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**Design and access statement**

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF REDUNDANT YOUTH CLUB, HOLT LANE, KINGSLEY, STOKE-ON-TRENT ST10 2BB**




*Photo courtesy of google earth*

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**Design and Access Statement**

Planning application for proposed demolition of the redundant youth club, and construction of 4no bungalows at Former Youth and Community Centre, Holt lane, Kingsley, Stoke-On-Trent ST10 2BB

**Introduction/Context**

The former clubhouse has not been used for around 8 years, the property had been broken into and vandalised. The former playing fields are overgrown with grass and used almost exclusively by dog walkers. Because of the current state of the centre and other amenities in the surrounding area, there is strong evidence that the facilities are no longer required.

The applicant has fitted a further steel gate and new posts at the entrance of the site for enhanced security to the site to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and campers overnight on the site.

A planning application was submitted in January 2018 to convert the redundant clubhouse into a single family dwelling. Parish councillors were saddened by the loss of the facility, but were supportive of the redundant building being put to good use. Consultation with the planning officer during the determination period, however it was agreed that the application would be withdrawn. The dwelling resulting for the conversion process would have been quite a large 5 bedroom dwelling due to the footprint of the building, but didn't really lend itself to subdivision into two dwellings due to the location of the building on the site, one of the dwellings would have very little private garden space. It was also discussed that working with what has become a very poor quality building wouldn't result in a good quality building without extensive replacement or enhancement of structural walls.

**Proposal**

Continuing consultation with planning officers it was agreed that the better course of action would be to demolish the redundant building rather than trying to work with it. Clearance of the site would allow for the construction of four new bungalows on the site. This gives the opportunity to move the existing entrance further along the site towards the midway point which is on a slight curve in the road to increase the visibility of oncoming traffic for vehicles exiting the site safely.

The proposed bungalows shall be of a similar size, each providing two bedroom living accommodation, a large kitchen / dining room with a patio door leading to a private garden space. The proposed development shall occupy the brownfield site area of the former youth club and carpark area, to include the demolition of the redundant small store, previously used for goal post/net storage and training equipment on the site, and squaring off the area to provide sensible garden and parking spaces.

The former youth centre is sited on the edge of a redundant football field which is currently overgrown and neglected. There are no proposals for the former football pitch, which is outside of the development boundary. A timber 5 bar gate shall be built into the boundary fence to allow access to the field.

The proposed dwellings shall each have off road parking for two private cars. The homes shall be suitable for retired couples rather than families with younger children, the additional parking space shall allow for visitor parking within resorting to parking on the road.

A footpath has been laid which runs between Kingsley and Kingsley Holt and as such runs past the application site, and serves as a safe walk for school children and other pedestrians between the villages.

**Use/Amount**

The proposed dwellings provide a sensible and practical living accommodation for a middle aged or elderly couple, with a guest room for a visitor or perhaps a live in carer, having an internal floor area of approx. 75m² exceeding the minimum housing standards requirements Each dwelling shall have off road parking for two vehicles, for the occupants and visitors to minimise any on road parking. Whilst it is more likely that a refuse lorry would reverse onto the site to collect the household waste, there is sufficient space on the site road to allow a delivery or emergency vehicle to execute a 3 point manoeuvre on site to exit using forward gear.

Each of the proposed dwelling will have an open frontage to the site and also a private rear boundary, secured by a timber fence boundary fence to the rear, each having a combined garden area in excess of 110m²

**Layout**

The layout of each proposed dwelling shall be a single storey traditional bungalow design having an open plan kitchen/lounge area, which will open onto the private garden via a pair of patio doors. The front door shall open to a hall leading to the two bedrooms, one of which shall have an accessible wetroom ensuite facility and also a separate bathroom.

The proposed layout provides best use of the space for the scale of the dwelling, allowing for a potential wheelchair user to access all of the bungalow, with space for turning, etc..

