

Design & Access Statement

Caverswell Castle

Design & Access Statement

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Astill Planning Consultants Ltd on behalf of Mr Robin MacDonald, the owner of the application site, in support of an application for a change of use to (C1) guest accommodation, meeting/lecture venue and film set location.
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO). The DMPO sets out the purpose and scope of a Design and Access Statement which should describe:
- a. “...the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and
 - b. how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with” (9(2)).
- 1.3 This document will summarise the site analysis that has taken place and will provide a justification of the various design considerations behind the proposal relating to use, amount, layout, scale and massing, appearance, landscaping and access.
- 1.4 The Design and Access Statement will consist of the following sections:
- Section 1 – Introduction**
 - Section 2 – Site Assessment:** an assessment of the immediate and wider site context.
 - Section 3 – Evaluation:** a consideration of the site’s opportunities and constraints.
 - Section 4 – Design Proposal and Justification:** a list of the design principles that have guided the design process and an analysis of the proposal in terms of its use, amount, layout, scale and massing, appearance, landscaping and access.
 - Section 5 – Conclusion:** a summary of the key elements of the proposal’s design.
- 1.5 This statement should be read in conjunction with the full planning application and its accompanying drawings and documents. Comprising

2 Site Assessment

- 2.1 This section will summarise the site analysis that took place during the development of the design proposals.
- 2.2 The application site which comprises Caverswall Castle and grounds, is located within the village of Caverswall, a small settlement located approximately 0.5 miles from the urban conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent. The application site is also located within the Caverswall Conservation Area which also includes a number of statutorily listed heritage assets. A list of the heritage assets contained within the application site boundary are set out in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Statutorily Listed Heritage Assets within Application Site Boundary

Designation	Heritage List Reference	Description
Grade I	1038000	<p>CAVERSWALL CASTLE, SCREEN WALLS, GATEHOUSE AND BRIDGE: Castle, later country house. C13 foundation to superstructure of circa 1615, enlarged, altered and refitted circa 1890. The work of 1615 has been attributed to Robert and John Smythson. Red sandstone ashlar; flat roofs largely invisible behind crenellated parapets with multishafted C19 side stacks; the gatehouse and angle towers have tiled roofs and balustraded parapets. Built in a castellar, supra-vernacular style with a foretaste of Bolsover and echoes of Longleat (and strangely reminiscent of Castle Drogo by Lutyens). House: the single-fronted house is a truncated rendition of the Slingsby plan and facade with symmetry upset by the lack of an eastern stair tower, the vacuum part filled by the additions of 1890 leading on to the gatehouse. Facade: of 3 storeys on a raised plinth over cellars (which are only part below ground level), banded at ceiling levels up to crenellated parapets, fenestrated on all 3 levels by five 3-light chamfer mullion and transom windows, the outer inset slightly from the extremities and formed into full height 3-sided bays with similar 2-light windows to angled sides; the central entrance has a small, 3-sided underplayed single storey porch with balustered parapet and part-glazed C19 doors. The square stair tower is well set back on the west side of the front rising a further storey, banded only under the parapet and fenestrated at that level by a three-light mullioned window with further two-light windows rising with the stairs; the C19 wing of two storeys slightly set back on the east side, of similar style including the two windows, the left hand a bay; the right hand first-floor window has a panel under inscribed "MDCCCXCI". Retaining structure: the house is set to the north side of a square retaining enclosure surrounded by an excavated moat which opens out to lower ground level on the west, forming a prospect which was never used. The lower parts of the walls (approx. 9m high) appear to be the only remnant of the medieval castle (the stonework above garden level certainly seems homogenous with the house) rising to plain parapets (set at garden level) and with octagonal towers on all but the northern-most angle. These rise to two storeys above the inner garden level (and thus approximately four storeys from the floor of the moat); they are pyramidally roofed with balustraded parapets and fenestrated by two-light mullioned windows on most facets but only to the final two storeys. The Gatehouse: of similar style; set on the east side and attached to the angle of the C19 wing of the house; fronted with two 3-sided bay turrets flanking an entranceway with rounded 2 centred arches; the inner face is flush. The gatehouse leads onto the bridge of two round arches with C19 balustrade set on a corbelled band. Interior of main house: entered via a screens passage with the hall opening out to the left via a round arch with carved figures; all the walls are panelled; two round arch (again in imitation of the medieval layout) doorways at far end and fireplace to north (inner) side; the overmantel has C17 elements but heavily remodelled and enriched in the C19 restoration; ovolo moulded beams and joists. Stairway: entered through one of the doors (the other is a blind dummy) at the rear of the hall rising in straight flights, a C19 restoration; lions and unicorns on newels, vase balusters. Dining Room: has 3 C17 low relief panels of hunting scenes reset in C19 over- mantel and late C17 or early C18 panelling. Library: early C18 panelling, C19 strap work, plaster ceiling, C17 overmantel with low relief carvings of fruit. First floor billiard room: set over hall with elaborate C19 plasterwork. The cellar does not bear the promise of Slingsby's garden room, being a collection of plain and unadorned service rooms. Refs: B.O.E. p. 95. M. Girouard. "Robert Smythson and the [Elizabethan Country House]" p.181-2.</p>
Grade II		<p>STEPS AND BALUSTRADING RUNNING APPROXIMATELY 2 METRES SOUTH OF THE SOUTH FRONT OF CAVERSWALL CASTLE: Steps and balustrading. Circa 1890. Stone. The balustrade set on a plinth approximately 1000mm above ground level runs the length of the 1615 facade of Caverswall Castle (q.v.). Rusticated pillars with ball finials; four bays with fretted strapwork set either side of central flight of 6 steps leading to entrance. Included for group value.</p>

