

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

12th November 2024.

Application No:	SMD/2024/0403	
Location	Daisy's Cottage, Main Road, Hollington ST10 4HR	
Proposal	Change of use from holiday let to 1 No. dwelling house.	
Applicant	Mr. P. Wilkinson	
Agent	Smytheman Architectural	
Parish/Ward	Checkley	Date registered 05.09.2024
If you have a question about this report please contact: Mrs L. Jackson lisa.jackson@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk		

REFERRAL

The application is brought to Planning Committee as the applicant is Councillor P. Wilkinson.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

1.1 The application site is Daisy's Cottage, Main Road, Hollington, a detached, gable-ended, stone and tile building positioned adjacent to, and on the southern side of, Main Road. To the rear of the building there is private external amenity space in the form of a patio area. To the west of the building is a large hardstanding area of broadly rectangular shape with a dropped kerb to allow vehicular access. Boundaries consist of drystone walling and timber fencing (including trellis fencing). Internally at ground floor level the accommodation consists of a sitting room, lobby (with staircase leading to the first floor) and an open-plan kitchen/dining area. At first floor level there are two bedrooms and a bathroom. A pitched roof dormer on the rear elevation provides light to the bathroom, the master bedroom is served by two skylights, the second bedroom has a small window within the gable end. Ground floor accommodation secures natural light from both regular sized windows and full height glazed openings. Land levels are relatively flat.

1.2 For the purposes of planning policy consideration the application site is located within the open countryside but it is not within the Green Belt. The building is not listed, it is not within any Conservation Area and there are no protected trees which need to be considered.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The application is seeking permanent residential accommodation use rather than its current holiday let use. Planning application reference 05/00476/FUL granted consent for the conversion of the redundant building to tourist accommodation. Condition 4 of the approval states that '*The holiday unit(s) hereby permitted shall only be occupied by persons whose main residence is elsewhere. No person shall occupy the unit(s) for a period in excess of 4 weeks at any one time, nor return to the unit(s) until a period of at least 6 months has elapsed.*' The reason given for the condition was '*In order to ensure proper control of the use of the holiday unit(s) and to prevent the establishment of permanent residency.*'

2.3 The application is accompanied by;

- Existing Block and Location Plan;
- Existing Plans and Elevations Plan;
- Planning Statement.

The application, the details attached to it, including the plans, any comments made by residents and the responses of consultees can be found on the Council's website by using the following link:-

<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=179798>

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

05/00476/FUL Conversion of existing redundant building to tourist accommodation. Approved.

4. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

4.1 The following Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan policies are relevant to the application:-

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS9 Smaller Villages Area Strategy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy
- E4 Tourism and Cultural Development
- H1 New Housing Development
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport
- Appendix 2 Parking Guidance

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework is relevant in the consideration of the application, including sections;

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
Section 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

National Planning Policy Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands
2. Space About Dwellings

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide
2. Churnet Valley Masterplan

Tourism Strategy for the Staffordshire Moorlands 2022-2027

Checkley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Site Notice: Expired.

Letters of representation: No representations received

Checkley Parish Council: Checkley Parish council (CPC) acknowledge that the current Property owner is applying for a change of use of a property from a Holiday Accommodation to use as a single residential dwelling. CPC are of the opinion that the Applicant has provided sufficient and satisfactory reasons for a change of use. CPC therefore consider that this application appears to be sound provided there are no local objections and it conforms with planning policies as defined in the Checkley Parish Council Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Croxden Parish Council: No representations received.

Waste Services (SMDC): No issues regarding waste collections.

Severn Trent Water: No representations received.

Staffordshire County Council Highways: No representations received.

6. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE

Policy Context and Principle of Development

6.1 This application is seeking use of an existing converted building for permanent residential use rather than the restricted tourist accommodation which was granted via approval reference 05/00476/FUL. A Planning Statement accompanies the application, which sets out the reasons why the applicant believes the building should be used as permanent residential accommodation, these reasons can be summarised as follows;

- No longer provides a viable income to maintain the current use due to maintenance costs as well as spiralling energy costs;
- Building in a good state of repair, the works required internally or externally;
- Off-street parking for numerous cars and associated turning space;
- Accounts from 2021-2024 show occupancy levels and profit are declining;
- Bookings were only at 68% after the Covid pandemic when everyone wanted to travel (prior to that they were 80%);
- Covid pandemic has resulted in many businesses closing and resultant economic collapse;
- Demand over the school holidays has not been as high;
- Local Authority has a shortfall of housing in respect of targets under policy SS3;
- Site is within a sustainable location and will not result in an isolated home in the countryside;
- Within walking distance of facilities within the village;

6.2 The Local Planning Authority is required to determine applications in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there are material circumstances which indicate otherwise and in determining these applications, it shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, in so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations. The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020 is the adopted Local Plan for the district.