**Scale**

The scale of each of the proposed dwellings shall be consistent with a similar 2 bedroom bungalow elsewhere. Having a ridge of approximately 5.1m high, each dwelling is considerably smaller in scale than the existing community building, having a ridge height of approximately 6.3m. The community hall currently provides an internal floor area of approximately 264.5m², whilst each of the proposed bungalows have a floor area of between 75.30m² and 77.6m², giving a combined floor area of 305.76m² which demonstrates a modest increase of floor area on the site of around 41.2m², which is a percentage increase of 15.5%. The overall volume of the former clubhouse is around 1117m² against the combined volume of the proposed dwellings of 1191m², indicated a small increase of approximately 6.6%

**Appearance**

The proposed dwellings shall be built from red/brown facing brickwork to the external walls to match the existing properties elsewhere in Kingsley, with low pitched interlocking concrete tiles.

The proposed application is designed to make best use of the site available and enhance the appearance of the site and also to enhance the overall character and appearance of the area, to support the community, complementing the style and traditions of the local buildings.

The pictures below show the youth and community centre as existing, we believe the proposal will enhance the surrounding area as the site and dwelling will be maintained by the owners of the proposed dwelling.





**Landscaping**

The site boundary shall remain similar to existing with native species hedging on the roadside boundary to be kept cut low to allow the roadside dwellings to face and view the road. The adjacent land to the north and east is raised providing natural screening from beyond the site, an established hedgerow on the western boundary to existing dwellings will maintain screening.

The area to the rear of the dwellings will be mainly grass with blocked paving for the drive area. The site access shall be a tarmac finish from the main road.

A tree report on the site by ARB identifies all the tree on the site to be of a C condition class. An oak tree on the site has been identified as its root zone being affected by the proposed Plot 4. This is proposed to be taken down and five replacement Oak trees shall be planted elsewhere on the site

**Access**

A new access shall be formed off Holt lane closer to the middle of roadside boundary length, taking it closer to Kingsley village, but also to a slight curve in the road where visibility is better for drivers exiting the site to see oncoming traffic.

The site is of a reasonable level, which will allow for level access to the dwelling, complying with current building regulations requirements.

There are 4no public footpaths with stiles formed on the boundary to the football field site which shall be maintained.

**Loss of community asset, public open space**

The former clubhouse and playing fields have not been used for around 7 years, the property had been broken into and vandalised. The former playing fields are overgrown with grass and used almost exclusively by dog walkers.

Councillor Ivor Lucas exhausted all avenues to retain the community centre and find a use for its continued community asset. The fact that the clubhouse and playing fields were sold and because of the current state of the centre and the playing fields, there is a strong indication that there isn't a requirement for this facility.

Currently there is a football pitch in Kingsley Holt which is approximately 500 yards from the community centre, a further pitch is situated approximately 300 yards from the community centre, to the right of St Werburghs primary school and is used for football practice on Saturday mornings.

On 20th October 2015, Staffordshire Football Association reported that a sum of £69,861 of National Lottery funding had been allocated to Cheadle SMU FC for the renovation and upgrade of facilities at the former Youth and Community centre in Kingsley and the adjoining pitches.
http://www.staffordshirefa.com/news/2015/oct/cheadle-smu-funding

On 30th January 2017 the Stoke Sentinel reported that The Kingsley Youth and Community Centre is for sale, Trustee Ivor Lucas said they had to make the difficult decision to put the site on the market.
http://m.stokesentinel.co.uk/holt-lane-s-kingsley-youth-and-community-centre-up-for-sale-with-20-parties-interested/story-30095306-detail/story.html

Two years after plans to renovate the Holt Lane Centre, he stated they have been losing money and even sent flyers around the village about the centre and that didn't work, because they already have another village hall in the area. They had a number of slimming groups use the building, but none stayed because it was slightly out of the village.

National Lottery funding is usually match funding, with the applicants generally having to match every £1 awarded with £1 of their own money. After securing nearly £70,000 in 2015, for revamping the venue, the funding was handed back.

Kingsley village hall is located 1000 yards from the community centre where they have recently launched a campaign by Martin Wheeler and Ken Unwin to attempt to get it used more.

There are various additional football pitches within the surrounding area such as Ipstones (2miles away), Cauldon Low which is now a hardcore quarry, and Waterhouses has two pitches one of which is redundant which shows there isn't a need for football pitches in the area as they're being left un-used and overgrown. However, there are more up to date facilities located in Oakamoor which has a major sports facility which is used largely during the summer time. The demise of the Leek and Moorland league several years ago and the only option to go into the potteries plus the youth of today want to use the more up to date facilities.

