

A Case Study: Consall Scout Camp

1 Overview & Map

Situated to the north-west of Cheadle, within the Green Belt in the Staffordshire Moorlands, lies Consall Scout Camp. Consall consists of 26 acres of mixed open fields and woodland with a number of buildings providing toilet and shower facilities, indoor activity space, self-catering kitchens and bunk accommodation, along with some storage buildings, a small shop and warden's accommodation as show on the map below (taken from Consall Scout Camp's website, consallscoutcamp.co.uk).



Although the motivation for and business model of Consall are somewhat different in a number of respects to those at Huntley Wood, the facilities are functionally similar and so it provides a good precedent for the creation of facilities of this nature in the local area against which to compare and contrast the development proposed at Huntley Wood.

2 Facilities

Despite its relatively small size, being only 26 acres which is less than one sixth of the 169 acres at Huntley Wood, Consall has a significant number of buildings which are in three clusters across the site, as shown on the map above. This section gives more details of the built facilities provided in each area of Consall.

All building measurements in this document are approximate, and based on external dimensions of the buildings.

2.1 Area One

At the end of a sand and gravel track leading from the entrance to the main car park are situated the warden's accommodation, two accommodation and activity buildings, some storage buildings and the shop, as follows:



Warden's accommodation: 36sqm

This is a single storey building which provides overnight accommodation for the site warden when groups are on site.



Gibson Building: 208sqm

(+ covered staircase in 18sqm lean-to & 13sqm veranda)

This is a two storey building providing indoor activity space, bunk accommodation sleeping 38 people, self-catering kitchen and toilet and shower facilities.



Clifton Building: 63sqm

This is a single storey building providing indoor activity space, bunk accommodation sleeping 20 people and self-catering kitchen.



Explorers Building: 45sqm

This is a single storey building providing indoor activity and storage space.



Garages: 50sqm

This is a single storey building providing storage and workshop space.



Tuck Shop: 30sqm

This is a single storey building selling tuck and simple provisions.

2.2 Area Two

At either end of a small camping field are situated a log cabin and a toilet block, as follows:



Werrington Building: 30sqm

This is a single storey building providing indoor activity space and kitchenette facilities.



Toilet Block: 55sqm

This is a single storey building providing toilet and shower facilities.

2.3 Area Three

On the west side of a large camping field are a number of buildings as follows:



Windy House Building: 115sqm

This is a single storey building providing indoor activity space, bunk accommodation sleeping 21 people and self-catering kitchen facilities.



Toilet Block: 40sqm

This is a single storey building providing toilet and shower facilities.



Service Team Huts: 18sqm & 21 sqm

Two single storey buildings providing indoor activity or storage space.



Service Hut: 10sqm

This is a single storey building providing services distribution.

3 Similarities and Differences

Before directly comparing the facilities provided at Consall to those proposed at Huntley Wood it is important to understand the similarities and, crucially, the differences between the two sites and the purpose for which they are designed.

3.1 Similarities

The similarities between Consall and the facilities proposed at Huntley Wood are self-evident. Both are secluded rural locations within the Staffordshire Moorlands green belt comprising of a mix of open space and woodland, and both contain facilities including camping space, toilets & showers, indoor bunk accommodation and activity space and some storage buildings associated with the management of the business and land, along with facilities for a manager to stay on site when it is in use. Both have several clusters of buildings designed to serve the area immediately adjacent to them, and to prevent visitors having to travel long distances across the site to find shelter or to access necessities such as toilets and showers.

3.2 Significant Differences

Apart from the size, the major differences between Consall and the proposed development at Huntley Wood relate to the use for which they have been designed. Being a scout camp, Consall was primarily designed for use by groups of scouts and guides, or similar groups of campers, rather than event running groups who are the major target market at Huntley Wood.

Because of this, the layout of Consall makes it impossible for a group to hire a single area without being disturbed by people using other areas of the site. Traffic for the second area must pass through the first, and traffic for the third area must pass through both of the others, causing continued disturbance to all groups. When the visitors to the site are those such as scouts, guides and general campers this is not a problem, but it makes the site unsuitable for groups who require exclusive, undisturbed access such as role playing and re-enactment or other event running groups, who are likely to produce the most significant revenue at Huntley Wood. Research suggests that, when such groups do make use of Consall, they hire the entire site so as to ensure undisturbed access. This limits this use of this site to groups of a fairly specific size, who are large enough to be able to afford to hire the whole site but small enough to fit into the relatively limited camping and accommodation space (it should be noted that several of the camping areas at Consall are prone to water-logging, making them effectively considerably smaller than they initially appear in all but the driest weather), thus excluding the majority of this lucrative market.