6.3 Policy SS1 of The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands; this echoes the stance of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Plan aims to deliver a wide range of development and includes support in principal for domestic developments.

6.4 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan policy SS9 identifies Hollington as a 'Smaller Village.' Within the smaller villages there is support in principal for a range of developments including (but not limited to) enhancing community vitality, meeting social and economic needs and the provision of housing. Local Plan policy SS10 also covers development within the rural areas. The policy states that *'these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.'* SS10 also expresses some support for housing developments (including the conversion of rural buildings) in accordance with the provisions of policy H1. The need to sustain the rural economy, support employment uses and enhance tourism opportunities is also identified. SS10 also expands upon tourism opportunities, seeking small scale tourism developments, developing close links to the Peak District and linking recreational and tourist resources.

6.5 Local Plan Policy H1 can support new housing developments, requiring a mix of accommodation sizes, types and tenure which are high quality and sustainable. The policy also enables housing in appropriate locations. H1 requires compatibility with the Nationally Described Space Standards for internal accommodation and also states that *'All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.'* H1 supports residential development of an appropriate scale and in the case of a Smaller Village it should be *'well related to the existing pattern of development'* and should *'not create or extend ribbon*

development or lead to sporadic pattern of development.’ In all cases it is specified that ‘development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.’

6.6 Policy E4 concerns itself with securing tourism and cultural development within areas that have good connectivity to other tourist destinations and amenities, in locations close to settlements where there are local facilities and areas identified for tourism development.

6.7 The Planning Statement informs that accommodation demand has decreased over the past 3 years. However this is contrary to the data within the Tourism Strategy (to cover the period 2022-2027), where it has been identified that there is a need to increase overnight stays. The Tourism Strategy for the Staffordshire Moorlands identifies priorities for growth in tourism. One priority raised in this document is to expand, improve and encourage investment in accommodation for tourists, in order to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions. This document states that an existing weakness of the Staffordshire Moorlands is the lack of accommodation investment.

6.8 The strategy identifies that increasing the average lengths of stays will contribute to economic impact including sustaining jobs. The strategy is detailed in its account of spending and the proportion of day and overnight visitors stating that *‘Day visitors dominate, accounting for about 90% of the 5.6m visits but just 58% of the £335m spend. Staying visitors however account for 42% of the total spend despite just being 10% of visits.’*

6.9 From this, it is clear that the loss of the available holiday let accommodation would contradict the evidenced need of Staffordshire Moorlands for more overnight tourist accommodation. Statistically speaking, it is clear that there is an essential need for growth through investment in tourist accommodation, including a duty to protect existing accommodation facilities in the District. Although the applicant has stated that has been a decline in books / demand, this stands in conflict with the findings in the Tourism Strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands.

6.10 The loss of Daisy’s Cottage as tourist accommodation would be contrary to the aims of the Local Plan and Tourism Strategy aims and requirements. The aim is to increase the provision of accommodation such as Daisys Cottage, not for the loss of it. The application does not contain any details of how the tourist accommodation has been marketed, for example where any adverts have been placed and how frequently they were displayed. There are no details relating to rental costs or information/marketing to demonstrate that the business could be sold as a going concern. It is unknown whether the accommodation is available for rent throughout the entire year and whether there are any restrictions on the length of stay. The existing planning condition is flexible, it allows for lengthy holiday stays and is not restricted to any particular seasonal use.

