

Burnett, James

From: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: FW: Comment Received from Public Access

-----Original Message-----

From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk [mailto:planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk]
Sent: Thursday, July 06, 2017 1:04 PM
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Application Reference No. : SMD/2017/0252 Site Address: Caverswall Castle Blythe Bridge Road Caverswall
Staffordshire ST11 9EA Stoke On Trent
Comments by: Phillip and Helen Bunn
From:

THE COACH HOUSE
BLYTHE BRIDGE RD
CAVERSWALL
STOKE ON TRENT
STAFFORDSHIRE
ST11 9EA

Submission: Objection

Comments: On behalf of my wife and myself, I am writing to object to the planning application currently submitted for Caverswall Castle.

We objected to the previous application, which was, unfortunately for us, granted to Mr McDonald, so we have to ask the question, what is wrong with the permission that has already been granted? Mr McDonald has not to our knowledge acted upon his previous application at all so why apply to expand the use of Caverswall Castle? This is just what we feared would happen - that whatever permission was granted, it wasn't going to be enough!

Previous planning permission was granted subject to conditions and therefore a unilateral agreement was agreed and signed. It states in the decision notice that restrictions were placed to 'avoid risk of disturbance to neighbouring dwellings from noise during unsocial hours' - 'to minimise any harmful impact on amenity of neighbouring occupiers' this agreement was put in place in order to safeguard the amenities and the privacy of us and the other residents who also live within the castle grounds. Once again to state, the previous application was, as we feared, not enough for the current owner of Caverswall Castle, we feel that he will not be happy until he has full commercial use of the castle and holds regular events there, similar to our previous experiences during which Mr McDonald flaunted planning laws and operated without the correct permission.

We furthermore wish to state that all of the issues for which castle has previously been refused permission remain and have in no way changed! Four families still live within close proximity to the Castle, and share amenities, including a driveway within the grounds, of Caverswall Castle and any traffic whether by car or foot can not gain entry into the castle without passing at least one of the other residents properties.

I would like to highlight recommendations proposed by John L Gray, when just one of the previous planning applications was refused in 2009. John L. Gray summarised that,

“Overriding all of these considerations, however, is the matter of residential amenity. I am in no doubt that the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings – the Moat House, East Lodge, West Lodge, the Keys and the Coach House – would suffer unacceptable noise and disturbance of various sorts and that that in itself suffices to dismiss the appeal.”

Our concerns and fears are not unfounded as we had a period of time when Mr McDonald did operate events, it has to be noted, without the correct permissions, in the manner to which we feel the current owner would like to see again. Many previous issues experienced, such as noise, were regularly monitored by the council and found to exceed maximum levels suggested by the World Health Organization. We furthermore experienced music, fireworks, strangers walking around - some under the influence of alcohol, cars blocking our entry almost every weekend, using the lights on our home for smoking areas, our driveways as toilets. Can you imagine walking your children to school in the morning to find vomit, bottles etc on your shared driveway and security guards stopping you from entering your own properties!

With this new planning proposal, Mr McDonald has applied for an increase in guests, who could turn up to Caverswall Castle without prior bookings and also to use the building and land for filming events, (no doubt to film more adult films that have previously been filmed in the Castle!) therefore this would undoubtedly ensue in an increase in traffic, deliveries and an increase in guests and with three young children who ride bikes and use the private shared driveway regularly, we would worry about security and safety. The increase in traffic via East Lodge and strangers regularly walking around the private grounds would be of great concern for everyone's safety. Also there is already a primary school almost opposite East Lodge and two churches within close proximity. Additionally, any proposed activities, both inside and outside Caverswall Castle, would disturb the peaceful setting and location that we have lived in for many years obviously prior to the applicant arriving to ruin the area for us!

Our concerns are that if any limited commercial permission is granted to the current owner of Caverswall Castle, the situation would rapidly revert back to how it previously was, as given an inch - he would take a mile! and consequently would be holding events and weddings, in fact, anything he could make money from within days! Also let us not forget that, after years of operating Caverswall Castle without relevant permission, it went into liquidation, with debts which left lots of couples, who had booked weddings, thousands of pounds out of pocket! Following this Mr McDonald then went on to purchase the Moat House (other side of the castle)!

We feel that the current owner of Caverswall Castle is not its saviour but has in fact probably caused more damage to the fabric of the historic castle than any good!

Within the planning application, it appears that Mr McDonald is trying to use the power of the internet to influence any decision made. This is disgraceful and smacks of desperation and in no way should any of these opinions, many of which are poorly informed, be allowed to influence any decision by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, in fact we are sure that the people who lost lots of money would feel very differently! Some comments to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council are hurtful to us personally, but would they complain if they had had to endure what we have for the past approximately ten/eleven years?

We therefore respectfully request that this planning application is refused.

Phillip and Helen Bunn