Another aspect of Consall which makes it undesirable for historical groups or those who require an unspoilt location is the modern look to several of the buildings and the proximity of the car park to a significant part of the accommodation. Many of these groups prefer sites where modern necessities such as toilets and car parks are well screened and designed to fit in with the natural surroundings, and buildings are constructed in a sympathetic manner eg being made from natural materials. Although the buildings in the second and third areas of Consall are mostly wooden and blend better into their surroundings, those in the first area are quite modern in look and face onto a concrete area with a number of modern features, such as the central gas tank for the buildings, on view, as well as the majority of the site's car parking space, making this an unattractive area for these groups.

The layout of the site also means that any land management work being done invariably disturbs any group hiring it at the time, equipment from the storage by the entrance having to travel through the areas where visitors reside in order to reach the majority of the land, which is also a significant problem for historical groups as well as those wishing peaceful, undisturbed enjoyment of the countryside. This is of less significance at Consall, which is designed primarily for weekend use

thus allowing management activity to be done when the site is unoccupied, than it would be at Huntley Wood, where we anticipate full-time use of the site.

The proposed plans at Huntley Wood aim to ensure that these important factors are taken into consideration, making the site very suitable for these sorts of groups, who, being national, are very interested in central locations and are willing to travel to the best facilities, and so we anticipate drawing a significant part of this expanding market to the area. It is important to note that being sensitive to these concerns which are significant to particular groups who represent a large part of the more lucrative end of the market will also increase the desirability of the site to other users who are interested in a tranquil and unspoilt location for their activities, and thus will also increase the business from other groups and individual campers.

The manager's accommodation at Consall is designed as occasional overnight accommodation for a single manager who would only be expected to be on site when there are visitors present. Since the site was designed for occasional use by scout and guide groups, almost entirely at weekends, this use is very limited. Unlike Consall, Huntley Wood will be a commercial venture which we anticipate will also be used during the week by groups offering healing retreats, bushcraft schools, management training and educational courses etc, as well as by individual campers, so we anticipate that the same need for an on-site manager to look after visitors will be constant, thus requiring modest full-time accommodation not just for a manager but also for his or her family, the scale of which has been based on the recommended size for a forestry worker's dwelling which is of the order of 140-150 sqm.

Finally, having been in existence for some time on a site which is not set up for commercial use or being run as a business, many of the buildings at Consall, particularly the older ones, are in need of repair and are in a somewhat dilapidated state which significantly reduces the attractiveness of the facilities for corporate and professional groups of the type we are aiming to attract to Huntley Wood. In spite of this, Consall is booked up well in advance most weekends of the year, particularly during the summer months. By providing facilities of a similar nature but considerably better quality, and designing the site to allow exclusive undisturbed access to a zone, we anticipate that Huntley Wood will appeal to groups who run events professionally and thus require a higher standard of facility, who can also afford to pay higher site hire rates than the mostly amateur groups currently using Consall, and will draw these national groups to the area from across the country. The volume of interest and support we have received from groups of this nature who we have contacted regarding our plans clearly demonstrates this.

4 Comparison

Despite being significantly smaller than Huntley Wood, and designed to cater primarily to a different market, Consall is similar enough in the facilities provided to serve as a useful local comparison from a planning and development point of view.

Below are a number of tables which show a direct comparison of the scale of the built facilities at Consall Scout Camp and Huntley Wood, and how they compare to the available outdoor space and the maximum number of visitors supported.

Because the major target market at Huntley Wood is event running groups who require exclusive access to the area they have hired, and this can only be achieved at Consall by hiring the entire site, we have compared the whole of Consall against both the individual zones at Huntley Wood and against the whole of Huntley Wood. Management and storage buildings have been compared separately to the facilities for visitors.

4.1 Visitors' Facilities

Maximum winter occupancy numbers at Consall have been taken as the number of bunks provided, while maximum summer occupancy numbers have been conservatively estimated based on the camping area available and toilet and shower facilities provided.

Land area and occupancy:

	Consall	HW Zone 1	HW Zone 2	HW Zone 3	HW Total
Land area (acres)	26	70	60	30	169
Max occupancy (summer)	240	500	200	100	800
Max occupancy (winter)	79	72	48	24	144

Land area and occupancy as a percentage of Consall (nearest %):

	Consall	HW Zone 1	HW Zone 2	HW Zone 3	HW Total
Land area (acres)	100	269	231	115	650
Max occupancy (s)	100	208	83	42	333
Max occupancy (w)	100	91	61	30	182

Overall Huntley Wood is 6.5 times the size of Consall, but even at maximum summer capacity will cater to only 3.3 times the number of people. The most similar density of people is on Zone 1 at Huntley Wood, which is nearly 2.7 times the size of Consall but will cater to at most just over twice the number of people. Thus the overall impact on the environment can be expected to be lower at Huntley Wood than it is at Consall.

