

<b>Planning Committee Report – LA01/2017/0730/F</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017</b>
<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Assets
<b>Outcome</b>	Pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Principal Planning Officer
<b>Cost: (If applicable)</b>	N/a

**Causeway Hotel  
40 Causeway Road  
Bushmills**

**LA01/2017/0730/F  
Full Planning**

**22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017**

<b><u>App No:</u></b>	LA01/2017/0730/F	<b><u>Ward:</u></b>	Giant's Causeway
<b><u>App Type:</u></b>	Full Planning		
<b><u>Address:</u></b>	Causeway Hotel, 40 Causeway Road, Bushmills		
<b><u>Proposal:</u></b>	Change of use from shop and office to ancillary W.C. facilities including blocking up internal access so that facilities are accessed externally only and alterations to façade to include the replacement of doors with a fixed glazed screen with hardwood painted frame.		
<b><u>Con Area:</u></b>	N/A	<b><u>Valid Date:</u></b>	5 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
<b><u>Listed Building Grade:</u></b>	B1	<b><u>Target Date:</u></b>	
<b>Applicant:</b>	National Trust, Rowallane, Stableyard, Saintfield, BT24 7LH		
<b>Agent:</b>	Pragma Planning, Scottish Provident Building 7 Donegall Square West, Belfast		
<b>Objections:</b>	23	<b>Petitions of Objection:</b>	0
<b>Support:</b>	0	<b>Petitions of Support:</b>	0

Drawings and additional information are available to view on the Planning Portal- [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)

## 1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee has taken into consideration and agrees with the reasons for the recommendation set out in section 9 and the policies and guidance in sections 7 and 8 and resolves to **APPROVE** planning permission subject to the condition set out in section 10.

## 2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site comprises a small shop to the rear side of the Causeway Hotel. The two storey hotel drops to a single storey return which houses the shop and office which are the subject of the application.

2.2 The site is located within the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site as defined in the Northern Area Plan 2016. The building is read within the context of the Causeway Hotel and the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre.

### **3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY**

There is no relevant history on this site.

### **4.0 THE APPLICATION**

4.1 Planning permission is sought for change of use from shop and office to ancillary W.C. facilities. This includes blocking up internal access so that facilities are accessed externally only and alterations to façade to include the replacement of doors with a fixed glazed screen with hardwood painted frame.

#### **Habitat Regulations Assessment**

4.2 The potential impact of this proposal on Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites has been assessed in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). The proposal would not be likely to have a significant effect on the features of any European site.

### **5.0 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS**

#### **5.1 External**

**Neighbours:** There are 23 objections to this proposal.

The objections raised matters of concern in relation to:

- The loss of a shop which provides an important amenity to the local community.
- Loss of focal point for the local community.
- Concern is also expressed at the management of the site by the National Trust and their motivation for the application.

## 5.2 Internal

**Environmental Health:** has no objection to the proposal.

**Historic Environment Division:** have been consulted on the accompanying Listed Building Consent and have no objection to the proposal.

## 6.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that all applications must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and all other material considerations. Section 6(4) states that in making any determination where regard is to be had to the local development plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 The development plan is:

- Northern Area Plan 2016 (NAP)

6.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is a material consideration.

6.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is a material consideration. As set out in the SPPS, until such times as a new local plan strategy is adopted, councils will apply specified retained operational policies.

6.5 Due weight should be given to the relevant policies in the development plan.

6.6 All material considerations and any policy conflicts are identified in the “Considerations and Assessment” section of the report.

## 7.0 RELEVANT POLICIES & GUIDANCE

Northern Area Plan 2016

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

PPS 2: Natural Heritage

## **8.0 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT**

8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relate to: the principle of development; the impact on the character of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site; the AONB and; other matters.

### **Principle of development**

8.2 The principle of the type and scale of development proposed must be considered having regard to the SPPS and PPS policy documents specified above.

8.3 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is a material consideration. As set out in the SPPS, until such times as a new local plan strategy is adopted, councils will apply specified retained operational policies. The SPPS states that in the countryside planning authorities must carefully manage tourism development. This is necessary in the interests of rural amenity, wider sustainability objectives and the long term health of the tourism industry.

8.4 The site is located within the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site and the Causeway Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as defined in the Northern Area Plan 2016.

8.5 Policy TSM 2 of PPS 16 states that proposal for the extension of an existing tourist amenity will be permitted where the scale and nature of the proposal does not harm the rural character, landscape quality or environmental integrity of the local area. Where possible, such proposals will be expected to be accommodated through the conversion, reuse or extension of existing buildings on site.

8.6 The proposal is in accordance with PPS 16 in that there is no impact on the character of the area and the proposal includes the reuse of existing buildings on the site. The alterations to the building are minor and are in keeping with the overall character and appearance of the building.

## **Impact on Giant's Causeway**

- 8.7 Policy COU 2: The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site: No development will be approved within the World Heritage Site unless there are very exceptional circumstances directly related to the provision of essential facilities for visitors and which would not be detrimental to the landscape or scientific interest of the Site.
- 8.8 The proposed change of use is to provide essential facilities for visitors and there is no visual or environmental impact as a result of the proposed works. As such the proposed change of use will not have a detrimental impact on the designated site.

## **Causeway Coast AONB**

- 8.9 The site is located within the Causeway Coast AONB and must be considered against Policy NH 6 of PPS 2. This policy requires development proposals in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to be sensitive to the distinctive special character of the area and the quality of their landscape, heritage and wildlife. Again the proposed change of use would not result in a change to the character of the area and it is considered that this proposal complies with policy
- 8.10 The policy also requires proposals to respect architectural styles, boundary details and retaining features, and respect local materials, design and colour. As outlined above the alterations to the exterior of the building are minor and are sympathetic to the overall appearance.

## **Other Matters**

- 8.11 There have been 23 letters of objection to the proposed change of use. Concern centres on the loss of a local amenity which serves as a focal point for the local community.
- 8.12 There is no provision under current planning policy which would establish a presumption against the loss of rural shops. It would be unreasonable for the Planning Authority to insist on the retention of the shop. As such their intention to terminate the lease afforded to the shop is not a significant material

consideration of the planning process. As outlined above the proposed change of use would not detract from the character and is in accordance with planning policy and the issues raised in the objections could not be upheld.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

9.1 The proposed change of use is considered acceptable in this location having regard to the Northern Area Plan 2016, and other material considerations, including the SPPS. The proposal will provide further toilet facilities for visitors to the Giant's Causeway and alterations to the building are minor. Approval is recommended.

## **10 Conditions**

1. As required by Section 61 the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Time Limit.