Grade II	1038001.	SUNDIAL APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES SOUTH OF ENTRANCE FRONT TO CAVERSWALL CASTLE: Sundial. Probably of circa 1890. Red sandstone. Approximately 1200mm. high of baluster style and with banded capital; top and dial replaced. Included for group value.
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- 2.3 A number of other listed buildings fall within the immediate vicinity of the site. A list and description of these heritage assets are contained in table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Designated Listed Heritage Assets within the Vicinity of the Site

Designation	Heritage List Reference	Description
Grade II	1374653.	CHURCH OF ST FILOMENA (ROMAN CATHOLIC): Catholic Church. 1863-4 by Gilbert Blount. Rock-faced, coursed stonework; banded tiled roof; verge parapets with buttressed bellcote at west end; nave (south porch) and chancel. Nave: buttressed at angles and to east of centre; four lancet windows widely spaced 1:3 flanking gabled porch with moulded pointed arch. West end has slight central break with two light pointed west window over west door and figure in pointed niche set under bellcote. Lower chancel, angle buttressed of one window, pointed of two lights and plate tracery. The church occupies a prominent position in the village centre flanking the approach to the Church of St. Peter (qv). B.O.E. p.95.
Grade II	1038002.	EAST LODGE TO CAVERSWALL CASTLE AND BALUSTRADING SCREEN WALL: Lodge. Dated 1890. Red sandstone ashlar; flat roof concealed behind crenellated parapet. Of a sympathetic style to the castle (q.v.). Two- storey, three-window front, banded at ceiling levels; 3-sided bay to left side with 1:3:1 light mullioned and transomed windows, further similar windows to right end of centre, set over inset labelled panel inscribed WE labelled round arch entrance, the stops inscribed "A.D." and "A 1891"; part glazed door. The lodge occupies a prominent position in the village centre between the Church of St. Peter (q.v.) and the Church of St. Filomena (q.v.).
Grade II	1038003.	GROUP OF 8 CHEST TOMBS IN AREA DEFINED BY PATHS IN NORTH WEST CORNER OF CHURCHYARD OF ST PETER: 8 chest tombs. Stone. 4 to north-west corner of similar style: Josiah Saunders d. 1847, Rev. Josiah Saunders d. 1791, William Hill d. 1776 and George Swift d. 1811, all of same size with inset banded angle pilasters, alternating fleuron and fluted bands to frieze and moulded top. Closer to the church tower lie Mary Shaw d. 1787 and the Hulme Memorial (from 1717 but more close to the 1787 date referring to Elizabeth Hulme). The former has moulded pilasters at angles, the latter with reeded pilasters to the angles with unusual Neoclassical surbase crest and Thomas Bentley d. 1822 with reeded pilasters to centre and angles.
Grade II	1281177.	GROUP OF 2 CHEST TOMBS AND ONE PEDESTAL TOMB TO WEST AND SOUTH OF TOWER OF CHURCH OF ST PETER: Group of 2 chest tombs (to south) and pedestal tomb (to west). All of stone. The latter to Ralph and Joseph Boulton d. 1807 with battered sides, pediments over inscription panel and heavy moulded surbase. Ralph Lees d. 1811 with moulded plinth and pilasters on angles all on repaired brick base. Hannah Wallace d. 1771 similar to above.
Grade II	1281181	WOOD MEMORIAL APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES SOUTH OF CHANCEL OF CHURCH ST PETER: Group of 2 chest tombs (to south) and pedestal tomb (to west). All of stone. The latter to Ralph and Joseph Boulton d. 1807 with battered sides, pediments over inscription panel and heavy moulded surbase. Ralph Lees d. 1811 with moulded plinth and pilasters on angles all on repaired brick base. Hannah Wallace d. 1771 similar to above.