Number of buildings:

	Consall	HW Zone 1	HW Zone 2	HW Zone 3	HW Total
Accommodation/Activity	7	4	2	1	7
Toilet & Shower	2*	2	1	1	4
Shop	1	0	0	0	0
Total	10	6	3	2	11

*The 3rd toilet facility at Consall is situated inside the Gibson accommodation/activity building, so has not been counted separately here.

Area of buildings (square metres):

	Consall	HW Zone 1	HW Zone 2	HW Zone 3	HW Total
Accommodation/Activity	500	343	162	81	586
Toilet & Shower	95*	81	27	27	135
Shop	30	0	0	0	0
Total	625	424	189	108	721

*The 3rd toilet facility at Consall is situated inside the Gibson accommodation/activity building, so its square meterage is included in the row above.

Area of buildings as a percentage of Consall (nearest %):

	Consall	HW Zone 1	HW Zone 2	HW Zone 3	HW Total
Accommodation/Activity*	100	69	32	16	117
Toilet & Shower*	100	85	28	28	142
Shop	100	0	0	0	0
Total	100	68	18	17	115

*Because the 3rd toilet facility at Consall is situated inside the Gibson building, figures in these rows marginally overestimate the relative amount of accommodation/activity space at Huntley Wood compared to Consall and marginally underestimate the relative amount of toilet & shower facilities.

Despite being 6.5 times the size of Consall in terms of land area and catering to over three times the number of visitors, the proposed plans at Huntley Wood require only one more building and just 15% additional square meterage of buildings as Consall to provide facilities to those visitors.

4.2 Management Facilities

Number of buildings:

	Consall	Huntley Wood
Manager's Accom	1	1
Storage	1	2
Services	1	1
Office	0	0*
Total	3	4

* Office at Huntley Wood is provided above the storage barn, so does not contribute to total number of buildings.

Area of buildings (square metres):

	Consall	Huntley Wood
Manager's Accom	36	136
Storage	50	64
Services	10	22
Office	0	42
Total	96	264

Area of buildings as a percentage of Consall (nearest %):

	Consall	Huntley Wood
Manager's Accom	100	378
Storage	100	128
Services	100	220
Office	100	(inf)
Total	100	275

It is in the square meterage of buildings devoted to the management of the land and business that the greatest discrepancy between the built facilities at Consall and Huntley Wood exists, which is due to a combination of the fact that Huntley Wood is significantly larger than Consall, will be run as a commercial venture and so requires additional facilities such as a small office for the management of the business element, and will be in use most days of most weeks thus requiring a full time member of staff living on site.

The significantly larger manager's accommodation, which accounts for a large proportion of the discrepancy, can be justified by the fact that Huntley Wood is expected to be in use to a greater or lesser extent most days of most weeks of the year, meaning that occasional overnight facilities for a single manager of the sort provided for irregular use at Consall would not be sufficient. The manager's accommodation at Huntley Wood is designed to be lived in year-round by a manager and his or her family, and the square meterage is well within that recommended for a modest "forestry worker's dwelling", the guidelines for which are of the order of 140-150 square metres.

There is only one third extra storage space proposed at Huntley Wood compared to that at Consall. Despite the difference in size of the land between the two sites, the machinery and equipment involved in its management are likely to be similar.

The additional services space is required because of the scale of the problem of distributing services across such a large site, and the necessity for having separate water and power metres for each zone so that fees for the provision of services can be charged to different groups appropriately.

The existence of an office, which is not present at Consall, can be justified by the fact that the manager will also be expected to deal with the paperwork side of the business, necessary for the efficient running of Huntley Wood and its success as a commercial venture.

5 Conclusions

In absolute terms, the total scale of proposed development in terms of the square meterage of buildings at Huntley Wood is only of the order of 1.4 times that which exists at Consall, while the site itself is approximately 6.5 times the size. Thus it is clear that relatively speaking the development at Huntley Wood would be of a significantly smaller scale when the much larger land area of the site is taken into account. In terms of number of visitors supported, the impact on the land is also expected to be lower at Huntley Wood than it is at Consall.

However, the nature of the facilities provided and the care being taken to cater to the specific needs of the main target market, which will also increase the desirability of the site to other groups, mean that Huntley Wood will be suitable for a wide variety of commercial groups who would not make use of a site like Consall, thus bringing significant new business to the area and easily sustaining this level of development.

Hence we conclude that the scale of development proposed at Huntley Wood is reasonable in terms of the facilities necessary to provide for the number of visitors anticipated to the site and to effectively manage the land and business, making it sustainable both in terms of the impact on the land and the profitability of the business.