The following was in the Leek Post and Times newspaper about Kingsley Holt Recreation ground:
http://www.leek-news.co.uk/plans-kingsley-holt-recreational-ground/story-28607310-detail/story.html

"Plans to win grant funding to refurbish a village's recreation ground have stalled – but a lesser scheme has been put in motion. The Kingsley Holt Community Fund had applied to the Awards for All, Heritage Lottery Fund, for a £10,000 grant for new play equipment.

However, the group received notice that it has been unsuccessful in the bid.
The information was given to members of Kingsley Parish Council at their monthly meeting which was attended by Jeremy Fallows, Kingsley Holt Best Kept Village co-ordinator, and John Hodgson, secretary of Kingsley Holt Community Fund."

Following from the refusal of a play area they were planning to make it into a community garden however there was little interest from the community.

**Planning Statement**

The site is located outside the settlement boundary of Kingsley, the west boundary of the site also forms the village boundary. The site is considered to be a brownfield site within the greenbelt having already had a development on the site.

The National Planning Policy Framework should support sustainable development. Unfortunately the village of Kingsley and neighbouring Kingsley Holt do not have a shop, however there is a bus stop almost immediately outside the site. The proposed dwellings are small retirement sized bungalows each enjoying a modest private garden area, with vehicular and pedestrian access, and parking for two vehicles to each plot.

A key objective of the National Planning Policy Framework is to encourage well designed buildings and places that can improve the lives of people and communities. The sustainable development plan policies encourage development in sustainable locations and on previously developed land.

The proposed development is to be of a high quality and will add value to the local area and has been designed to respect the site and surroundings, through scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and overall appearance.

**National Planning Policy Framework**

*The UK Sustainable Development Strategy Securing the Future set out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.*
*6. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The policies in paragraphs 18 to 219, taken as a whole, constitute the government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.*
*7. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:*

- *an 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.*

The proposed dwelling makes good use of a redundant building with is becoming an eyesore and a potential hazard.

- *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; 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 properties for the proposal will be suitable for couples to move into downsizing from larger properties. This will allow for a family to move into the area in their vacant property which will contribute to the community regarding the economy as well as playing a social role

within the area. The social role once provided by the community Hall has long since passed, as demonstrated by the lack of support by the local residents for its continued use, which resulted in the Parish Council's decision to sell off the hall and the playing fields. We understand that during the period the site was for sale, there were numerous enquiries made on the land, all for development for housing, etc and there we no enquiries for the retention of a community use, or conversion to another purpose for use by the local community.

- *an 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.*

The site will be enhanced by virtue of cleaning up the site and removing a redundant building, making the site visually attractive whilst contributing to the built environment.

*Policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.*

***Core planning principles***
*17. Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:*

- *be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency*
- *not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives*
- *proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings*
- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);*

- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework*
- *encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value*
- *promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production)*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations*
- *actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable*
- *take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs*

Paragraph 90 of the NPPF allows for the re-use of buildings within the Green Belt provided that the buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Paragraph 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) establishes that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The re-use of buildings of permanent and of substantial construction is identified under this paragraph. The NPPF encourages the re-use of redundant buildings in the countryside. The structure does not require substantial modification before it could be converted to form a dwelling.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is founded on delivering and achieving sustainable development. This means supporting strong and healthy communities, protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment and contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.
The existing Core Strategy was adopted in March 2014 and covers the future development strategy of the area of Staffordshire Moorlands outside of the Peak District National Park.