6.11 The Planning Statement informs that the applicant has *‘decided to limit bookings with immediate effect and take the cottage off the website for bookings for next year.’*

6.12 The reasons for submission of the application are noted. However there exists concern that this scheme would potentially see the loss of a unit where a need has been identified, not just within the Staffordshire Moorlands but within the Parish in which the application site sits. Account has been taken of the Checkley Parish

Neighbourhood Development Plan (2021-2035). Policy EMP2 'Rural Business Diversity and Growth' is clear in its support for proposals which result in the growth of rural enterprise and tourism. The loss of this unit of holiday accommodation would run contrary to policy EMP2, especially as this policy is identified as an 'enabling policy' to encourage visitor accommodation such as holiday-lets.

6.13 Members may be aware of a recent approval at Quarry Walk Caravan Park (SMD/2024/0082 dated 22nd October 2024). This site is 1.5 miles from Daisys Cottage. This was a retrospective application for 11 Glamping Pods. The retrospective nature of the application, clearly demonstrates that there is a need/demand for tourist accommodation within this area. The Case officer opined that *'the fact the development has already been implemented with all the investment that will have entailed, offers some proof in itself that there must be a customer demand.'* The Caravan Park application was assessed against tourism policies as well as the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan.

6.14 Members may also recall the application at The Dairy, Hollington Road (SMD/2023/0476) for a glamping pod. The application was approved by Planning Committee in February 2024 contrary to officer recommendation, with members citing the need for tourist accommodation in the area. This site is just over 2 miles from Daisys Cottage and was considered by Members to accord with the provisions of Local Plan policy E4 (Tourism and Cultural Development).

6.15 A recent application at Hermitage Farm (SMD/2024/0272) for the removal of a holiday let condition was refused by Committee Members at the October 2024 committee meeting. One of the reasons for refusal was that the application proposed the loss of tourist accommodation when there was a need within the District. Similar to the Hermitage Farm scheme, there is no evidence that any downturn in occupancy is from competition elsewhere or that there won't be an increase in future demand. These applications demonstrate an accepted need/demand for tourist accommodation in the area.

6.16 The loss of a development which promotes sustainable tourism in this rural area and contributes to the rural economy would be considered a detriment. Therefore, the removal of the available holiday lets would conflict with Policies E4 and SS10 of the Local Plan, as well as the 'Tourism Strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands 2022-2027'.

Design and Visual Impact (Character and Appearance)

6.17 Local Plan policy DC1 requires that all developments shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the character and heritage of an area. Development should be of a high quality, adding to the value of a local area, incorporating creativity, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity. Policy DC3 cites 'resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside.'

6.18 The application does not propose any external alterations to the building. Internally all of the accommodation required for day to day living is provided. The plans do not show any proposals for alterations to the hardstanding area at the side of the holiday cottage. In the event of Member's seeking to approve this application then there could be some consideration of imposing a landscaping condition within this area. However, any landscaping would have to be compatible with vehicle parking and turning requirements.

6.19 The Checkley Neighbourhood Plan describes Hollington as being *'liner in outlay with most housing stock placed within short distance of the road,'* Paragraph 3.12). The Neighbourhood Plan also states that the *'extensive public consultation on the plan identified that maintaining the rural look and feel of the villages and parish was of paramount importance,'* (paragraph 3.76). This proposal would comply with these aims in that the building is not to be altered.

Amenity

6.20 The application triggers consideration of amenity standards within the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Space About Dwellings' and other relevant policies including Local Plan policy DC1 and the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph number 135. Paragraph number 135 includes the requirement to seek developments that will function well, add to the overall quality of the area and provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. The footnote to paragraph 135 references consideration of the Nationally Described Space Standards.

6.21 With regards to the council's adopted Space About Dwellings Standards, the proposal falls short of the requirements. External amenity space requirements for one and two bedroom dwellings (where Permitted Development Rights have not been removed) specify a mean garden length of 14m and 85 square metres. Even if Permitted Development Rights were removed the site would still not comply with the reduced standard of 11m garden length and 65 square metres of amenity space.

6.2 The patio depth at the rear of the property is approximately 3m. With a width of approximately 12m this is well below the aforementioned standards. The gravelled area at the side of the building could be taken into account but this only adds a further approximate 18 square metres resulting in a total of approximately 54 square metres. The hardstanding area is acknowledged this area would be used for the parking and turning of vehicles rather than providing any meaningful external amenity space. In any case the hardstanding area would not afford residents any privacy.

