essential to their safe, effective, compassionate care and rehabilitation does amount to a very special circumstance that clearly outweighs the harm to the Green Belt identified above, harm by reason of inappropriateness and a limited harm to openness and conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

Conclusion and planning balance

7.10 There would be harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. However, harm to its openness and conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt would be limited. The stated requirement for essential facility to support the care and rehabilitation of existing resident patients is compelling, supplemented with evidence and overall amounts to a very special circumstance that would clearly outweigh that harm and conflict. There would be no harm to the character and appearance of the area or significance of historic environment; and the amenity of nearby residents would not be adversely affected.

8 RECOMMENDATION

A. That an outline planning permission be APPROVED for the extension subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason:- To comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)

2. The development permitted and described above shall only be carried out in complete accordance with the drawings numbered 2019-2449-02D and 2019-2449-03C that were submitted with the application.

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

3. The development shall only be constructed and finished using external facing brick and roofing tile that shall match in colour, form and texture those of the existing building and there shall be no variation without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:- To ensure that the works harmonise with the existing development.

4. The new rooms within the development permitted shall only be used for those specific purposes that are identified on the ground floor plan numbered 2019-2449-02D to provide ancillary facility to no more than six resident patients. At no time shall the new development be used to provide an additional bedroom or to reconfigure or use the building's existing floorspace to provide more than six bedrooms or to accommodate more than six residents.

Reason:- In the interests of residential amenity.

5. The trees closest to the development, that are protected by preservation order, are to be retained and protected from damage during the approved works and construction by erecting a temporary tree protection barrier/fence and the display of advisory notices in accordance with guidance in British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*, unless otherwise agreed by the LPA. Within the barriered/fenced areas there shall be no excavation, changes in ground levels, installation of underground services, provision of hard surfacing, passage of vehicles, storage of materials, equipment or site huts, tipping of chemicals, waste or cement, or lighting of fires unless otherwise agreed by the LPA.

Reason: To ensure that existing trees to be retained are protected from damage.

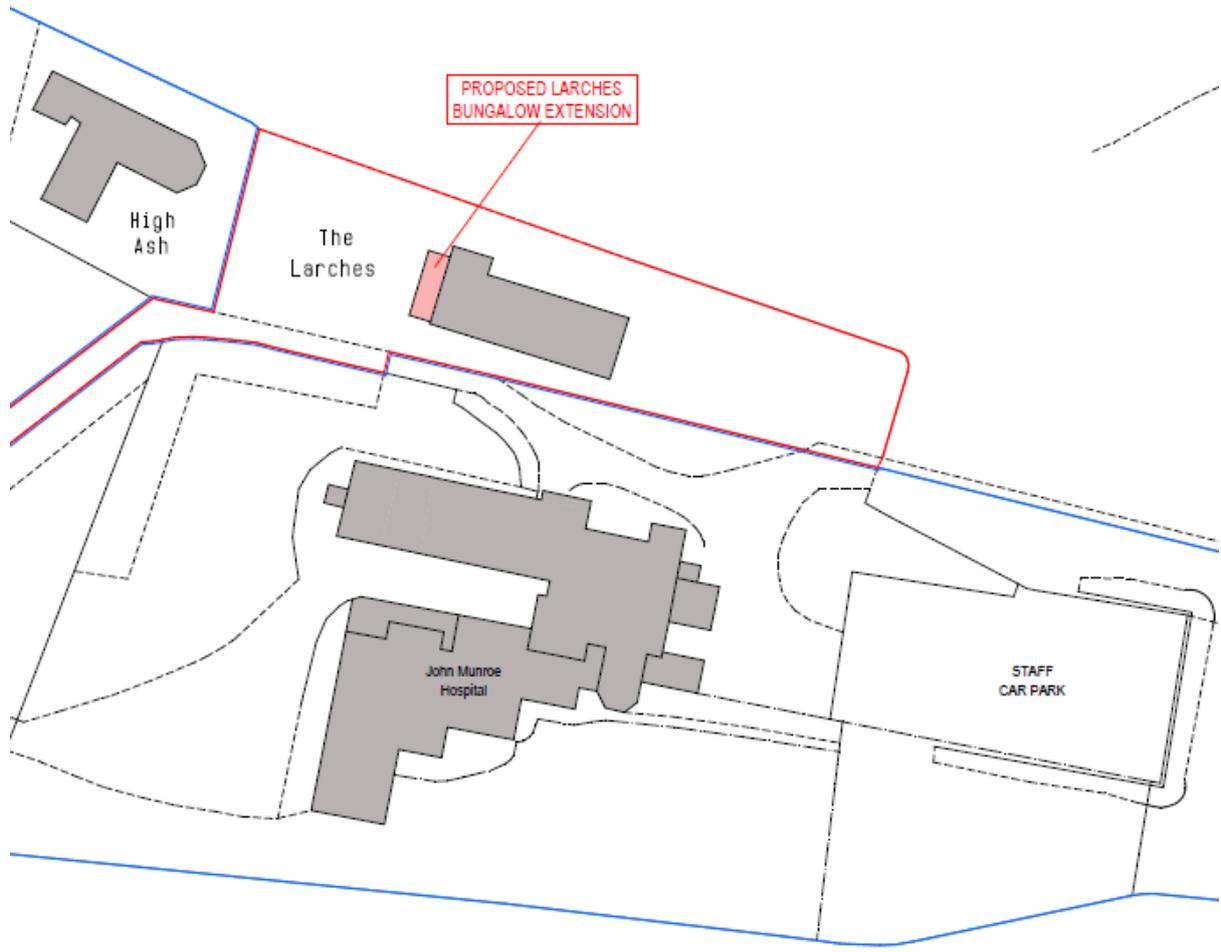
6. Before the development is brought into use the new retaining walls and access steps; land reprofiling; and means of enclosure – all necessary to complete the development, shall be constructed and completed only in full accordance with drawn and written details (relative to the existing and proposed levels; design, use of materials and means of construction) that shall first be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. In particular, such details shall demonstrate how adverse impacts on existing trees shall be avoided.

Reason:- To ensure that the large nearest Larch tree is protected from damage.

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.

Informative

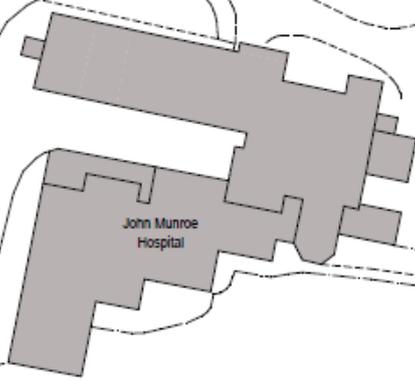
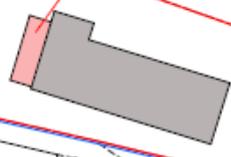
1. The application is for a sustainable form of development which complies with the development plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. In the spirit of paragraph 38 of the NPPF amendments were secured to reduce the impact of the scheme.



High Ash

The Larches

PROPOSED LARCHES BUNGALOW EXTENSION



John Munroe Hospital



STAFF CAR PARK