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From: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
Sent: 25 November 2025 20:39
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

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Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0385 Site Address: Higherland Farm Caverswall Common Lane Caverswall
Staffordshire ST11 9EU Stoke-On-Trent Comments by: Gemma Brereton

From:

Roughcote
Caverswall
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[REDACTED]

Submission: Objection
Comments:

Subject: Objection to Planning Application & Change of Use at Higherland Farm, Caverswall Common, Caverswall,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9EU (&Higherland Stone&) Application SMD/2025/0385

I am writing as a local resident and community member of Caverswall Common to register my strong objection to the proposed planning application for the change of use of existing agricultural buildings and land at Higherland Farm to operate a stone supply business known as &Higherland Stone.&

While the applicants describe the proposal as &small-scale,& the reality is that it would introduce a commercial and industrial-style operation into a quiet, rural area that is clearly unsuitable for such use.

Highway Safety and Access & Narrow Lane and Blind Bend

My principal concern relates to highway safety.

Caverswall Common and the surrounding lanes are narrow, winding country roads with no pavements or passing places, and a sharp blind bend near the proposed access point. These roads were never designed to accommodate frequent movements of 7.5-tonne and 18-tonne lorries, as described in the proposal.

The applicants estimate up to 15 trade customer visits per day, in addition to deliveries and collections by large commercial vehicles. This level of traffic would be completely inappropriate and unsafe for this type of rural lane.

These roads are regularly used by dog walkers, horse riders, cyclists, and families, many of whom live locally or visit the area for recreation. The introduction of large, heavy vehicles would pose a serious danger to these vulnerable road users, particularly around the blind bend where visibility is extremely limited.

Even a single 18-tonne truck negotiating this section would cause obstruction, potential damage to verges and hedgerows, and unacceptable risk to public safety.

Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

The site lies within the Staffordshire Moorlands Green Belt, where development should preserve openness and avoid urban encroachment.

Although no new buildings are proposed, the change of use to a stone merchants yard ė involving regular HGV movements, outdoor storage of stone pallets up to 2.5m high, and hardstanding areas ė would visibly industrialise what is currently a peaceful rural landscape.

This is not a compatible or ėlow-impactė reuse of agricultural buildings. It would introduce a commercial character and activity level that directly conflicts with the purposes of Green Belt designation and with local policies intended to protect the countryside from exactly this type of gradual industrial encroachment.

Noise, Disturbance, and Amenity Impact

The movement of vehicles, loading/unloading of stone, and general yard activity will inevitably create constant noise and disruption, even during standard weekday hours.

Residents living on Caverswall Common and beyond will experience an unacceptable loss of peace and rural amenity.

Forklift operation, reversing alarms, engine idling, and the clatter of stone handling will all impact what is currently a tranquil rural environment. These activities cannot realistically be contained within barns or masked by planting, as claimed.

Visual and Environmental Harm

The open storage of stone products and pallets will create a visually intrusive industrial yard effect, entirely out of keeping with the surrounding countryside.

Despite the presence of hedgerows, the site will remain visible from nearby properties and the public highway, especially during winter months. The proposal would erode the rural character of Caverswall Common and set a damaging precedent for future commercial activity in the Green Belt.

Lack of Justification or Local Need

There are already established stone and landscaping supply businesses in nearby Roughcote , Cellarhead, Blythe Bridge that adequately serve the local area with better accessibility.

There is therefore no demonstrated local need for another operation of this kind, particularly one located within a sensitive Green Belt setting with poor access and no infrastructure to safely support commercial vehicle movements.

Community Safety and Character

Caverswall Common is valued by local residents for its quiet rural character, wildlife, and safe country lanes used by walkers, riders, and families.

This proposal threatens to change that permanently by introducing industrial traffic, noise, and safety risks to a small rural community that currently enjoys peace and open countryside.

It would also discourage the very outdoor activity that local and national policies aim to promote for health and wellbeing.

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully urge the Council to refuse this planning application.

It is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan policies SS10, DC1, and DC3, which collectively aim to:

- Protect the Green Belt and rural landscape;
- Safeguard highway safety; and
- Prevent development that harms residential amenity or local character.

Thank you for considering this objection.

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