6.3 Internally the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) need to be considered. this property would be classed as a two bedroom, four person dwelling based on the room layouts. The NDSS requires a minimum gross internal floor area of 70sqm. The dwelling has a total floor area of 86sqm. A double or twin bedroom must have a floor area of at least 11.5sqm. The bedrooms in this case are at least 15sqm. The widths of the bedrooms also meet the standard.

6.4 However, any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage, in which case it is counted at 50%. Areas with headroom of less than 900mm cannot be counted at all. The plans show areas with less than 1.5m headroom as part of the bedroom living accommodation due to the restricted head height of the first floor. This would reduce the floor area to approx. 61sqm.

6.5 Furthermore, the NDSS also requires that the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross internal area. It is calculated that only 59% of the floor area would have a ceiling height of 2.3m. The accommodation does not comply, therefore with the NDSS.

6.6 In summary, therefore, the proposal fails to provide an adequate level of external privacy amenity space and internal accommodation. Whilst this arrangement

is considered to be acceptable for short term holiday accommodation, it would be provide an inadequate standard of amenity for permanent residential accommodation. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DC1 and H1 of the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF in this regard.

Highways/Access

6.7 The National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan policies DC1 and T1 require that all development proposals secure safe and suitable access to a site whilst making a contribution towards meeting parking requirements and ensuring that all new development can be satisfactorily accommodated within the highway network. The application does not propose any alterations to the existing vehicular access. The building is a two bedroom property therefore Local Plan parking standards require two parking spaces within the curtilage of the dwelling. The application site is large enough to accommodate this requirement.

6.8 In addition it is considered that the proposal complies with the parking requirements of policy DES1 'Design' of the Checkley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan. Policy DES1 requires that parking should be well-designed and form an integral part of the development; this is achieved through adequate curtilage parking/turning space, rather than potentially adding pressure on roadside parking and visually impacting upon the street scene.

6.9 No highway comments had been received at the time of report preparation but if any are received a further update will be provided to Members prior to their meeting.

7. CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 For the reasons above there is conflict with Policies in the Development Plan. Although the provision of a dwelling would contribute to the Councils current housing undersupply and this is a benefit of the proposal, this site is not a suitable location for housing because it would result in the loss of tourism accommodation for which there is an identified need in the District and which also supports and therefore benefits the rural economy.

7.2 The proposal also fails to make adequate provision for private amenity space to comply with the Space About Dwellings standards for external amenity space. Furthermore the proposal fails to provide internal accommodation which complies with the National Described Space Standard for a 2 bedroom, four person dwelling. Whilst this arrangement is considered to be acceptable for short term holiday accommodation, it would be provide an inadequate standard of amenity for permanent residential accommodation. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DC1 and H1 of the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF in this regard.

7.3 Applying para 11, the tilted balance, as this is effectively an application for housing and the Council do not have a 5 year supply, the conclusion for all of the reasons above is that the adverse impacts are significant and demonstrable and outweigh the benefits. A recommendation of refusal is therefore made.

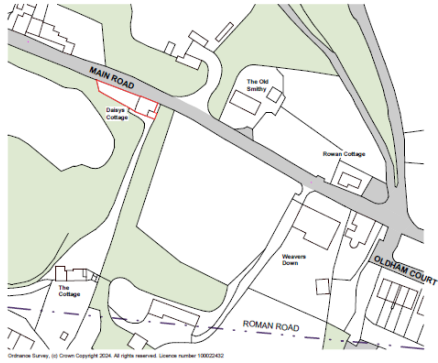
8. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That the application be refused for the following reason(s):

1. The proposal would result in the loss of tourist accommodation for which there is a need within the District and is therefore contrary to policies E4 and SS10 of the Local Plan as well as the 'Tourism Strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands 2022-2027' which encourage tourist development in the District in the interests of the local rural economy.
2. The proposal also fails to make adequate provision for external private amenity space and fails to provide internal accommodation which complies with the National Described Space Standard for a 2 bedroom, four person dwelling. Whilst this arrangement is considered to be acceptable for short term holiday accommodation, it would be provide an inadequate standard of amenity for permanent residential accommodation. The application is therefore contrary to policies SS1, H1 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Space About Dwellings' and the National Planning Policy Framework including section 12.

B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/in formatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's Decision.





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1 **Location Plan**
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