DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2020/0123 **Valid 05/03/2020**	**ISAAC WALTON FARM** **CRESSWELL LANE** **CRESSWELL**	**RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR THE ACCESS TRACK AND PARKING FROM CRESSWELL OLD ROAD.** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES
Impact on the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the area.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE
The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and comprises a parcel of land located to the south of Isaac Walton Farm (the applicant's property) and to the east and northeast of the Isaac Walton Public House (closed). Mature landscaping and trees enclose the southern, western and eastern boundaries of the site, with a 2m high wall along the western boundary to the Sandon Road. Beyond the eastern boundary lies an open field.

Izaak Walton Farm is to the north of a level crossing, a short run of interwar roadside dwellings to the west of Sandon Road (also within Green Belt) and a small 70s housing development built around the Rookery Crescent loop road that is on the east side of Sandon Road and the other side of the Green Belt boundary. It lies in the Green Belt between the neighbouring towns of Stone to the south and Cheadle to the north.

Izaak Walton Farm is essentially a roadside dwelling that fronts Cresswell Lane. It's established and authorised access is taken from Cresswell Lane at the front a short drive accesses courtyard parking within the curtilage of the dwelling. To the south and south east the dwelling and its curtilage is surrounded by open field. The applicant's land ownership extends to the Cresswell Old Road that skirts the property to the south.

PROPOSAL
The development has already been carried out. A new access has been constructed to the south of the dwelling with Cresswell Old Road. A new access drive surfaced with hard core now runs alongside the public house property for a distance of approximately 48m and connects the new access to a new hard surfaced parking area with space for at least four vehicles. The access then continues on to connect to the existing driveway of the property at the front.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)
S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c Other Rural Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape Character
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework
Section(s) 2 Achieivng Sustainable Development; 4 Decision Making; 12 Achieving Well Designed Places; 13 Protecting the Green Belt.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
SMD/2014/0324 Single storey rear/side extension. Appproved.
SMD/2019/0628 Conversion of coach house to dwelling. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 14th April 2020
Neighbour consultation period ends: 14th April 2020
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
Awaited

Staffordshire County Council Highways
No objection subject to conditions.

The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the access drive rear of the public highway has been surfaced and thereafter maintained in a bound and porous material for a minimum distance of 5m back from the site boundary in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The access shall thereafter be surfaced in accordance with the approved details.

Within 3 months of the proposed access track being granted approval, the existing through route onto Cresswell Lane shall be permanently closed off such that all access to Isaac walton is via this access off Cresswell old Lane in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The through route shall thereafter be permanently closed off in accordance with the approved details within 3 months of the approval of those details.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the Green Belt

The development has been carried out in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and by definition harmful unless it is provided for by one of the excetpions that appear on the closed lists at paragraph 145 and 146 of the NPPF. The development includes the constrcution of an access with the highway, a hard surfaced driveway, and the provision of a hardsurface on an area of surrounding field or paddock that is now used at least 4 of the applicant's vehcilces. It amounts therefore, to a material change of use and an engineering operation. Both of these development types are exceptions included at paragraph 146, provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with any of the purposes of including lan in the Green Belt. Three of those purposes include a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The new car park in particular now occupies a significant area of what was field that provided important openness between Izaak Walton Farm and the public house property. The man made, constructed surface now covers an area where grass naturally grew and the vehciles which stand for prolonged and frequent periods are structures of significant size that, rather than preserve, obstruct and consume the openness of the Green Belt.

The development also conflicts with those purposes of including land in the Green Belt that are referred to above. Specifically the development encroaches on the countryside beyond the curtilage of existing development by making an addition to and exacerbating the urbansising impact and form of exisitng built development that lies in the Green Belt between neighbouring towns. The development is therefore, inappropriate and, by deifntion, harmful to the Green Belt. The development conflicts with the terms of the NPPF and polciy SS6c of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (SS10 of the emerging Local Plan).

The farmhouse has an existing vehicular access direct onto the Cresswell Road, but the applicants find this a difficult entrance to utilise, given the speed and frequency of oncoming traffic along the Cresswell Road. They consider the new access onto Old Cresswell Road to be safer. It does appear that the Old Road is noticeably quieter and less used, however, this does not explain the introduction of the new parking area, parking could have been retained within the dwelling's curtilage with a new access arrangement. The access onto Creswell Lane at the front is not in anyway uniquely dangerous it has served the property throughout its life and has indeed planning permission has just been granted for a second dwelling to share the access with the conversion of the applicant's coach house. Overall, this is not a consideration that clearly outweighs the substantial weight that is attributed to the Green Belt harm and it does not amount to a very special circumstance.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area
Before the development was carried out there was no formal access or driveway connecting Cresswell Old Road to the property. However, set back from the roadside within mature roadside shrubbery and hedgerow, there was a simple metal bar field gate.

The access construction has expanded the opening in the roadside shrubbery, some of which has been cutaway to improve visibility, and a compacted stone surface now runs up to the carriageway in a splay, where previously there was uninterrupted grass verge. From the roadside there is now a view straight through to the applicant's dwelling approximately 70metres away where previously the view was limited to glimpses of field (reference here to Google Street View photographs that predate the development).

However, in this rural location the compacted stone or gravel driveway that runs to the carriageway between roadside shrubs and trees retains a rustic character and does not appear to be at odds with or unexpected within this rural environment, in terms of its scale, character and use of material. The area of parking itself is not visually conspicuous from public vantage, it is well screened and concealed by enclosing hedgerow and shrubbery. The development does not result in significant visual intrusion or harm to character and appearance of the rural environment.

The highway authority consider the new access to be acceptable however, they request that a bound surface be provided for 5metres rear of the carriageway edge. That bound surface however, could appear overly engineered and urbanised, at odds with the rustic character identified above. On balance it would appear unnecessary to make this alteration, the stone has been well compacted and there did not appear to be an issue with deleterious material spreading or being carried on to the rural lane.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE
Inappropriate development that is harmful to the Green Belt. The harm is not clearly outweighed by any other considerations.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst
Recommendation Date: 30/04/2020

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council