



Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust

Registered Charity No. 1156812

www.cuct.org.uk

From / Please reply to:

Julie Arnold
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Planning Department
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Sent by email to: planning@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk

4 October 2022

Dear Sirs

SMD/2021/0536 - Land at Barnfields Industrial Estate, Sunnyhills Road, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5RJ: Reserved matters application for approval of appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale to provide: 157 residential dwellings (Class C3) providing a mix of two, three and four bedroom houses, and two bedroom apartments; 6 x live / work units (Sui Generis); 1 x public house / restaurant / café (Sui Generis / Class E(b)); a marina / basin and associated boating facilities with 13 berths; associated works including internal road network, associated highway works, drainage infrastructure, landscaping, open space, play area, pedestrian, and cyclist links; land reserved for future railway station with associated heritage / railway activities building/s and car parking; and land reserved for future link road including associated landscaping. (Pursuant to outline planning permission SMD/2014/0750.)

The Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the objectives to restore, preserve, maintain in good order and improve the existing Caldon Canal and all former arms of the Caldon Canal including the branch known as the Uttoxeter Canal for the use and benefit of the public. It came into being as a charity working to deliver the restoration on the Caldon Canal which was achieved, in partnership with others, in 1974. It is a member and delivery organisation within the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership.

Following the addition of further documents to the above application on the SMDC website on 22 September 2022, the Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust (CUCT) **OBJECTS** to planning application SMD/2021/0536. Elements detailed in our letter dated 4 November 2021 regarding the application dated have still not been addressed.

Furthermore, the specific elements on recent versions of drawings 03 Boundary Treatment Layout and 04 Boundary Treatment Details that refer to 2.1m High Railings (around Marina) are NOT needed because the applicant is not delivering a marina, and because a final design for the proposed new 'canal basin' provided for by SMD/2020/0552 has not yet been agreed and does not form part of this application.

The proposed canal basin (See outcome of SMC/2020/0552 copied in below) will be a gateway into Leek and needs to have strong character around which communities can flow and interact, as can be seen around other market town canal basins and wharves such as: Brecon, Market Harborough, Llangollen, Aylesbury. (Photographs will be provided under separate cover.) Railings as indicated are not appropriate and are not installed at other such locations.

It should be noted that on 12 May 2022 application "SMD/2020/0552 Land at, Barnfields Road and, Sunnyhills Road, Cornhill, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5RJ - Application to vary a S106 relating to SMD/2014/0750" was discussed by Staffordshire Moorlands District Councillors and the following Recommendation was passed by the Planning Applications Committee:

A. That the request to vary the Section 106 Agreement is agreed on the following terms subject to detailed discussion on the wording of the revised and new clauses and trigger points, with input from the Council's lawyer

a) to remove the obligation on the developer/landowner to construct the Marina, link to the Caldon Canal and install a footbridge over the aqueduct

b) insert a new obligation which requires the developer to reserve land for the Marina and subsequently transfer this to the Council (or other body that the Council considers capable of financing and operating the Marina and associated liabilities) for nominal cost (£1)

c) insert a new obligation requiring the developer to landscape and maintain the Marina land area as public open space until the transfer of the land takes place.

d) insert a new clause to secure the planning surplus of £815 000 to be directed towards funding of a Marina and/or Canal Basin. This is in addition to the £200 000 education contribution already secured in the 106 Agreement. All other provisions/obligations as set out at 2.1 to remain in place.

B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/in formatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's Decision.

Furthermore on the Site Layout in the southern section only a Pedestrian Link to the county park footpath is indicated; there is no indication of connectivity to the Caldon Canal towpath which carries National Cycle Network route number 559 (this links through with Stoke-on-Trent and also via the main line of the Caldon Canal into the Churnet Valley). Nor does it define strong links between the towpath, Ladderedge /Rudyard and the new station.

(<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Transport/cycling/Documents/Cycling-in-Staffordshire-Moorlands-Leek-Issue-5.pdf>)

In conclusion, we must object to the application as currently proposed and request that consideration is given to our concerns about it including elements that are not appropriate in this application, and about it not making provision for a well-interconnected southern area to the site.

We urge the planning team, committee and SMDC officers to work to bring about a partnership with the applicant - and others such as CUCT and Canal & River Trust - that will enable the design of an accessible basin that will deliver a distinct sense of place, reconnect Leek to its canal and with the railway offer a unique gateway for Leek and the Churnet Valley - which will add enormously to the Staffordshire Moorlands for its residents and for the tourism economy.

Yours sincerely

Julie Arnold

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Vice Chairman

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