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From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
Sent: 29 July 2026 15:53
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

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Application Reference No. : SMD/2026/0250 Site Address: John Munroe Independent Hospital Reacliffe Road
Rudyard Staffordshire ST13 8RU Leek Comments by: Gillian Hiom

From:

Half Acres
Camrose Hill
Rudyard
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 8RU

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Submission: Objection

Comments: Half Acres,

Camrose Hill,

Rudyard,

Leek

29th July 2026

Dear Case Officer,

Re: Objection to Planning Application John Munroe Hospital C2 to C2A SMD/2026/0250

I am writing to formally object to the above planning application for the conversion of the John Munroe Hospital from a C2 care facility to a C2A secure residential institution. While the existing C2 use has been part of the community, albeit with many issues / concerns in the past, the proposed shift to a C2A designation represents a severe and inappropriate escalation in the nature and intensity of the site's operations. The proposal conflicts directly with the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan regarding rural sustainability and community amenity.

I object to the application of the following material planning grounds.

1. Security requirements relating to fencing and lighting

C2A establishments require high security infrastructure including anti-climb perimeter fencing reaching up to 5.2 metres, dusk to dawn continual illumination at ground level, and vandal resistant luminaires mounted on 6 metre columns. There is no mention of these features on the planning application, yet they are a mandatory requirement, which would be essential to gaining change of use approval. It is also important to state that the hospital sits within a Conservation Area, and therefore any changes must preserve or enhance the unique character of the area. These significant security alterations to the site would negatively alter the visual appearance of the site within this rural village setting, and would certainly not preserve or enhance the character of the area.

2. Proximity to local nurseries and schools

The John Munroe site borders the boundary of Horton Lodge Community Special School, which provides education for children with special needs and disabilities. The hospital is also in extremely close proximity to St. Michaels First School, this being a forest school where children are regularly outdoors in the forest area. The vulnerable nature of the children in these establishments raises questions around safeguarding and security. When the John Munroe hospital was operational, there were several occasions where patients absconded, putting the children at risk, and / or meaning the schools were put into 'lockdown' status. Additionally, the children were regularly subjected to noise from patients, in the form of distress calls, shouting, screaming, and use of foul language. This was and clearly would also be a significant concern regarding the ongoing operation and management of a C2A establishment. It is also understood that a high security environment surrounded by the perimeter fencing would have a direct impact on the reputation and appeal of the schools, thereby likely reducing pupil numbers, and potentially reducing the viability of these valued community resources that have been part of the village fabric for many years.

3. Impact on local residents

This area of the village houses many families that respect and love the rural and peaceful aspect of life. Similarly to the schools, having lived in the area for 20 years, and experienced the noise, and worry associated with living near to the hospital, the concerns around security of me and my family, alongside the unacceptable patient noise, is further elevated by the potential change to a C2A establishment.

4. Highway Safety, access and traffic generation

Camrose Hill where the hospital is located is a narrow, minor rural lane with limited visibility, sharp bends, and no continuous pedestrian paths. There are also regular bottlenecks at school drop off and pick up times, which bring traffic to a total standstill. It is entirely unsuitable for the traffic intensification that a C2A secure facility demands. This type of facility inherently increases the frequency of staff shift changes, specialist secure transport vehicles, legal / medical visitors, and emergency service vehicles. The narrow network cannot safely accommodate this increase, creating an acute hazard for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians using the area.

5. Unsustainable location with poor infrastructure

Under the Staffordshire Moorlands local plan, developments of this scale and nature should be directed towards urban area with robust infrastructure. Rudyard is a rural village with highly limited public transport options. Staff and visitors would be entirely reliant on private vehicles, worsening the environmental impact. It should also be noted, that part of the reasons for the closure of John Munroe hospital as driven by CQC inspections / special measures, was staff shortages at least in part caused by the rural location of the site, whereby it was difficult for employees to travel to and from work.

6. Misleading application

The Heritage Statement implies that the John Munroe hospital operated essentially as a C2A establishment, however this is not the case. As an example, when applying for change of use for High Ash to be incorporated within the hospital, permission was sought to move from C3 to C2 status (SMD/2010/1086), even though this part of the hospital did have locked rehabilitation. The hospital has never operated as a high security establishment, with a C2A institution being significantly different in terms of patient profile and security requirements compared with C2. There is also suggestion that High Ash and The Larches were integral to the hospital complex, however these were family-owned residential properties for many years. Ultimately as the hospital expanded and further encroached on the visual amenity and lifestyle of the residents, they opted to move away. Due to the proximity of the properties to the main hospital building, and the shared single lane access, it proved impossible to sell the houses to everyday purchasers. John Munroe Group took advantage of this situation, purchased the houses, and further extended and developed their business.

In conclusion, the intensification of a high security institutional facility in this area is inappropriate and fails to respect the surrounding land uses and conservation area. The proposal represents unsustainable development in the open countryside and threatens the safety and character of Rudyard. I respectfully ask the case officer to refuse this application.

Yours Sincerely,

Gillian Hiom

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