Planning & Heritage Impact Statement

Caverswall Castle

Planning Statement
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ASTILL PLANNING

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Astill Planning Consultants Ltd on behalf of Mr Robin MacDonald, the owners of the application site, in support of an application to vary approval SMD/2015/0683 to allow the property to be used as a holiday let, conference venue and a film location.

1.2 The primary purpose of this planning statement is to assess the proposed development against relevant development plan policy and material planning considerations, and to explain the environmental and technical aspects of the proposal.

1.3 Section 2 of this document sets out a description of the site and its surroundings. Section 3 provides details of the development proposals. Section 5 lays out the relevant planning policy and material considerations underpinning the proposal. Section 6 provides an assessment of the proposed development in planning terms, and Section 7 sets out the Statement's conclusions.

2 Application Site & Surroundings

2.1 The site is located within the village of Caverwall, a small settlement located approximately 0.5 miles from the urban conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent. Caverswall Castle and its grounds are sited within the Caverswall Conservation Area and comprises of a number of statutorily listed heritage assets. A list of the heritage assets contained within the application 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	**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.
Grade II		**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.
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.

2.2 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 promiment 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 AREADEFINED 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 round 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, exhuberantly 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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

2.5 The site is located outside Caverswall 's village development boundary and falls within an area designated as greenbelt land.

3 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposal essentially seeks to amend the existing consent for change of use of the castle to a mixed use of residential dwelling house and well-being retreat centre with guest hotel accommodation and the creation of a car park, to enable the building to be additionally rented for holiday lets, used as a conference venue and a film location. In addition, it is also proposed that the restriction on patrons who wish to stay for only one night is removed.

3.2 It is proposed that a Unilateral Undertaking is entered into in order to control the following proposed uses in the following manner:

- Number of patron's using the proposed conference venue, along with the hours of attendance for the said patrons who are not using the guest facilities. It is proposed that conference use will be limited to normal working hours such as 8am - 6pm or will only involve residents staying overnight - numbers will not exceed residential use of up to 40 people.
- Numbers of people on site using the site as a film location.

3.3 It should be noted that there is no intention to be using the Castle or grounds as a major film set with hundreds of extras re-enacting historic battle scenes, but rather a smaller scale use where numbers are kept the same or lower as residential use - i.e. under 40 people. It is anticipated that most photography use will be with numbers less than 5 and filming approximately 5-10 people.

4 Development Plan Policy & Material Considerations

National Planning Policy

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. The NPPF replaces a raft of national government policy and is intended to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth.

4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.3 The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications.

4.4 The Foreword to the NPPF is clear that;

4.5 "The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development"

4.6 The overall purpose of the NPPF is that planning should contribute to the "achievement of sustainable development" (para 6). There are three dimensions to sustainable development (para 7):

- An economic role – ensuring that sufficient land of the right type and is available in the right place at the right time to support growth and innovation;
- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations together with providing everyday needs; and
- An environmental role that contributes to protecting and enhancing natural resources.

4.7 Paragraph 9 notes that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life including (but not limited to):

- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;
- moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;6
- replacing poor design with better design;

- improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and
- widening the choice of high quality homes.

4.8 Paragraph 10 states that "plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas."

4.9 Paragraph 14 states that "at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking".

With regard to decision taking it states:

"For decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
  - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
  - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted."

4.10 Paragraph 197 reiterates the presumption when it states that:

"In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development."

4.11 Section 1 of the NPPF sets out the Governments planning policy approach to building a strong competitive economy.

4.12 Paragraph 19 states that:

"Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system."

4.13 Section 9 of the NPPF sets out the Governments approach to protecting Green Belt Land. Paragraph 79 states that:

"The government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence."

4.14 Paragraph 87 makes it clear that as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. This further expanded upon in paragraph 88, which states that:

"Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

4.15 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out the Governments planning policy approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

4.16 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that:

"In determining applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."

4.17 Paragraph 129 of the NPPF sets out the approach Local Planning Authorities should take to assessing the significance of a heritage asset affected by a proposal (including development affecting the setting of a heritage asset). It states that "they should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."

4.18 Paragraph 131 confirms that when determining planning applications; "local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

4.19 Paragraph 132 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."

4.20 Paragraph 134 confirms that:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use."

4.21 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that:

"In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

4.22 Paragraph 136 seeks to ensure that:

"Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred."

4.23 Paragraph 137 states that:

"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably."

4.24 "Significance" in terms of heritage policy is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as;

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

4.25 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as;

"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as

the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."

4.26 National Government guidance upon the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account in the decision making process is contained in Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It states the following;

"Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not.

4.27 The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

4.28 The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance.

4.29 When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation."

4.30 Guidance on how to assess if a proposal causes substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset is also provided. Paragraph 17, states that "In general terms; substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases." It goes onto provide the following example:

"In determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting."

4.31 In addition, paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that;

"Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."

Local Development Plan Policy

4.32 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Core Strategy adopted in March 2014 sets out what the District would like to achieve in each of the main towns and the rural areas outside the Peak District National Park. The following policies are pertinent to the development of the site:

4.33 ***SS1 Development Principles.*** The policy expects the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands District.

