

PLANNING, HERITAGE AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



**PROPOSAL : INSTALLATION OF REPLACEMENT SEPTIC TANK
(RETROSPECTIVE)**

**ADDRESS : JOHN MUNROE INDEPENDENT HOSPITAL, HORTON
ROAD, RUDYARD, LEEK, ST13 8RU**

APPLICANT : JOHN MUNROE HOSPITAL

DATE : JANUARY 2018

JOB No. : 2017-2291

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by John Munroe Hospital to prepare and submit a planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for a retrospective application to install a replacement septic tank. The site is located in the open countryside and defined as being within the Green Belt and within the Rudyard Conservation Area.

2.0 USE

The use of the property remains unaltered

3.0 AMOUNT

The site area amounts to 100m²

4.0 LAYOUT

The replacement septic tank has been installed on the site of the original septic tank.

5.0 SCALE

The scale of the proposal will be low as it is underground and comparable to the original installation that it replaces.

6.0 LANDSCAPING

The area surrounding the septic tank will be re-seeded with grass.

7.0 APPEARANCE

The proposed use will have a minimal impact due to the installation being located underground. The only elements that will be visible will be the access points to the inspection chambers that will generally be level with the ground.

8.0 ACCESS

The proposal will not involve any changes to the access arrangements.

9.0 PLANNING POLICY

As you will be aware Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Given this obligation, this chapter therefore considers national guidance relevant to the application as well as the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014). The following is considered relevant:

Core Strategy,

SS1 – Development Principles

SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS6c - Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

SD1 – Sustainable Use of Resources

DC1 – Design Considerations

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National Planning Policy Framework

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Core Strategy Development Document. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

Paragraphs 1 – 17.

1. Building a strong, competitive economy
7. Require good design
9. Protecting Green Belt land
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Within the NPPF it is also worth noting the following relevant paragraphs:

- Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para 2).
- 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, (para 10)
- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, (para 11).
- At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LPA's should approve proposals which accord with the development plan without delay (para 14).
- The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future (para 18)
- The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. 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 (para 19)
- The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (para 56)
- 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 (para 79)
- Green Belt serves five purposes:
 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land (para 80)
- Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:
 - mineral extraction;
 - engineering operations;
 - local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
 - the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and
 - development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order (para 90)
- 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. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation (para 128)
- 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 (para 134)

10.0 HERITAGE & SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

- 1) A description of the heritage asset, its history and its setting

The Rudyard Conservation Area Appraisal published in July 2016 and accompanies the designation of the conservation area that was formed on 20th July 2016. Conservation Areas are designated by Local Authorities under fulfilment of duties imposed by Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990. This defines Conservation Areas as:

'areas of special architectural or historic interest of the character and appearance of the of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'

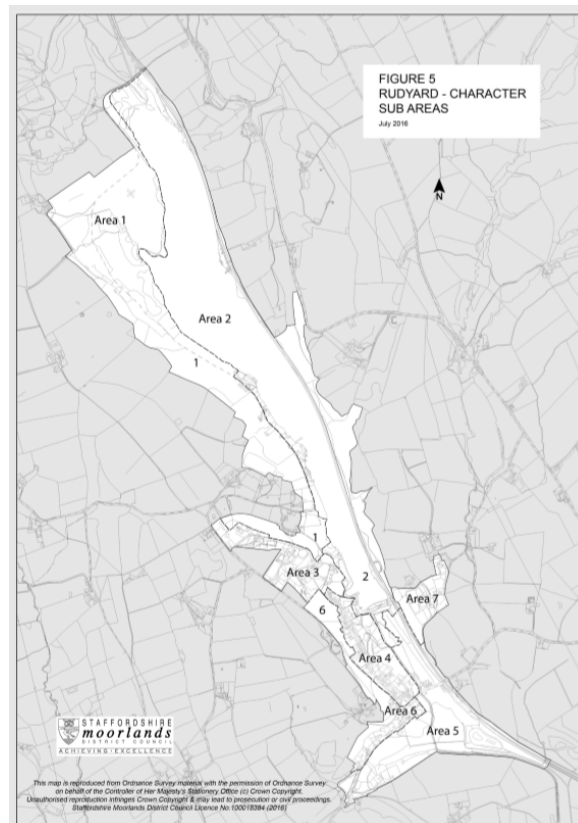
Conservation Area status is a material consideration in the evaluation of planning applications. Section 72 of the 1990 Act requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of achieving preservation or enhancement through their decision making. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 makes it a duty for the Local Planning Authority, in reaching its decision, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The extent of Rudyard Conservation Area is shown in the map below, which is taken from the Character Appraisal:



Rudyard Conservation Area consists of seven Character Areas as follows and shown in the map below:

1. Cliffe Park Estate and Reacliffe Road
2. The Damhead and Lake
3. Villas and Rudyard Vale
4. Lake Road
5. Southern Area and low-lying water courses
6. Whorrocks Bank and Dunwood Lane
7. Willgate



The application proposes a replacement septic tank on a property that is located within the recently designated Rudyard Conservation Area. The application property is sited off Horton Road and is located within Area no.3 'Villas and Rudyard Vale' that states:

To the east of Camrose Hill, where the ground begins to plateau, are the large houses of Horton Lodge and Fairview, which sit in extensive grounds, each emphasised at the road by a well-preserved gatelodge; that to Fairview is an Arts and Crafts inspired building, with half-timbered gables, whilst that to Horton Lodge is characterised by spiky gables, chimney stacks and finials. Further along the road is an attractive detached cottage, also with half-timbering, called Wits End. The land to the north of Fairview was still moorland by 1879, edged by woods to the east and the mature landscaped gardens of Fairview.

Fairview (John Munroe Private Independent Hospital) is described as follows in the Character Appraisal:

'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. The building is served by a picturesque half-timbered gatelodge, of Arts and Crafts style, quite different from the main house, on Camrose Hill.

2) An assessment of significance

NPPF paragraph 131 says that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and (inter alia) putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. NPPF paragraph 132 says that, "great weight should be given to the asset's conservation" and that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Paragraph 134 states that where a development would lead to "less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset this harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal including securing its optimal viable use".

Heritage 'significance' is defined in 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.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that "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." It goes on, "Works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

The application property is a non-listed building that occupies a prominent position in this character area. Its presence contributes to the historic character of the conservation area and street scene. The property has been altered greatly over the years, but the site still positively contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

3) An explanation of the design concept for the proposed development.

The new septic tank by virtue of its very own nature will result in no harmful heritage impacts and in turn the development will not have a negative impact on the heritage significance of the area. The new development will not adversely harm the conservation area. Neither will it adversely harm other key heritage assets in the locality. Whilst the design of the proposal is determined by the functional requirements it clearly respects the conservation area, as the external impact will be negligible given that it is located underground and will therefore not detract greatly from the existing or previous appearance as it had a similar unit installed previously.

4) Describing the impact of the proposed development

The new development will not adversely harm the conservation area. Neither will it adversely harm the setting of any nearby listed buildings or other key heritage assets. The current character and appearance of the application site itself has been disturbed due to the installation of the new septic tank, but the land that has been disturbed will be improved and restored through a programme of grass re-seeding. It is therefore concluded that the proposal will not result in a harmful impact on the heritage asset, which in this instance is the Rudyard Conservation Area.

11.0 SUMMARY

A key principle of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework definition of sustainable development is:

“Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don’t mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate. Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment”

The NPPF determines that sustainable development includes three dimensions:- economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- **Environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy
- **Economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **Social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and

by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being;

The application site comprises a small area to the immediate south-east of the main building. To the south of the site is a field and Horton Road beyond. The development subject of this planning application is for the replacement septic tank that reached the end of its operational life. Unfortunately, the applicant did not realise that planning permission was required for a replacement installation.

As the site is located within the Green Belt consideration is made towards relevant policy and in particular national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in 2012. Paragraphs 87 and 88 of the NPPF state:

'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 (para 87)'

'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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 (para 88)'

The proposed development subject to this application should be deemed to be covered by engineering operations under paragraph 90 of the NPPF (stated as not inappropriate providing the openness of the Green Belt is preserved). If the Council does not consider this to be the case, then the fact that the development subject of this application constitutes a replacement unit should be sufficient to demonstrate 'very special circumstances'. Therefore, as the proposals are limited in scale, are unlikely to have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt and replace an existing facility constituting very special circumstances, the proposals are acceptable in light of paragraphs 87 to 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the landscaping proposal to restore the land to a grassed area will form suitable mitigation measures to restore the land and minimise the impact of the development to the satisfaction of Local Planning Authority.

12.0 CONCLUSION

The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 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.

The application is considered to accord with policies in the Development Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. At the heart of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 of the Framework identifies three key elements of sustainability based on social, economic and environmental dimensions. This proposal responds positively towards all three elements and as such, the Local Authority is politely requested to support this application for a replacement septic tank and grant retrospective planning permission accordingly.