

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0336
Valid 17/07/2025

LEEK RUGBY CLUB ,
CHESTNUT WALK ,
CHEDDLETON ,
STAFFORDSHIRE , ST13
7BJ

REPLACEMENT FORWARD-
FACING FIRST FLOOR
BALCONY TO THE EXISTING
CLUBHOUSE BUILDING

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Development in the Green Belt
- Design
- Trees
- Heritage
- Community Facility

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is a two storey red facing brick rugby clubhouse associated with the Leek Rugby Club, and has a dual pitched and hipped concrete tile roof. It is located on the grounds of the Grade II Listed St Edwards Hospital and associated redevelopment. The site is on sloping ground and so both floors have entrances from ground level. The site is also located within the Green Belt, and is within Tree Protection Order area SM213A001.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for a replacement balcony to the rear of the clubhouse, comprising of a single large balcony area replacing the existing two smaller balconies. The balcony will be accessed via the existing French doors and supported off the ground by stilts.

The balcony would span the width of most of the existing rear elevation of the building at first floor and would measure 6m x 11.6m and have a footprint of 69.6m². The balcony is enclosed by 1.2m high metal railings.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
C2 Sport, Recreation and Open Space
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Supplementary Planning Document

Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD – Part 5: Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

National Planning Policy Framework

Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places, 13 – Protecting Green Belt land.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

08/00735/FUL – Extension to existing car park to provide an additional 20 parking spaces

SMD/2023/0413 - Flat roofed extension to upper ground floor to accommodate relocated toilets, new store room, enlarged kitchen, new entrance lobby and drinks store. Extension to lower ground floor to form new plant room and store

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 17.09.2025
Neighbour consultation period ends: 16.09.2025
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None received

Town / Parish Comments

None received

Conservation Officer

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the setting of the Listed Building and its special interest would be preserved. This would satisfy the provisions of s.66 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. There are no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions relating to:

1. Construction Impacts (Condition)
2. Amplified noise - Music and speech (Advisory)
3. Lighting (Condition)
4. Unexpected Contamination (Condition)

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

SMDC Policy SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy maintains strict control over development in the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined in Government policy. The NPPF makes it clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. In this case, the relevant exceptions to this are:

- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Whilst there is inevitably some impact on openness owing to the additional floor area, when considered in the context of the current structure and its position, built into rising ground and viewed against the backdrop of the existing building it can be accepted that the openness of the Green Belt is 'preserved'.

It can be considered the extension does not result in disproportionate additions.

SMDC Policy C2 supports applications to improve the existing sports and recreation provision, provided they meet the following criteria:

- are directly related to the needs of the facility and are proportionate in scale;
- can be satisfactorily and economically serviced;
- do not have an unacceptable impact on existing neighbours;
- meet the above criteria for new sport, recreation and open space facilities;

and

- are acceptable in other respects e.g. design, landscape impact, not inappropriate in Green Belt

Design

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place. The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and size states that extensions should harmonise with the host building. For a development to be considered appropriate in terms of its size and massing, the Council would universally expect to see extensions subordinate to the dominance of the original building. While the balcony is larger than those it replaces, the difference at the rear is not visually prominent and the development is still subordinate to the host building.

The balcony is located to the rear of the building, where it is largely hidden from view by the existing building, rising ground and trees that surround the grounds. Some glimpsed views may be available along Villa Road, but overall the impact on the character and appearance of the area is considered to be minimal. Taking account of the specifics of this site and the existing building the replacement balcony is found

acceptable in this case.

Amenity

Paragraph 135 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. SMDC Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

Environmental health have commented on the proposal and their general comments are that during construction impacts should be minimised and conditions are advised to protect neighbourhood amenity and the local environment during the construction phase. This proposal is an upgrade and improvement to an existing balcony. The primary concern is potential excess noise caused by amplified voice or music. Good on site management and noise control should be sufficient to monitor and control excessive noise. EH also have powers to deal with any issues arising under Statutory Nuisance and Licensing regimes. The site formed part of the Cheddleton Hospital grounds prior to 1901 but has been a cricket ground since at least 1922. Though no contamination risk is predicted an unexpected contamination condition is imposed as a precaution to protect workers and the local environment.

Given the significant distance to any neighbouring residential properties, the proposal should not present any issues in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing effect. Whilst the balcony area will be enlarged, in the absence of any objection from environmental health it is not considered that noise or light pollution would form sustainable grounds for refusal.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development does not lead to an increase in on street parking.

The proposed development would be enjoyed by existing users of the function space and not increase capacity. The balcony will be a break out space to view the game.

The development does not remove parking availability. No additional parking spaces will be required for this proposal, and it is in compliance with Policy T1. Thus, the proposed replacement balcony would have no impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy T1.

Heritage

Given the previous planning consent for the current existing club house building and its extension, the replacement balcony now proposed could be considered 'neutral' in its impact on heritage significance. As for previous applications, a Heritage Statement would not be necessary, as there is no direct line of sight from any of the listed buildings in the area due to dense woodland surrounding the proposal. The degree of screening of the building is also found to mitigate any heritage impact. The

woodland is protected under TPO SM213A001, and therefore screening is considered protected/ensured.

Trees

Building works are away from any trees and RPZ are not compromised by the development.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The development would be acceptable development in the Green Belt, as it is an accepted exception, as per NPPF paragraph 154. Due to the application having no adverse effect upon heritage asset, neighbour or street scene amenity and no overall impact on the highway, it is deemed acceptable under planning policy. The extension would not be inappropriate development and would not harm openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposed replacement balcony is recommended for approval, subject to compliance with all conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Pet Twigg

Recommendation Date: 6th October 2025

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council