4.34 ***SS1a Presumption in favour of sustainable development.*** The policy sets out how the Council will ensure that decisions taken in respect to development proposals will reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.35 ***SS2 Future Provision of Development.*** The policy details how the Council will ensure that the current and future objectively assessed development needs of the District are met.

4.36 ***SS6C Rural area strategy.*** The policy Sets out the Councils approach to development outside of the development and infill boundaries of the towns and villages.

4.37 ***SD1 Sustainable Development.*** The policy details how all new development in the District will make sustainable use of resources and adapt to climate change.

4.38 ***SD4 Pollution and Flood Risk***. This policy among other things seeks to ensure that schemes which constitute unacceptable amenity impacts in regard to noise and light pollution are avoided.

4.39 ***R1 Rural Diversification.*** The policy aims to ensure that proposals for the reuse of buildings outside the development boundaries of towns and villages will constitute appropriate development, which enhances and does not harm the rural character, environmental quality of an area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved.

4.40 ***DC2 Historic Environment.*** The policy sets out how the Council will safeguard and enhance the historic environment within the District.

4.41 ***DC3 Landscape and Settlements.*** The policy sets out how the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

4.42 ***T1 Development and Sustainable Transport.*** The policy sets out how the Council will seek to promote development which reduces the reliance upon the private car for travel journeys.

5 Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 The proposal as submitted does not seek to make any external or internal alterations to the Grade 1 Listed heritage asset or its setting, other than those already approved by planning and listed building consents SMD/2015/06/83 and SMD/2015/06/71.

5.2 The development already approved as part of applications SMD/2015/06/83 and SMD/2015/06/71 comprised of the change of use of the Castle to a mixed use of residential dwelling house and well-being retreat centre with guest hotel accommodation, creation of a car park, demolition of existing summer pool building and alteration, and extension of the existing outbuilding to provide estate workshop and garaging for three cars in connection with the proposed use.

5.3 These applications where supported by a detailed Historical Environment Desk Based Assessment by Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology Service, which in summary found the following:

- The change of use of the Castle to a combined residence/ Well Being Centre will have an **imperceptible** direct impact on the asset.
- The potential for a burial ground in the area of the planned car park to the south of the moat has indicated that the likelihood of interments in this plot is low and the probably impact **imperceptible**.
- The impact of the car park upon the setting of designated assets, chiefly the Castle and adjacent structures, St. Peter's Church and associated structures, and Dove Farmhouse is considered, respectively, to be **low**, **low negligible** and **negligible**.

5.4 Given that the proposal would not seek to make any external or internal alterations to the Grade 1 Listed heritage asset or its setting, other than those already approved and that a Unilateral

Undertaking would be used to control the intensity of the additional proposed uses, it is clear the heritage impact would remain unaltered from the findings of Stoke-On-Trent Archaeologies Report, which is summarised above.

6 Assessment of Proposed Development

6.1 The proposal can be most simply assessed in terms of three main issues, the first whether the proposed use would have a negative effect upon the special architectural and historic interest of Caverswall Castle, which is a grade I listed building has been adequately dealt with above. As such, the main remaining issues to be assessed are as follows:

i. The effect of the proposal upon the Green Belt
ii. The effect of the proposal upon the living conditions of neighbouring residents, predominately from noise and disturbance

The effect of the proposal upon the Green Belt

6.2 There are no changes proposed to the appearance of the green belt other than those approved as part of application SMD/2015/06/83. There would therefore be no resulting effect upon the quality or openness of the green belt.

The effect of the proposal upon the living conditions of neighbouring residents, predominately from noise and disturbance

6.3 There will be no large groups of people leaving at unsocial hours as part of the proposed and consented use, and the Moat House is now a composite part of the Castle once more.

6.4 It is also not intended to deviate from the agreed terms of the Management Plan attached to the existing Unilateral Undertaking, which ensures that supplier/delivery vehicles only using the East Lodge access in certain circumstances.

6.5 It is proposed that a Unilateral Undertaking is entered into in order to control the following proposed uses in the following manner:

- Number of patron's using the proposed conference venue, along with the hours of attendance for the said patrons who are not using the guest facilities. It is proposed that conference use will be limited to normal working hours such as 8am - 6pm or will only involve residents staying overnight - numbers will not exceed residential use of up to 40 people.
- Numbers of people on site using the site as a film location.

6.6 Given the nature of the uses proposed and the use of appropriate controls on the numbers, frequency of use and hours of attendance, it is therefore clear that the living conditions of neighbouring residents would not be unduly affected by the proposal.

6.7 It should also be noted that in respect to the proposed holiday lettings use the Castle & Moathouse have a both previously used for such a use. From 1993 - 2006 for the Castle and from 2000 - 2012 for the Moathouse. Numbers of guests will be in line with normal residential use, and will be split as follows, 14 for the Moathouse, 14 for the Castle main house, and the four turrets with 2/4 people in each. Furthermore, the adjacent Dove house barns are operating upon a similar basis with 60 bed spaces.

6.8 In conclusion, the proposed scheme accords with both national and local planning policy. Therefore, the proposal should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF the proposed development and be approved without delay.