Grade II	1374655	CHURCH OF ST PETER, CAVERSWALL ROAD: Parish Church. C12 and C13. Core remodelled C15 and substantially altered C17 and restored 1880 by Lynam. Coursed, squared and dressed red sandstone; tiled roofs; verge parapets. West tower, nave, north and south aisles and chancel. Tower: squat and square of approximately 3 stages with diagonal buttresses of four stages; raised string under crenellated parapet, small pinnacles at angles; two-light, almost round-arched bell chamber openings, 3-light west window with panel tracery. Nave: clerestory of three C17 four-light chamfer mullion windows. North aisle: C13, flat roofed behind parapet, buttressed at angles; 2, 2, 3, light windows, the former pair curvilinear the latter geometric, all with labelled, virtually round arches; round arch door to west bay. South aisle: similar, but all three 3-light windows appear to date from the C19 work, small gabled porch over door on west bay. Chancel: C12 of similar ridge but lower eaves height, two wide bays divided by thin buttresses with lancets to either side of east bay; east window of two round-arched lancets with tall round relieving arch. Small C19 flat-roofed vestry to south side. Interior: nave of 5 bays on around columns and with (C17) round arches, the west bay is shorter and therefore pointed to achieve a similar height. Arch braced collar roof with brattished purlins and exposed rafters, pointed C19 chancel arch by Lynam; chancel roof of trussed rafters, aisles beamed. Pulpit C17 oak, octagonal and with miniature blind panel arcading of typical style. Font: stone, octagonal on octagonal plinth. Glass: Kempe, Holiday and Selwyn Image. Monuments: (chancel, north side from west to east) Parker C17, painted; broken segmental pediment over 3 panels flanked by Corinthian pilasters, apron below. Sir Thomas Parker 1784 marble plaque with obelisk finial, figured urn in low relief, fluted side bands. Countess of St. Vincent 1816 by Chantrey; marble, kneeling figure (C17 plaque directly behind). South side: George Graddock 1643; stone, exuberantly powerful baroque high relief pedestal and urn, gadrooned above cornice and with flanking festooning. Matthew Craddock; C17 painted plaque. The Craddock family were responsible for the work at Caverswall Castle (q.v.). B.O.E. p. 95.
Grade II	1374656	WILSHAW MEMORIAL AND RAILED ENCLOSURE APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES NORTH OF CHURCH OF ST PETER: Pedestal tomb and railed enclosure. Elizabeth Wilshaw died 1817. Stone. Inscribed die with shield-shaped surround, moulded surbase and urn finial all on repaired stone plinth with cast iron railings, capped by urns at angles.
Grade II	1204471	CHURCH WALL, PIERS TO NORTH AND EAST OF CHURCH OF ST PETER: Churchyard wall, piers and gates. Probably late C18. Rusticated ashlar gate piers to north with corniced cappings and ball finials. Wall has moulded coping ramped down from piers to east side. C17 lintel on north west section.
Grade II	1038004	DOVEHOUSE FARMHOUSE: Farmhouse. Early C19. Red brick; tiled roof; end stacks. L-shaped plan. Two-storey, three-window front; glazing bar sashes with painted wedged leads; central entrance with painted stone Tuscan doorcase; diagonal glazing bars to overlight; C20 part-glazed door.
Grade II	1037999	WEST LODGE TO CAVERSWALL CASTLE: Lodge. Circa 1890. Red sandstone ashlar; flat roof concealed behind crenella- ted parapet of a sympathetic style to the castle (q.v.). Two-storey entrance front with raised strings at ceiling level. Single range of three-light chamfered mullioned and transomed windows to left end and similar to right, set in a diagonally-facing rectangular bay set on the angle of the building, small central window set over a recessed panel bearing low relief coat of arms; labelled round-arched entrance below with part-glazed door.

