

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**ADDRESS : TITTESWORTH WATER SPORTS AND ACTIVITY CENTRE,
FISHERMAN'S LODGE, MEERBROOK, LEEK,
STAFFORDSHIRE, ST13 8SH**

APPLICANT : TITTESWORTH WATER SPORTS AND ACTIVITY CENTRE

**PROPOSAL : RENEWAL OF TEMPORARY PLANNING PERMISSION FOR
SITING OF PORTACABINS AND CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO
STORAGE COMPOUND**

DATE : MARCH 2023

JOB No. : 2023-2768

DESIGN

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This application seeks the renewal of a temporary permission for the siting of portacabins and change of use of land to a storage compound to meet an on going need for additional accommodation on the site at Tittesworth Water Sports and Activity Centre.

Assessment Area

The application site operates as a watersports activity centre on the west side of Tittesworth Reservoir. The site accommodates a single storey building, originally constructed as a fishing lodge. The building is itself of stone construction with a tiled roof and provides toilets and changing facilities and a space that has a dual use of reception and coaching. There is a timber boat store to the side of this.

The site has a frontage to the lake where access is available for boat launching from a jetty. The site has vehicular access from Meerbrook Road where there is a small car park.

The site is located within the extensive grounds of Tittesworth Reservoir and is operated by Severn Trent Water as a reservoir and as a centre for recreation. Severn Trent has a Visitor Centre on the opposite side of the reservoir where they have a café and shop. An exhibition area provides information about the history of the site and the presence of wildlife on the site. The grounds accommodate a large children's play area, an ice cream hut and toilet facilities. The grounds have an extensive network of footpaths that are heavily used.

The site is located in attractive open countryside about 3.5km to the north of Leek.

THE PROPOSAL

The application is a response to a growth in the number of users of the site. The applicant provides a variety of water-borne activities and has expanded into non-water activities including archery and countryside walking. The applicant has set out its case in a separate document submitted with the planning application.

The application proposes the retention of four portakabins on the open area to the south of the boat store. These buildings will free up the existing stone building for use for indoor activities. Two of the portakabins will provide replacement changing facilities; replacement toilet facilities and a stand-alone classroom. Each building will be of standard construction and will be sited on a concrete base. The applicant has stated his preparedness to timber clad the buildings. A "hit and miss" timber fence is proposed between the buildings and the shoreline.

ASSESSMENT

Planning permission for the portacabins and change of use of land to a storage compound was approved in May 2018 under application reference SMD/2018/0148. Due to the nature of the development the consent include a condition (number 3) which required the portacabin buildings to be removed from the site in entirety within five years of the date of the decision notice. The reason given for the condition was that "as the structures are required temporarily and also in the interests of the character of the area and openness of the Green Belt".

The five year time limit is due to expire on the 24th May 2023 and this application seeks to renew the temporary planning consent for the portacabins for a further 5 year period. The decision notice did not require the use of the land as a storage compound to cease and therefore this application does not seek consent for this.

The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt where restrictive development plan policies apply. The previous application was considered under the Councils Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2014). Whilst both the adopted development plan for the area and the National Planning Policy Framework have both been updated since the grant of the previous consent there has been no fundamental change to planning policies which would affect the determination of this application.

Although new buildings are generally resisted in the Green Belt, facilities for outdoor sport and recreation are not considered to be inappropriate development. As previously the two existing buildings on site are being used to their full potential and the new buildings are needed to allow the continued expansion and operation of the site. The site which is leased by the applicant is up for renewal in 205 and the applicant is therefore, especially having regard to the current economic climate cautious, to invest in any capital projects including new buildings at this time. The retention of the portacabins would provide a short term solution.

The previous consent acknowledged that portacabins would not by virtue of their size, scale, form, design, materials and appearance be in keeping with the character and appearance of the countryside however it was accepted that their visual impact would be limited due to the temporary nature of the consent and a condition requiring them to be clad in dark stained vertical timber boarding was also imposed. This condition has been complied with and the portacabins are not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the visual amenity or openness of the Green Belt or the character and appearance of the site and its setting. The proposed development would not by virtue of its relatively remote location and proximity to neighbouring dwellings be prejudicial to amenity or adversely affect any neighbouring land uses.

CONCLUSION

The application proposes to renew consent for the retention of the existing portacabins which were granted temporary planning permission in May 2018 under application reference SMD/2018/09148. Whilst the national and local planning policies have been updated there has been no significant change to the policies

contained therein which would continue to support the proposal on the basis that it represents an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt without harm to its visual amenity or openness. Furthermore, the proposal would support and secure the continued expansion of an existing established rural business and improve existing facilities on the site whilst seeking to satisfy growing demand for water-borne and non-water activities that the applicant provides. The proposals will enhance the recreational and leisure experience of customers. The proposed development would not harm or detract from the character and appearance of the site or its wider setting nor would it by virtue of its location be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of amenity or neighbouring land uses. The proposed development would not result in any intensification in the use of the site nor would it result in any displacement or loss of current parking provision. It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with policies SS1, SS10, DC1, DC3, C2 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.