



The countryside charity
Staffordshire

SMD/2025/0053 Full planning application for demolition of building and alterations to site layout to accommodate 49 static caravans with associated internal access roads and parking areas and amendment to occupancy dates to permit all year round opening.

Rudyard Vale Caravan Park, Lake Road, Rudyard, Staffordshire, ST13 8RN

Representations of CPRE Staffordshire, the countryside charity.

Summary

CPRE objects to this planning application due to its harmful effects on to the open space in the Green Belt, heritage, biodiversity, loss of local amenity, and flood risk.

1. Heritage, Landscape, and Biodiversity

- 1.1. The Rudyard Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2016 recognised the natural beauty of the area, which has been well-known for tourism and leisure activities since the 19th century. It is an area of ornamented landscape, and a backdrop of dense mixed woodland connects spaces and frames the main views of the man-made reservoir. We echo the Churnet Valley Masterplan 2014, which sets out the strategy for sustaining and enhancing the natural, built, and historic environmental quality of the area, its settlements, and its hinterland through managed change that provides for rural regeneration largely based on sustainable tourism.
- 1.2. The subject site is in Character Area 3 – Villas and Rudyard Vale, as defined by the Rudyard Character Appraisal 2016. This area was deemed to be “a muddle of structure” with a “lack of well-defined space” as a result of the area having “slowly over time become surrounded by trees and cluttered with ad-hoc mobile homes, caravans and static chalets, some now permanent dwellings”. We acknowledge the importance of having a well-defined space that would support people’s activities and give out a “sense of place”.
- 1.3. However, as also mentioned in the Rudyard Character Appraisal 2016, the area was once an open area of fields and characterised by nearby 19th-century architecture like Horton Lodge, Fairview, and the Villas, which are recognised as Local Heritage Assets. The proposed landscaping of the development has not only failed to consider open space but also did not include the caravan design details in relation to the immediate Local Heritage Assets. Therefore, the proposed development contradicts Policies DC1, DC2, and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorland District Adopted Local Plan.

- 1.4. The site is located within the Green Belt, where NPPF paragraph 142 emphasises the importance of keeping land permanently open. The NPPF established that the Green Belt's role is in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The development will result in 9 additional caravans on the site and significantly reduces open space. We urge SMDC to carefully evaluate the adverse impacts of this development, which fails to comply with Policies SS2, SS6, and SS10 of the Adopted Local Plan.
- 1.5. The proposed development has failed to provide a cumulative assessment of landscape alteration such as the removal of established vegetation and replanting, which might cause harm to the soil and existing habitat.

2. Traffic, Access to Public Service, and Flood Risks

- 2.1. We emphasise the potentially harmful effects of introducing additional caravans without careful planning. As the proposed development will result in introducing more people to the site, consideration must be made regarding how this will affect the capacity of the local services and amenities.
- 2.2. The proposed development has also failed to demonstrate how the site would fit in with the wider surrounding area, as it will result in more incoming traffic.
- 2.3. Although the site is situated at a very low flood level according to the Environment Agency, a drainage plan is necessary for the site alteration and increase in caravans. Without a proper drainage system, surface flooding will increase in the area.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. We recommend a Refusal of Planning Permission for this application as due to the location in the Green Belt, and the lack of consideration of harmful effects on the local heritage and biodiversity. The proposed development would increase the number of visitors, affecting local services, traffic, and flood risks. We strongly urge SMDC to carefully consider and evaluate the significant consequences of releasing Green Belt land for development and the cumulative harmful effects on the landscape character, human health, safety, and biodiversity within this area.