- 2.4 The moat of the castle is lined by mature trees, and to its south is a grass-covered space. Access to the area to the south of the castle is gained via a narrow path that passes between St. Peter's Church and the Castle, and enters the area from the north east, following a slight downwards slope. The western and southern boundaries of the area are lined with mature trees a small orchard sits within a linear, c.2.0m wide hollow towards the northern end of the site This sits below a slightly elevated area with a path that skirts the southern edge of the moat, which is flanked by mature trees and

rhododendrons. The southern boundary terminates in a partially crenelated stone wall Dove House farmyard, which is populated by several agricultural buildings located upon its eastern boundary.

- 2.5 This area contains two existing structures a 'T'-shaped stone outbuilding with a date stone of 1891 and a fully glazed rectangular swimming pool enclosure, both located on its eastern side.

3 Evaluation

- 3.1 From the assessment of the site in Section 2, the following opportunities and constraints have been identified for the application premises. These have been taken into account in formulating the development proposals.

- 3.2 The proposed development should also be assessed in the context of the recent planning approval SMD/2015/0683 and listed building consent SMD/2015/0671, which permitted a change of use of the application premises to a mixed use comprising: a residential dwelling house and a Well Being Retreat Centre with guest house hotel accommodation.

Opportunities

- 3.3 The application premises comprising the castle and grounds are an important heritage asset worthy of retention for the benefit of the community as a whole.
- 3.4 Sustainable proposals for the continued use of the castle and grounds which result in its continued maintenance, and the restoration of the built fabric of the castle and the grounds, provide a welcome opportunity to preserve this asset.
- 3.5 Uses of the property that allow it to be used in an economically viable way, will contribute to the long term sustainability and preservation of the historical asset.
- 3.6 Uses of the property that allow public access to the property will increase public awareness and enjoyment of the heritage asset.
- 3.7 Proposals that lead to the preservation and enhancement of Caverswall Castle and its grounds will in turn will lead to the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation area.

Constraints

- 3.8 The application premises comprise a Grade 1 listed heritage asset. Any development proposal will need to be sympathetic to the castle and grounds and not result in any detriment to the historical structure or its setting.
- 3.9 The application site is located within the green belt. Development proposals should not result in any detriment effects to the green belt or result in any reduction in its openness.
- 3.10 The application site is located in close proximity to residential properties. Development proposals should not result in any loss of residential amenity to local residents.
- 3.11 The application site is located within the Caverswall Conservation Area and in addition to the castle there are a number of other statutorily listed assets in close proximity. Development proposal should not result in any detrimental or harmful effects on these assets or the Conservation Area in general.

4 Design Proposal and Justification

- 4.1 The overriding principles adopted in formulating the development proposals have been to:
- a) identify sustainable uses for the application premises that will result in its continued economic use, and which in turn will contribute to the maintenance and preservation of this historic asset; and,
 - b) identify uses that do not result in any detriment or harmful effects to the application site asset and others in the vicinity; the local conservation area and the green belt;
 - c) propose uses that do not result in any detriment to the amenity of local residents.

