

Planning Department
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
ST13 6HQ

12 MAR 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Objection to Planning Application SMD/2025/0021 – Well Street Mill, Well Street, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6JU

I am writing to formally object to the above planning application for the conversion of Well Street Mill into 17 residential units. The basis of my objection is the distinct lack of parking provision, which will result in severe parking stress and harm to the surrounding area.

Failure to Provide Adequate Parking

The application fails to provide details of any dedicated parking spaces for future residents. There appears to be several existing spaces on an existing car park, but this is not referred to in the application. Given the scale of the development—comprising 2 studio apartments, 11 two-bedroom apartments, and 4 one-bedroom apartments—there will be a significant increase in parking demand. Applying Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards, the expected provision should be:

- 1 space per 1-bed unit (6 spaces)
- 1.5 spaces per 2-bed unit (16.5 spaces)
- Additional visitor parking

This equates to a minimum requirement of approximately 23 parking spaces. The complete absence of on-site parking will lead to overspill into surrounding streets, exacerbating an already critical parking situation.

Impact on the Local Highway Network

The streets surrounding the application site consist of tightly packed terraced housing with high parking demand from existing residents. There are established parking restrictions, and on-street parking is already oversubscribed. The applicant's reliance on distant public car parks—such as Market Street West (8-minute walk), Buxton Road (3-minute walk), and Vicarage Road (12-minute walk)—is unrealistic. Given human behaviour, car owners will inevitably seek to park in nearby residential streets rather

than use remote pay-and-display facilities, leading to obstruction and inconvenience for existing residents.

Conflict with Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021)

- Paragraph 110 requires that developments provide “safe and suitable access to the site for all users.” A lack of on-site parking will result in increased vehicle congestion and unsafe parking practices, creating highway safety concerns.
- Paragraph 111 states that development should be refused if it would have an “unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.” Given the existing parking congestion, this proposal would indeed have a severe impact.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020)

- Policy T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport) requires that developments provide adequate parking in accordance with the local standards. The complete lack of parking provision directly contradicts this policy.
- Policy DC2 (The Historic Environment) (if applicable) states that development should not harm the setting of historic assets. Increased on-street parking pressure in narrow terraced streets will detract from the historic character of the area, in addition to the changes to the building that threaten character and significance (window replacements etc). It is evident that specialist Conservation designers / advisers have not been consulted, and several alterations would not be in line with ICOMOS / Conservation principles.

Conclusion

While I acknowledge the applicant’s proposal to provide cycle parking and reference to nearby public transport, this does not mitigate the fundamental issue of car ownership and parking demand. The lack of consideration to on-site parking will cause significant disruption, worsening an already strained situation in the area.

It is unrealistic to think that all tenants or apartment owners will not have access to a vehicle, in order to commute to their workplace. According to the 2011 Census data for Staffordshire Moorlands (see attached), which includes Leek, commuting patterns were as follows:

- Less than 2 km: 1,221 commuters

- 2 km to less than 5 km: 6,073 commuters
- 5 km to less than 10 km: 6,530 commuters
- 10 km to less than 20 km: 5,044 commuters
- 20 km to less than 30 km: 3,952 commuters
- 30 km to less than 40 km: 7,378 commuters
- 40 km to less than 60 km: 3,952 commuters

This data indicates that a significant portion of residents commute beyond the immediate Leek area for work. Specifically, approximately 20,326 individuals travel more than 10 km to their workplace, suggesting that a considerable percentage of the working population is employed outside the local vicinity, making a commute a challenge by bus, particularly in a town without a rail link.

Given the above it is my opinion that the application should be refused on the grounds of non-compliance with national and local planning policies relating to parking, transport and protection of the historic environment.

I urge the Council to reject this application unless suitable parking provision in line with local and national planning policy and guidance, is incorporated into the scheme and the scheme is amended to be more sensitive to the historic fabric.

Yours faithfully,

26 Well Street
Leek
Staffs, ST13 6JU.

