Rob Duncan
Planning
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Miss. J. Howard
Development Services
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6HQ

7th September 2018

Dear Julie

RETENTION OF RETAINING AND EXPANSION OF YARD AREA – THE YARD, BACK LANE, LEEK

I refer to our previous discussions in respect of the above matter, and would be grateful if you would find enclosed a retrospective planning application for the retention of the retaining wall and expanded yard area on the site.

The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Leek, and is located to the immediate west of the applicant's existing commercial repair garage. The land was previously over-grown aside from a track which leads up to the land behind to the south of the site. The applicant subsequently undertook works to excavate some of the embankment and retain it behind a new retaining wall in order to provide an additional yard area to improve the general operation and efficiency of his existing business, and to provide security for the vehicles.

Policies SS5a and E1 of the Core Strategy offer support for the creation of employment growth within the District, with the latter expressing preference for business developments to be located in or on the edge of town centres, as is the case here. Policy E1 goes on to offer support for the expansion of existing businesses provided that there would not be an unacceptable impact on the amenities, character or appearance of the area. These provisions are broadly reflected within paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that:

> *"Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development"*

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The works undertaken on site, and the corresponding change of use of the land, were driven by the applicant's desire to provide additional storage for vehicles and materials on the site whilst they are awaiting repair, and in the interests of providing a more efficient site layout to the benefit of his business operations and productivity. The provisions of paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework is therefore considered to lend significant weight in favour of the proposed development.

The retaining structure erected is modest in nature, and owing to surrounding topography, vegetation and boundary treatments, does not derive any harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, as it is obscured from public view. The resultant embankment is to be seeded to grass which will assimilate it with the vegetation behind. Similarly, the change of use of the land to increase the size of the applicant's existing commercial yard area also derives no adverse impact to the character and appearance of the area. The works furthermore do not derive any adverse impact to the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS5a, E1 and DC1 of the Core Strategy.

For these reasons I submit that there is a compelling case for planning permission to be granted to retain the works undertaken. Nevertheless should you have any queries or concerns in respect of this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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