

## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

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**SMD/2024/0216**  
**Valid 15/05/2024**

**CROSS INN ASH TREE  
ROAD  
HOFTENS CROSS  
CAULDON LOW**

**CHANGE OF USE OF AMENITY  
BLOCK TO FORM RESIDENTS  
BAR & SHOP, LAUNDRY &  
OFFICE FOR CARAVAN PARK**

**(FULL - MINOR)**

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### MAIN ISSUES

- The principle of the development
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact on highway safety.

### DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in the open countryside a short distance to the north of Hoftens Cross in Cauldon Lowe. It comprises a former pub and caravan site (also not in use and absent of caravans) which is on the north side of A52 main road. The caravan site is in the west part of the site and the pub is in the east. Between the two lies a single-storey render and tile amenities building for the caravan site. Inside it is toilets, a washing area, a reception area and two bedrooms to let. The junction of Main Road lies to the south and to the west of this, opposite the caravan site, is a farm. Open fields lie to the north and west. To the east, lies a country road to quarries and the village of Waterhouses (Hemingslow Lane). The site is not in the Green Belt.

### PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for the change of use of the amenities building into a bar, shop, laundry and office for the caravan site. There would be no extension to the building. The only external alterations would be timber vertical cladding placed over the walls and there would be no new openings for external windows or doors. There would be no alterations to the ground within the site. The bar area is intended to be available for use by local residents as well as caravan park occupants.

A Planning Statement has been submitted which states the following:

*The amenity block building is part of a caravan site that is currently under redevelopment following the receipt of a Lawful Development Certificate issued on April 2024 under reference SMD/2023/0462 where the sites use for 44 static caravans was agreed.*

*Previous planning history would seem to indicate that the building was originally used as a shop as in June 1999 planning permission was granted to replace the shop with 2 letting bedrooms under planning reference SMD/1999/0465 within the building.*

*The owners of the public house do not consider that the licenced premises is sustainable so currently there is no intention to reopen the public house. The bar within the amenity block will not just be for residents of the park but also the locality. This will be a sustainable replacement for the loss of the public house. The residents will also be able to benefit from the small retail facility within the building for essentials such milk, bread, and newspapers.*

*The laundry will benefit the residents of the mobile home park. The sales office is required by the owner's staff to manage the site and act as a reception for the park.*

## **RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES**

### **Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)**

SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy  
S11 Churnet Valley Strategy  
C1 Community Facilities  
E4 Tourism development  
DC1 Design Considerations

### **National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2023)**

Section 5 (Housing), 6 (Economy) and 12 (Design).

## **SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS**

SMD/2023/0462: Certificate of lawfulness for existing use as a caravan site for 44 caravans. Granted.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Publicity**

Site Notice expiry date: 25.6.24  
Neighbour consultation period ends: 25.6.24  
Press Advert: N/A

### **Public Comments**

Letters of objection have been received from three local residents and a further four neither supporting or objecting but all the letters focus on the old pub and concerns

are raised that the pub could be demolished. One letter stated it should be brought back into use instead of a new bar being provided in the amenities building.

### **Town / Parish Comments**

Cotton: Concerns were raised over the old pub on site and also the amount of tree surgery currently being undertaken at the site.

Waterhouses: No objection.

### **Local Highways Authority**

No objection but recommends that vegetation by the road to the west of the access is cut back to improve visibility.

### **Environmental Health**

No objection subject to conditions which include restrictions on plant and machinery noise and on amplified voice or music from the bar.

### **Severn Trent Water**

No objection subject to a condition requiring details of surface and foul drainage to be submitted for approval.

### **SMDC Waste Collection Service**

No issues regarding waste collections.

## **OFFICER COMMENTS**

The site is currently derelict but in 2023 a certificate of lawfulness was granted for an existing use as a caravan site with up to 44 static and touring caravans. There is therefore a proposal to re-use the site for this purpose and bring it back into operation and this new application is clearly linked to the proposal by providing enhanced facilities for the caravan site occupants.

The site is in the countryside and the strategy for the countryside, Policy SS10 allows the conversion of existing buildings into other uses. The building was used as an amenities building i.e. toilets and washing areas for the caravan site and also contained two rooms to let, which were all users linked to the caravan site and tourist accommodation operation. The building would again be used for this purpose, supporting tourist accommodation although the exact use would differ in that it would mostly be a bar and lounge area for the caravan site and a small amount of floorspace would be used as a convenience goods shop and also a sales office (a number of static caravans are allowed under the previous approvals and certificate of lawfulness). The proposal therefore complies with policies SS10 and also E4 'Tourism and Cultural Development' and also in line with Policy SS11, the Churnet

Valley strategy which encourages tourism development such as new and sustainable tourist accommodation and tourist facilities.

The policy would also comply with Policy C1, 'Community Facilities', in that the bar/lounge and convenience goods store, would also be open to local residents. The site is short walk from the residential areas of Hoftens Cross and also bus stops and the site is in a sustainable location for these uses. The site was historically a public house.

Overall, I consider the principle of the proposal to be acceptable.

With regard to the character and appearance of the area, the only physical changes would be the addition of timber cladding on the building. Although timber is not a vernacular material, the building is a single-storey functional building in form and also completely subservient to the much larger and higher host building, the pub. It may have been a former outbuilding for the pub and it is not unusual or out of keeping with the area that an outbuilding or amenities building for a caravan site should have a timber finish. I do not consider the cladding would amount to poor design or would harm the character and appearance of the area given the size and form of the building and its lack of prominence from the roads.

With regard to residential amenity, the site was used a former pub and caravan site and so the introduction of a small bar/lounge area back onto the site would amount to a significant increase in noise and disturbance with the safeguard of conditions to restrict machinery noise and amplification of voice and music.

Finally, with regard to highway safety, there is not expected to be a significant increase in traffic in relation to uses of the site previously approved and the access onto the main road is a satisfactory standard with an acceptable level of visibility which can be further improved merely by the cutting back of vegetation.

There is no requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain as this is solely a change of use with no extensions, new buildings or new hardstandings proposed and thus less than 25sqm of habitat would be affected. There would be no harms to protected species as there are no roof works proposed (which could harm bats).

With regard to the points raised by local residents and Cotton Parish Council, the application is solely for the conversion of the amenities buildings and not for the demolition of the pub and the approval of this application does not permit its demolition. A separate application would be required for this.

## **CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

The proposal is acceptable in principle in this location and would not lead to any significant additional impacts on the visual or residential amenities of the area (with the safeguard of conditions) or on traffic and highway safety. The proposal would comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :    APPROVE**

**Case Officer: Chris Johnston**  
**Recommendation Date: 10.7.24**

X *B.J. Haywood*

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Signed by: Ben Haywood

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**