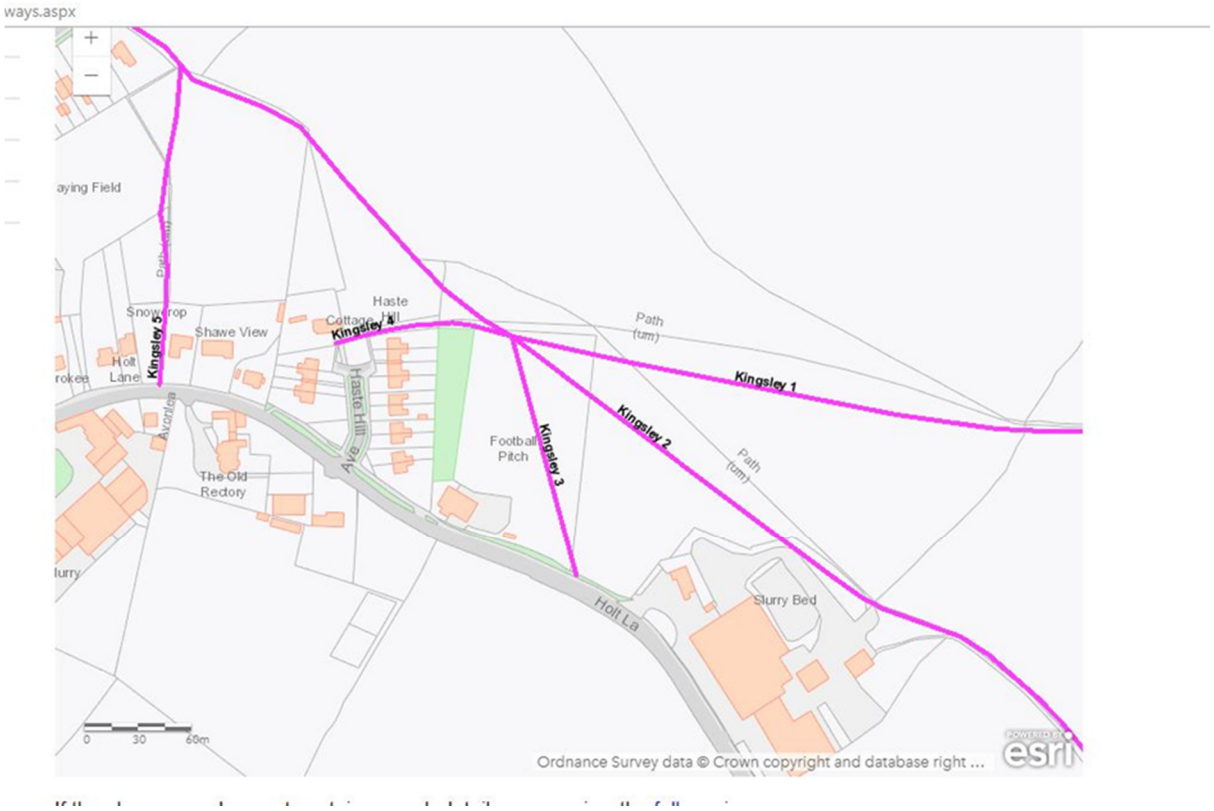
The vision for the future of Staffordshire Moorlands is founded on the delivery of sustainable and balanced communities with an excellent quality of life, with a diversified economy and regeneration assisted by tourism. It seeks to better meet the needs of all sectors of the community and ensure a high standard of design and quality environment within the three principal market towns of Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph as the focus of growth in the area...'

**Impact on Residential Amenity**

The proposal will have no impact on the residential amenity as it will not be adjoining to other applicants and will have its own access, by virtue of the improved access. Although the site has not been used for football and the like for around 7 years, the proposed residential use will has a much lesser impact on the neighbouring properties than having 22 football players and supporters during match days and training.

**Impact on public rights of way.**

The redundant playing field shall remain as existing. There are four public footpaths which cross the playing field site according to SMDC footpath records. Each of the footpaths are outside the proposed development boundary and shall remain unaffected during construction works and thereafter.




**Impact on Highway Safety**

Traffic will be significantly reduced as previously from a community Hall and football clubhouse to use by a single residential family. The proposed new entrance is placed on the slight curve in the road providing a much better visibility for cars exiting the site and viewing on coming cars from both directions.

**Conclusion**

The site although outside the village boundary is suitable for development. The proposal shall not be intrusive upon the wider landscape. The redundant community hall is considered to be a brownfield site, neither can the playing field be considered to be 'true' greenbelt

The current Strategic Housing Market Assessment has identified a shortfall in housing, which means this isn't automatically considered for approval, but the new owners moving into the properties will free up a dwelling further down the housing chain and will assist the economy and also provide dwellings which wouldn't otherwise be available..

The site as a community asset has been long lost, and proven there has been no real interest to retain the playing fields.