Proposed Uses

Guest Accommodation

- 4.2 By virtue of planning approval 15/0683/FUL, the permitted use of the application premises is a mixed one of both a single dwelling house and a Well Being Retreat Centre. The latter use being where paying guests book accommodation to stay at the Castle and make use of its facilities and grounds to enjoy” a tranquil and relaxing experience “.
- 4.3 Under the terms of a unilateral undertaking entered into in September 2016, the Well Being Retreat use has been defined as “Retreat means the use of the site for a wellbeing experience with guest hotel accommodation to be accessible to and used by guests staying at the site for a pre-booked period comprising no less than 2 nights’ accommodation in accordance with the management plan. “
- 4.4 The undertaking further restricted the Well Being use by: not allowing the use or occupation of the Retreat by pre-booked guests for more than 48 weeks in any calendar year. It also restricted the occupation of the Retreat to no more than 34 persons in the 18 bedrooms at any one time when not in use as a private residence.
- 4.5 Albeit not falling into a specified use class, the approved Well Being use would appear to be virtually the same as a hotel or guest house C1 use. The only difference being the services on offer which mainly relate to diet. There is no standard medical treatment on offer and it is not a D1 use. Guests are required to pre-book, which is the norm in the majority of guest houses or hotels Neither are guests obliged to undertake any specific treatment at the Well Being Centre unless they agree to do so. The only apparent difference between the approved Well Being use and a hotel or guest house C1 use, would appear to be that the Well Being guests are required to stay for 2 nights’ minimum and the Well Being use can only operate 48 weeks in any calendar year, both of which appear to be arbitrary in nature with no logical reasoning behind them.
- 4.6 To allow greater flexibility to the attraction of guests to the Castle, which in turn will support its upkeep, the application proposal seeks to vary the permitted use of the premises by removing the restrictions on guests using the castle accommodation, specifically,
- 1) The accommodation at the Castle be open to guests not attending the Well Being Retreat;

- 2) Guests attending the Well Being Retreat or independently using the Castle accommodation not being restricted to a minimum of 2 nights stay;
 - 3) The restriction on the use of the Castle for a Well Being Retreat or general accommodation for a maximum of 48 weeks in a calendar year be removed.
- 4.7 It is also proposed that the Castle is allowed to be let out separately for private holiday accommodation as follows 14 for the Moathouse, 14 for the Castle main house, and the four turrets with 2/4 people in each.

Meeting/Lecture Venue and Film Location

- 4.8 The unilateral undertaking attached to planning consent 15/0683/FUL further restricts the use of the Castle by not allowing its use for the purposes of, inter alia: functions/events; corporate events; film location and activity days. This proposal seeks to relax this restriction by permitting the Castle ground floor accommodation to be used as a conference/ meeting venue and secondly, for the Castle and its grounds to be used a film location venue.

Amount

- 4.9 The removal of the restrictions on guest accommodation proposed would not require any alteration to the numbers of rooms or guests currently permitted to stay at the castle. No physical alterations would be required to the Castle to accommodate the proposal. The existing kitchen and dining room are of sufficient capacity to cater for guests without addition or alteration. The Castle already has sufficient bathrooms for guests, and no alterations to the Castle fabric are required for the proposed variation of use.
- 4.10 The ground floor and basement common rooms of the Castle, provide any opportunity for guests at the Castle to use them to hold them for business meetings or lectures. The limited size and number of the ground floor and basement rooms would however restrict those attending to a small number.
- 4.11 The historical setting of the Castle, its rooms and grounds, provide an ideal opportunity for it to be used as a setting for film locations on occasional basis. Such a proposed use would be subject to agreement on the frequency of use, limitations of hours and numbers of personnel involved.

Layout

- 4.12 The proposed variations to the uses at the application premises will not involve any changes to the existing approved layouts.

Scale

- 4.13 The proposed variations to the permitted uses of the Castle will not result in any material alteration to the scale of the uses permitted already. The removal of restrictions on guests staying at the Castle will not result in any alteration to the numbers staying or the hours of operation or the frequency of deliveries or callers. Similarly, the use of the Castle as a meeting, lecture venue will be by those guests already staying at the Castle. The proposed use of the Castle and grounds as a film location will only

be on an occasional basis and it is proposed that numbers, hours of operation and locations be agreed beforehand.

Appearance

- 4.14 The proposals will not result in any permanent changes to the appearance of the application premises. Any structures or scenery erected in connection with the use as a film location will only be on a temporary basis.

Access

- 4.15 The proposed changes of use will not require any alterations to the existing access to the application premises either by foot or vehicle. The already approved parking arrangements for the Castle are considered adequate to accommodate guest vehicles and deliveries

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposal represents a sustainable and viable use of the Castle that will ensure its continued occupation with the economic benefits helping to preserve and maintain this heritage asset.
- 5.2 The proposal will have no detrimental or harmful effects on the Castle or other heritage assets in the locality.
- 5.3 The proposal does not constitute inappropriate development in the green belt or result in a reduction in its openness.
- 5.4 The proposal would not result in any detriment to the amenities of local residents.
- 5.5 The proposal is in accordance with development plan policies and national planning guidance and should therefore be permitted.